

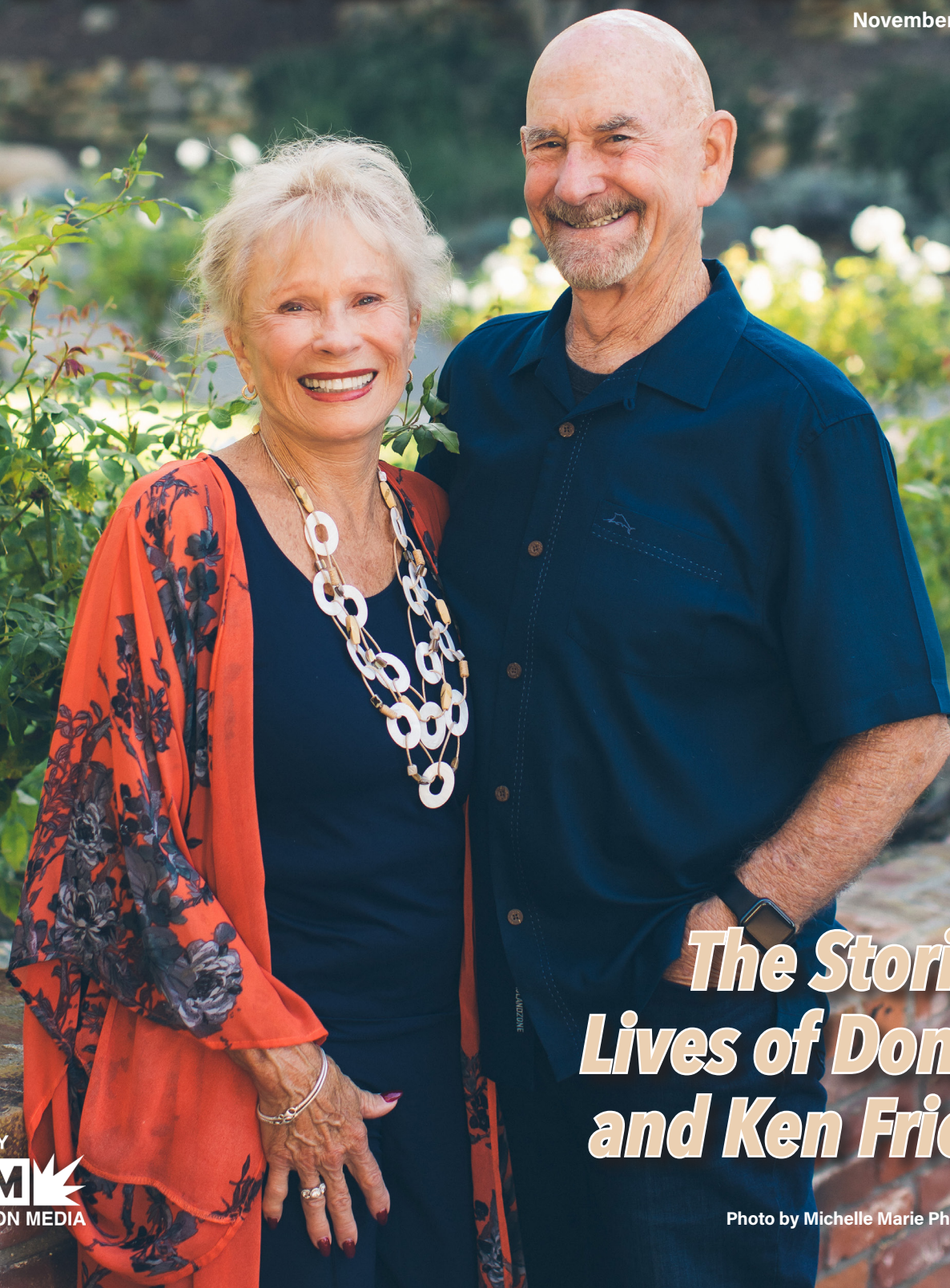
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November 2023



*The Storied
Lives of Donna
and Ken Friess*

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Let them give thanks to the Lord for His unfailing love
and His wonderful deeds for mankind, for He satisfies the
thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

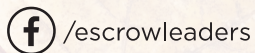
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All month long, enjoy family gatherings, feasting, parades, and football. Then, come together with loved ones on Thanksgiving on the 23rd and rejoice in your blessings.

We want to send a special note of gratitude to our readers and sponsors of **Neighbors of San Juan Capistrano** magazine. We wouldn't exist without your continued support.

For the latest happenings in the neighborhood, follow us online **@neighborsofsanjuancapistrano**.

Have a happy, safe, and bountiful Thanksgiving!



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CONTENT SUBMISSION DEADLINES

The first of the month of the month prior to publication.



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Medicare Open Enrollment Reminder & Healthy Holiday Tips

By Carlos Aguilar - 3G Insurance

The holiday season is a time of joy and togetherness, but it can also bring about a fair share of stress and uncertainty, especially for those on Medicare. As the year winds down and we celebrate with family and friends, it's essential to understand how your Medicare coverage can impact your health and finances during this festive time.

Remember, the Medicare enrollment period that started on October 15th will end on December 7th for plan changes for 2024. You may qualify for other special election periods after that, so don't hesitate to call me at **949-529-7123** to discuss.

In the meantime, here are some tips to help you thrive during the holidays.

Maintain a Balanced Diet

It's easy to indulge in holiday treats, but try to maintain a balanced diet. Include plenty of fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains. Be mindful of portion sizes to prevent overeating.

Stay Hydrated

Dehydration can be a concern during the winter months, especially if you're in a heated indoor environment. Make sure to drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.

Manage Stress

The holidays can be stressful, so finding healthy ways to manage stress is essential. Consider relaxation techniques like deep breathing, meditation, or yoga. Don't hesitate to ask for help with holiday preparations to reduce stress.

Stay Active

Maintain your regular exercise routine as much as possible. If weather permits, consider outdoor activities like walking or gentle stretching exercises. Engage in physical activities with family or friends to stay active and social during the holidays.

Prioritize Sleep

Adequate sleep is essential for overall health. Stick to a regular sleep schedule and create a comfortable sleeping environment.

Plan Transportation

If you plan to attend holiday gatherings, arrange for transportation in advance to ensure your safety. If driving, ensure your vehicle is well-maintained. Consider using rideshare services or asking a family member or friend for a ride if necessary.

Medication Management

Don't forget to take your medications as prescribed. Consider setting alarms or using a medication organizer to help you stay on track. Ensure you have an adequate supply of medicines to last through the holiday season.

Watch for Depression

For some, the holidays can bring feelings of loneliness or sadness. If you're experiencing symptoms of depression, don't hesitate to seek help from a healthcare professional or counselor.

Remember that self-care is crucial during the holiday season. Prioritize your well-being, seek support from loved ones, and take steps to ensure a safe and enjoyable holiday season. By following these health tips, people of all ages can celebrate the holidays while staying well.



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Ask DeAnna

By DeAnna Jordan Crosby, MA, LMFT, LAADC, Psy.D. (c)

Dear DeAnna,

My 13-year-old is experiencing some pretty dramatic mood swings and big emotions these days. She has mentioned not being sure why she feels sad or angry and says she doesn't know how to deal with these extreme feelings. She also has pretty low self-worth despite being an amazing kiddo. I know hormones play a huge role in a kid's emotions at this age, but should we be concerned? I don't have the tools in my toolbox to walk her through these times, and we often end up frustrated and upset when we try to talk. My question is, do you think therapy is warranted so she can have an unbiased person's perspective and guidance?

Signed,

A Worried Mama

Dear Worried Mama,

First, BRAVA, for reaching out! Many of us believe that we should naturally know how to handle these difficult situations that arise with our children. My main mission is to remove the stigma around seeking help for mental and emotional health issues.

When it comes to teenagers, there are many

factors at play, and I am absolutely certain that none of us handle it perfectly. Let's start with HORMONES; your teenager is going through something that greatly affects her mood, and she has no control over it, nor does she have any prior experience dealing with it. This is a new experience for both her and you.

Another important issue is that she's at an age where she wants to be independent like an adult but still looks up to you for solutions to all her problems. I often advise parents in this situation to shift from being a parent to becoming more of a coach, offer fewer suggestions, and wait for their teenager to ask for help before stepping in. It's a challenging change that requires practice.

When my own teenager started therapy, I confided in a trusted friend about feeling embarrassed as a therapist myself because my child needed treatment. Her response was comforting: "All teenagers need therapy." It brought me immense relief.

I suggest gently asking your teenager if she would like to speak with a professional. If she shows interest, proceed further; if not, let her know it's always an option if she changes her mind. By treating it as a normal

and healthy choice, she might see it the same way. Remember, though, it may take time for her to decide, so try not to have any expectations when discussing this topic.

Many of my clients have found great value in reading *How to Hug a Porcupine: Negotiating the Prickly Points of the Tween Years* by Julie A. Ross, MA.

I hope this helps, and please keep these letters coming! You can reach me at deanna@newmethodwellness.com.

—DeAnna



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Basil Brazil Cuisine:

Bold and Delicious

By Jill Brooks

A new culinary revelation graced San Juan Capistrano in October, bursting with vibrant flavors and an effervescent staff all wrapped up in a comfortable, cozy atmosphere. Though proprietor Jacqueline "Jackie" Silva and her husband, Rodrigo, only opened Basil Brazil Cuisine last month, the fandom (a prerequisite in Brazil) is already there.

Jackie grew up in Brazil and fell in love with cooking when she was 13. She learned the ropes and even became a private chef, but soon decided to expand her culinary education. The family moved to Southern California, where Jackie enrolled—and excelled—in culinary school at Orange Coast College for Culinary Arts.

"We created Basil Brazil Cuisine to serve great Brazilian food and bring a bit of Brazilian culture and atmosphere into a restaurant. We aim to show the world a piece of our home country through traditional and authentic cuisine. We pride ourselves on always having the freshest ingredients and providing attentive, hospitable service," Jackie explains.



Proprietor Jacqueline
"Jackie" Silva

Jackie and her family have lived in Orange County for five years. They knew San Juan was the ideal location to open a restaurant. She shares, "My husband played a major role in this decision by supporting me and making me believe that I should pursue my dream of opening my own restaurant."

Their tasty and eclectic menu includes brilliantly flavored, traditional Brazilian delights, such as Feijoada (pork sausage, pork ribs, bacon, and dry meat cooked with black beans) and Moqueca (fish stew with coconut milk, bell peppers, onion, and tomato). Sure, sure, there are salads... and they're amazing too!

Jackie and Rodrigo are incredibly welcoming and friendly and hope to open more restaurants in the next several years. They have a daughter, Sabrina (20), and a son, Ezequiel (15), and you may see them helping out around the restaurant too!

We wish them the best of luck and suggest that you stop in soon for an incredible meal. Basil Brazil Cuisine is located at **31878 Del Obispo St., Suite 120, San Juan Capistrano**. Enjoy!



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By Kathy Randall - Lesneski Mortuary

Did you know military veterans with an honorable discharge and their spouses can be laid to rest at a National Cemetery at no cost to the family? Mortuaries work with the families and the Veteran's Administration to assist with the arrangements.

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Pre-planning can help ensure the veteran's wishes are fulfilled, and their funeral is conducted in a way that honors their service. National Cemeteries are sacred places where veterans and their families can be laid to rest with honor and dignity. The National Cemeteries closest to Orange County are Miramar National Cemetery in San Diego and Riverside National Cemetery. Lesneski Mortuary works closely with families to facilitate these benefits and identify what best suits the veteran's needs.

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The Storied Lives of Donna and Ken Friess

By Ryann Smith Groseclose
Photos by Michelle Marie Photography



When telling the story of Donna and Ken Friess, it takes work to pinpoint just where to begin. Their chapters span multiple decades and are bursting with love, family, adventure, history, service to the community, and more. They have been fixtures in the San Juan community for 50 years, and their connection to the area is deeply rooted. As with most tales, the logical place to start is the beginning.

Donna fondly reflects, "When we were 14, Ken and I met through his Boy Scout leader. Ken, wanting to appear older and more sophisticated, said he was 15. When I spotted him through the glass-paned door of the Scout leader's home, I was so stricken that I could not eat or sleep for the remainder of our five-day visit. I've never gotten over it. It was truly love at first sight."

At the time, Donna lived in Venice and Ken in Palos Verdes, so dating wasn't a logical option. Instead, an epic and romantic years-long letter-writing connection ensued. Their love would blossom through written correspondence until college.

Donna stayed in SoCal for her schooling, graduating cum laude from the University of Southern California, where she was a proud member of the Alpha Gamma Delta sorority. She went on to earn a master's degree from Cal State Long Beach and her doctoral degree in psychology from Alliant University in San Diego. Ken attended Occidental College, earned his master's degree in psychology from Cal State Long Beach, and his doctoral degree in psychology at Alliant University.

Donna and Ken were married in 1964. Not long after, Donna took a position as a professor at Cypress College. A founding faculty member, she held the position for an impressive 44 years before her retirement in 2010. She adored teaching her communications students, and her students loved her. In 2009, she was named Orange County Teacher of the Year. Ken had a long, successful career as a general contractor before his focus shifted to a more civic-minded role.

In 1973, Donna and Ken moved their young family to an equestrian area in San Juan called Hidden Valley. Back then, the population of San Juan Capistrano was 7,000. Ken recalls, "There wasn't even a stop sign at San Juan Creek Road and La Novia! We lived on a dirt road with a septic tank and propane; the house was all electric. We couldn't even have a fireplace because the authorities deemed our house 'too far out in the country.'" They fell in love with their two-acre property surrounded by rolling green hills and horse-conscious neighbors who quickly became dear friends.

As the town grew and the couple's fondness for the area bloomed, Ken applied to the Planning Commission. The city's original master plan was to build out the population to 85,000, which had Ken and several other like-minded community members concerned. The commission devised a new plan that capped the build-out at 39,000 to protect San Juan's ridgelines and open spaces. Their revised proposal was a success. The population of San Juan

currently sits right around 35,000. These early efforts preserved the integrity of the land and the rustic charm of the area, ensuring San Juan remained a precious and protected gem. Donna emphatically states, "We do not plan to ever move away. San Juan, Hidden Valley, is our home."

Inspired by his early involvement with the Planning Commission, Ken served four terms on the San Juan City Council and four terms as Mayor. He reflects, "During the 50 years we have lived in San Juan Capistrano, I have been amazed at the commitment of this community to work together to preserve our history, our open space, and our unique way of life."

Donna and Ken have three adult children; oldest son K. Erik "Rick" (married to Jenny Friess), Julina Bert (married to Justin Bert), and Dan Friess (married to Natalie Friess). They all have grown children of their own—11 kids between them, much to the delight of their grandparents. Rick is a land use litigating attorney for Allen Matkins Attorneys at Law, Dan owns his own development company, and Julina teaches middle school in North San Diego County.

Over the years, Ken kept his family active by introducing them to the sport of long-distance running. Ken has completed 18 marathons, and all three Friess children have run many races with their dad. One of the most harrowing was the Catalina 50K they all did together. Dan and Rick are Ironmen; Julina was an All-American athlete in college and has several marathons and races under her belt; Dan is an ultramarathoner; and Rick has run a whopping 120 marathons. Rick passed his love of running and competing down to his five girls, who have all completed at least one marathon.

Donna's hobbies are more artistic, philanthropic, and advocacy-related. She has studied porcelain art under Millie Jones and is also a serious artist specializing in portraiture, recently choosing watercolor as her preferred medium. After she retired in 2010, she received the city's blessing to volunteer weekly as a grief counselor through the local recreation department. She held the hands and helped the hearts of group members for almost a decade before the pandemic shut down the program. She is also extremely passionate about her work as a Mission docent. Donna explains, "It is very important to me to share the history of San Juan and to celebrate the indigenous people who built our beautiful mission."

Additionally, she is an accomplished writer. Donna has authored ten books, perhaps the most well-known being *Capistrano Trails*:

Continued on next page



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Ride for the Brand, the equestrian story of Southern California that goes back to prehistoric times. A historian at heart, the area's rich ranching history is fascinating to Donna. She has also purposefully turned her own pain into a way to help others. Her autobiography, *Cry the Darkness*, has been printed in seven languages and is an audiobook and eBook in multiple countries. A fierce advocate for children's and women's rights, Donna serves on the U.S. Justice Department's Office for Crime Victims on its Technical Training Advisory Council and was nominated for the President's Service Award in 1996. Donna's career as an author has taken her and Ken all over the world. Bitten by the travel bug, she's been to all seven continents and multiple cities globally.

Closer to home, the Friesses have their own mini farm. An avid horseback rider and dog lover, Donna keeps three large quarter horse mares in the stables on the property, and she and Ken are both smitten with their three Golden Retrievers. Donna and the pups can be found walking down the San Juan Creek Trail most mornings, she rides her horses weekly, and often trots down to the Ortega Equestrian Center to say "howdy" to friends.

One of Donna and Ken's favorite memories together is centered around horses and riding. In 1974, their neighbor, John Clifton, organized a cross-country horse race for the people in their local community. Donna, new to riding, hadn't yet learned to use a saddle.

Though she was up against horseshoers, serious cowboys, and other seasoned equestrians in town, Donna was not deterred.

Donna remembers, "The guys in town laughed when they found out I had entered the race. There was a purse for the winner and the runner-up. The course was daunting, starting in Hidden Valley, winding along the riverbed, and up the dirt on the side. Perhaps four miles in length, it was very dangerous; if a rider had fallen, they would have been trampled by the other horses on the narrow paths."

To the great shock of everyone in town, Donna came in first! And to sweeten the win, Ken was runner-up. That day, Donna learned she could go up against real cowboys and come out okay. And if she could do that, she could do anything.

Donna has parlayed her varied life experiences and lessons into helping others. She's been a grief counselor and a support system to countless individuals and now inspires others as a speaker and life coach. Ken volunteers as a girl's wrestling coach for San Clemente and Dana Hills high schools in his free time.

Though they have been married for nearly 60 years, their story is far from over. More in love today than ever, Donna and Ken Friess feel blessed to enjoy their "horsey and doggie San Juan life" together.

Cheers to the next chapter, Donna and Ken!



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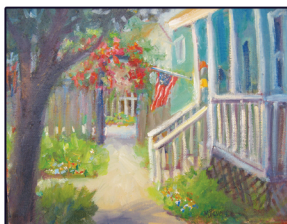
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Recent Real Estate Activity

St#	St Name	Sales Price	Bed/Bath	Sale Date	St#	St Name	Sales Price	Bed/Bath	Sale Date
30724	Calle Resplendor	\$720,000	2/3	9/13/2023	26298	Meadow DR	\$1,599,990	4/4	9/4/2023
32121	Via Barrida	\$749,000	2/2	9/25/2023	29831	Imperial DR	\$1,650,000	4/3	9/14/2023
31101	VIA EL ROSARIO	\$750,000	2/3	9/18/2023	31121	Santa Margarita PL	\$1,750,000	4/3	9/5/2023
27605	Avenida Larga	\$770,000	3/2	9/30/2023	33452	Via De Agua	\$1,870,000	4/3	9/28/2023
31546	Windsong Drive	\$800,000	3/2	9/25/2023	28951	Via Hacienda	\$1,875,000	5/3	9/26/2023
27547	Paseo Tamara	\$940,000	2/3	9/18/2023	33532	Via De Agua	\$1,885,000	4/3	9/15/2023
33025	Sea Breeze CT	\$955,000	3/3	9/21/2023	28422	Via Pasito	\$2,020,000	5/4	9/21/2023
32792	Via Malaga	\$995,000	3/3	9/29/2023	26732	Via La Jolla	\$2,649,000	5/5	9/29/2023
27207	Paseo Lomita	\$1,020,000	2/2	9/6/2023	30902	Via Mirador	\$2,969,600	4/5	9/21/2023
33905	Calle Acordarse	\$1,100,000	3/3	9/15/2023	27462	CALLE DE LA ROSA	\$2,999,999	5/6	9/25/2023
31942	Via Encima	\$1,272,312	3/3	9/1/2023	26671	Buckingham	\$3,175,000	5/5	9/25/2023

Dancing Through Life with Maddie Sieger

By Heather Paris-Ybarra

When Maddie Sieger was eight, her mom took her to Bumpin' Ballroom to try a class. From her very first salsa step, Maddie was hooked. A short seven years later, she's still kicking up her heels—and loving every minute of it.

Maddie studies Latin Ballroom, which includes Jive, Paso Doble, Rumba, Cha Cha, and Samba (her favorite). She trains approximately 15 hours a week with her partner, is also enrolled in private and group lessons, and currently attends Orange County School of the Arts, where she continues to hone her craft.

Several times a year, Maddie performs in shows hosted by Sway Ballroom and in various competitions. Competition weekends are grueling, starting with professional hair and makeup, practicing non-stop with her partner when not on the dance floor, and then dancing anywhere from 10 to 12 different dances.

Maddie competes in the Gold Junior Division for 13- to 15-year-olds and consistently ranks in the top three. Her dedication is unwavering, and she attributes that to the support of both her family and coaches over the years. One of her favorite pieces of advice given by a coach was, "It doesn't matter how you do, but that you are always having fun!" When asked what she would say to any new family starting ballroom dance, she jokingly warned, "It is expensive!"

Despite the hours of practice and financial commitment, Maddie loves it and says her favorite part is "getting to listen to music and hang out and dance with my friends."

Your San Juan Capistrano neighbors are proud of you, Maddie, and hope to see you Samba-ing your way across a ballroom floor near us soon!



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Harrie Houdini's Miraculous Escape!

By Brandi Ortiz

Most people know about escape artist and illusionist Harry Houdini, but this isn't his story. In 2007, San Juan resident Katie Shreve found a lone tortoise on her back patio. Confident he belonged to someone, Katie posted flyers, and a neighbor eventually claimed him. However, the following day, the same neighbor asked if she and her family could adopt the tortoise since they could no longer care for him.

The Shreves welcomed him with open arms and named him Harrie. Years later, in 2012, Harrie escaped his habitat while the family was on vacation. They searched and searched but could not find him. Several years passed, and eventually, the Shreves adopted a new female tortoise from a local pet store and named her Henrietta.

In 2019, Katie was driving down the street and was flagged down by neighbors. They had been stopping cars because they found a tortoise in the neighborhood and were hoping to locate the owners. Katie thought the tortoise might be Harrie, so she offered to take him home. To her surprise and joy, when she cross-compared the



Henrietta (L) and Harry living their best lives in Katie Shreve's garden.

shell markings of her "new" pet with an old photo of Harrie, she realized he had miraculously—and randomly—returned to them! Harrie was finally home where he belonged after almost seven long years. Katie shares, "I told my friend about Harrie's long adventure, and she said, 'You must call him Harrie Houdini!'"

These days, Harrie and Henrietta live a peaceful, pleasant life, roaming in Katie's vegetable garden and munching on the lettuce and kale she grows. But their mom keeps a closer eye on them. Katie offers some sage advice for owners of these unique reptiles: "Tortoises are natural escape artists."

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On-Trend

By Christine Vartanian

Hi, I'm Christine Vartanian, founder of jade. for all seasons COLLECTIVE and the waistUPwardrobe podcast. I'm here to share what's on-trend for this festive fall season.

LEATHER = EGY ELEGANCE

The "season of leather" is upon us, as leather clothes claim a prominent spot in women's fashion for fall 2023. Synonymous with edgy elegance, leather pieces—from pants to jackets—make a powerful statement, signaling a blend of toughness and sophistication. Leather's versatile nature, in classic black or bold colors, allows for endless pairing possibilities, making it a coveted staple for the season's ever-evolving fashion narrative.

LUMINOUS METALLICS

Metallic clothes shine bright in women's fall fashion this year, bringing a luminous glow to the season's palette. From shimmering dresses to high-shine jackets, metallics are celebrated for infusing everyday wear with a touch of glamour. Whether a subtle silver blouse or a bold gold skirt, incorporating metallic elements adds instant radiance and elevates any autumn look to head-turning status.

OFF-THE-SHOULDER GLAM

Off-the-shoulder tops are claiming their place in women's fashion, introducing an alluring touch to the season's ensembles. These tops reveal just a hint of skin and strike the perfect balance between elegance and playfulness. As temperatures cool, pairing them with high-waisted jeans or layered under jackets provides both warmth and a nod to fashion-forward versatility.

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JSERRA IS THANKFUL FOR COACH KAY

By Jill Brooks

Brett Kay is a bit of a legend around the JSerra Catholic High School campus. As Head Baseball Coach for the last 18 years and Assistant Athletic Director in charge of communications, he does a grand-slam job for the school—both on and off the field.

JSerra has a famed athletic program, and during his tenure, the varsity baseball team has won two CIF Championships back-to-back in 2022 and 2023. This feat has been accomplished only three times, in 2000-2001 by Capo Valley, and once way back in the 1950s.

The team has also won a SOCAL Division I Regional Championship in 2021 and five Trinity League Championships, has had four players win Orange County Player of the Year, and has churned out 26 professional baseball players! Two of them have hit the major leagues. First, Royce Lewis, who was the *LA Times* Player of the Year, the first draft pick for the Minnesota Twins in 2017, and who recently hit two homeruns in his post season at-bats. Then we have Austin Hedges, Trinity League Player of the Year 2009-2011, who currently plays for the Texas Rangers.

Other notable JSerra baseball grads include Parker Joe Robinson, Cody Schrier, Trent Caraway, Andrew Lamb, Chase Strumpf, Davis Wendzel, and Luke Jewett, just to name a few.

"A great program starts at home," Coach Kay states. "Great parents raising great kids who push themselves academically and athletically makes all the difference."

Coach Kay was voted Coach of the Year in 2009 and 2022 and CIF Coach of the Year in 2022 and 2023. He strives to be a conduit for his players to become the best people they can be. He says, "We ensure these kids are faith-filled, treat people with respect, love and appreciate their parents, and get good grades. If they go on to be successful in baseball when they leave JSerra, that's great too."

Coach Kay is the real deal. He cares deeply about the kids he coaches and who they are beyond baseball. He's even attended a few weddings of former JSerra players. "The relationships are what it's all about," he affirms.



Coach Kay and his wife, Kristen, love hanging out with their two sons, Brody (10) and Kaden (6), in the little free time they find. The whole family feels thankful and blessed to be a part of such an incredible school and community.

Please send nominations for outstanding athletes, coaches, and teams from Pee Wee to Pro to be featured in future issues to rgroseclose@bestversionmedia.com.



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Mead Me

ON THE OTHER SIDE



By Andrew Reed - The BrewHouse

The booze industry never tires of creating new options for consumers: cue wine coolers, Zimas, and now, seltzers. But let's jump in the way-back machine and discover a beverage that has existed for thousands of years.

Mead was the world's first fermented beverage, as determined by evidence recovered from ancient vessels in Asia, Europe, and Africa. It significantly predates any organized agricultural activity, as the ingredients to make mead don't require growing quantities of grain. Mead is essentially honey and water combined with yeast. The yeast in ancient times would be naturally occurring, requiring the honey and water mixture to be left in a place where it would be exposed to outside air.

The honey in mead provides the fermentable sugars versus the grains used for beer, grapes for wine, or almost anything with sugar content for distilled spirits. Often called "honey wine," mead can be infused with fruits, spices, and other flavorings. A mead with a fruit addition is referred to as a "melomel," and one with spices is a "metheglin." The most prevalent style of mead today is the "cyser," representing a blend of honey

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and apple juice, which can be flavored in many ways. Depending on the style, mead can range in alcohol content from the low single digits all the way up to 18-22%.

If your curiosity is piqued and you want to discover this ancient beverage for yourself, it doesn't take an epic journey: You can go straight to the source at a meadery near you. (There are a handful within easy driving distance from Orange County.) Mead is also available from larger beverage retailers and often at places that specialize in craft beer.

Mead comes in many forms—still, sparkling, spiced, fruited, dry, and sweet. And because the ingredients used to make it are available worldwide, local versions have emerged from virtually every geography. Grab a cup of mead and venture into the past to enjoy the world's oldest fermented beverage.

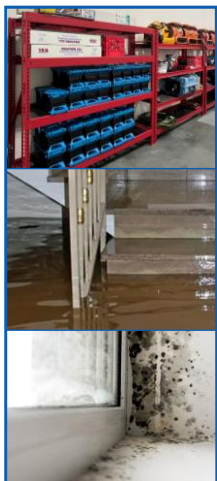
Cheers!



Happy Thanksgiving!

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A blue golf cart with a black roof and a turkey in the driver's seat. The cart is surrounded by autumn decorations like pumpkins and berries.

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— Lauren Firner, Firner Esquestrian

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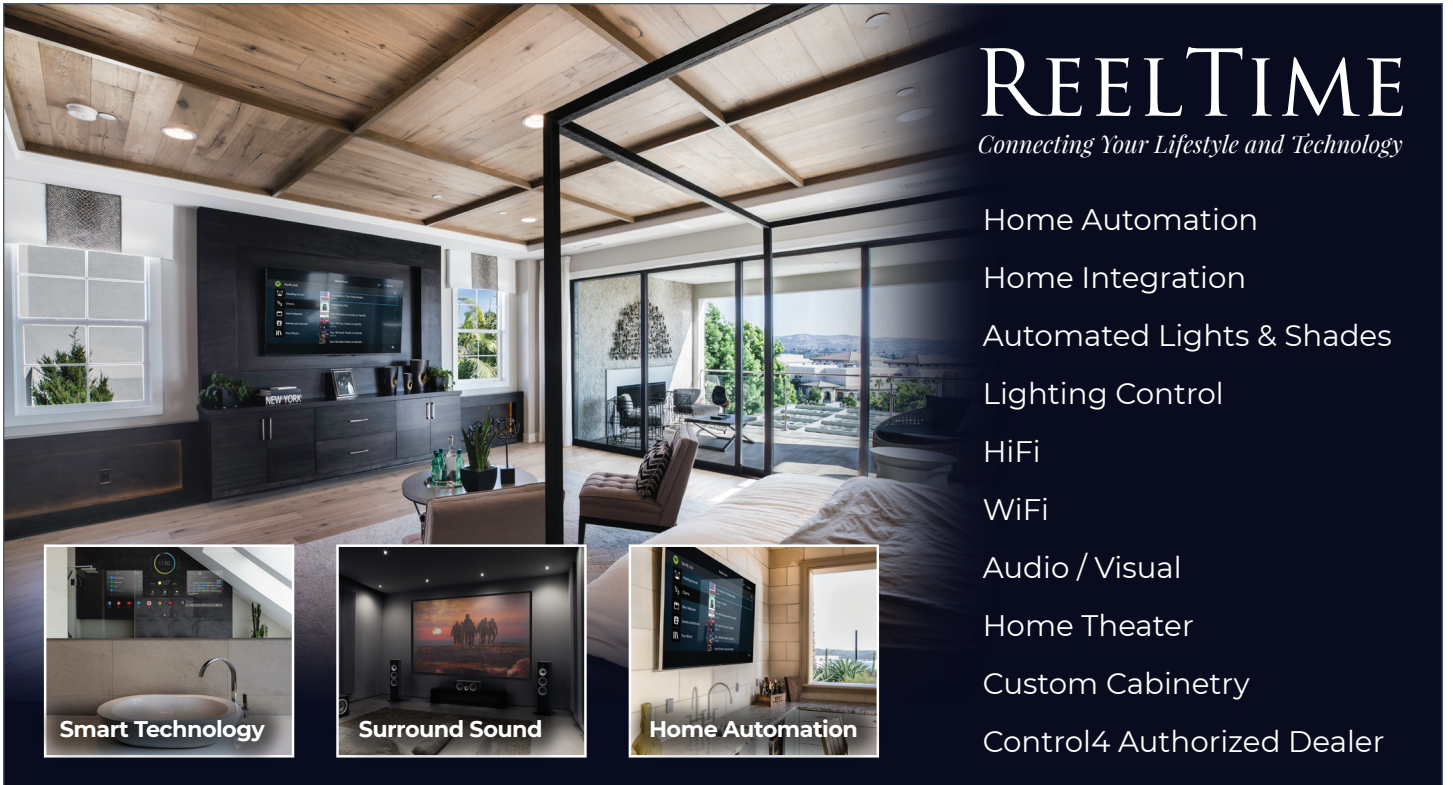
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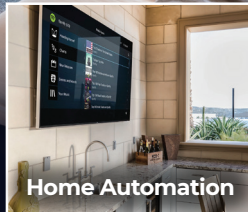
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