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Strategy and Logic Abound at Local Chess Competition

By Michele Earle

Forty-four student chess players from Payne, Monte Vista and Parkview schools in the Mountain View School District put their mental strength and gaming talents to the test at the District's Annual Chess Competition held at Monte Vista School.

Students were divided into three levels, Level 1 for beginning players with one year of experience or less, Level 2 for intermediate players with two to three years of experience and Level 3 for advanced players with four or more years of experience for the three-match competition. Intensity filled the air as students calculated their moves, strategized and maneuvered their pieces across the board. The skills displayed by the young chess players were impressive as they vied for the title of District Chess Champion.

As members of their school's Chess Club, the students meet each week after school with their coaches to learn and perfect the game of strategy, tactics and logic. Monte Vista's club is led by Marcos Bowers, leading Parkview's



club is Steve Owen and Payne's club is led by Carlos Campa.

"Chess is the universal language," said Bowers. "I try to make chess fun for students and create a safe space for them to be academic when academics are sometimes deemed 'un-cool'. The ultimate goal for the Monte Vista Chess Club is to create independent thinkers that strive to be the best that

they can be. If we are successful in creating students with higher level skills, then these students will be able to compete not only in local job markets but be successful globally."

Chess has been around for 1,500 years and is considered by many as a discipline masked as a game. Research continues to show that
CHESS >> PAGE 7

EMCSD's Musical Theatre Program Hits Center Stage



By Jasmine Velazquez, El Monte City School District

Excitement reverberates through the corridors of El Monte City School District (EMCSD) as curtains rise on another spectacular season of Musical Theatre. From enchanting melodies to electrifying choreography, the stage is set to showcase the boundless talent of students, spanning from 1st through 8th grade.

This year's lineup promises to captivate audiences of all ages with musical adaptations of timeless classics like The Little Mermaid, Aladdin, Shrek, Annie, and Charlie Brown, and newer family favorites like Frozen, Moana, and High School Musical among others. Each performance serves as a testament to the dedication and passion of our young performers, who have poured their hearts into rehearsing iconic scenes and melodies.

"I think this program is great for our students and our community," shared Shirpsers' Musical Theatre lead Ms. Luisa Valdez. "Honestly, the students surprised me with their great performance [especially] not being

shy for their age. They really own their performance; musical theatre is special to them [and] makes them feel proud. On campus, I can see how they walk with more pride after the musicals."

Shirpsers School launched EMCSD's musical theatre season with their adaption of Disney's Frozen. The students love their musical theatre program, and it inspires them to keep finding outlets to perform. Carly Miramontes who portrayed Anna said, "I love the experience of being on stage and performing for others." Keith Ilagan who played Hans thinks more students should join the program, "It's a really fun learning experience, and you get to connect with other people." Keith was introduced to musical theatre last Spring while walking by Shirpsers' Lion King practice. Curious, he asked Ms. Valdez if he could try out even though he missed the initial casting calls. Keith ended up getting the lead role as Simba and now wants to explore theatre beyond school, "I'm really into it, and I'm going to try getting into a public musical next year."

Fellow Shirpsers student Adela Marquez, who has been in musical theatre for the past couple years, says the program has helped her tremendously and thinks it can help her classmates, "I keep coming back because I want to build more confidence in myself. In the years before, I wasn't comfortable, and I think if other students want to be more confident, they should join because it
THEATER >> PAGE 7

South El Monte Secures Dominant Playoff Victory



South El Monte continued their impressive form from the regular season as they entered the playoffs, displaying a dominant performance.

The team showcased their prowess by shutting out the Silverado Hawks and securing a commanding 7-0 victory on Thursday.

This triumph highlighted South El Monte's familiarity with big wins, having already claimed victory in 15 games by a margin of six runs or more this season.

Nadine Gutierrez proved to be an impenetrable force on the mound, allowing only four hits and tallying an impressive 11 strikeouts, effectively denying the Silverado Hawks any opportunity to score.

On the hitting side, South El Monte witnessed contributions from six different players, each stepping up and recording at least one hit.

Notably, Jazmine Leyva had a stellar performance, scoring two runs, stealing a base, and going 3-for-4 at the plate.

Elise Gonzalez also played a vital role, scoring a run, stealing a base, and reaching base in two out of her three

plate appearances.

With this victory, South El Monte extended their winning streak to an impressive 12 consecutive games, bringing their season record to an outstanding 21-5-2.

Conversely, the defeat marked the end of a three-game streak of away wins for the Silverado Hawks, leaving them with a record of 9-12.

South El Monte is set to face Providence at home on Tuesday at 3:15 p.m. in an upcoming matchup.

South El Monte currently boasts a remarkable 12-game streak of home wins, while Providence carries a four-game streak of away wins. This clash promises to be a battle of streaks, with one team destined to break their impressive run on the field.

South El Monte's unwavering success from the regular season continued as they dominated the playoff game against the Silverado Hawks.

With an exceptional pitching performance from Nadine Gutierrez and contributions from various players on the hitting side, South El Monte displayed their prowess and secured a resounding victory.

As the South El Monte High School Eagles prepare to face Providence, both teams bring impressive streaks, setting the stage for a thrilling matchup.

Information for this article sourced from Maxpreps.com and photo courtesy Eastsidemedia.tv



El Monte Union Honors 2024 QuestBridge Scholars

Five standout seniors from El Monte Union High School District (EMUHSD) secured coveted, full four-year scholarships exceeding \$200,000 through the QuestBridge National College Match program for their dedication to academic excellence and spirited involvement in their school communities.

South El Monte High's Mariana Ortega Ubada and Karla Ixchop, Rosemead High's Wesley (Junaho) Huang, Arroyo High's Chris Tu, and Mountain View High School's Jason Flores were selected out of 18,000 applicants nationwide for QuestBridge Scholarships, propelling them toward elite colleges across the nation. Each EMUHSD senior met QuestBridge's rigorous selection criteria, which demanded exceptional academic performance, demonstrated leadership skills, and financial need.

"El Monte Union is incredibly proud of the hard work and dedication these scholars put into their academic journeys and we congratulate them on this well-deserved achievement," Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga said. "Their success not only reflects their outstanding efforts to be resilient, college-and-career ready lifelong learners – it is also a testament to the District's commitment to providing diverse programs and ample growth opportunities that empower our students to excel."

Ubada became a QuestBridge College Prep Scholar during her junior year and has maintained a 4.35

GPA while undertaking rigorous Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Her passion for research and experimental psychology drove her ambition to attend Amherst College and pursue a meaningful career in psychology or neuroscience.

"I am so grateful to be a QuestBridge Match Scholarship recipient," Ubada said. "It means the world to me that I can attend a QuestBridge partner school on a full-ride without the worry of burdening my parents financially. I never believed I would be able to afford to attend a top college, but after working hard and receiving my QuestBridge recognition I was filled with immense pride."

Ixchop, who matched with UPenn, will be the first in her family to attend college. As an active scholar within the South El Monte High community, she is a proud participant in several AP courses, including AP Psychology and Art History, and has been preparing for her college journey through the school's Early College Academy Program. This school year, she also joined the school's construction pathway, in partnership with Los Angeles Trade-Tech College, where she was selected to lead her team as captain during the 2024 Design Build Competition.

"I was in shock when I received the acceptance letter," Ixchop said. "I immediately went to go tell my teachers, family, and friends, who have all had a positive impact on my academic journey. As a first-generation college student, it makes me nervous to leave home, but I am looking forward to my bright future ahead of me."



Huang, who matched with Washington University in St. Louis, is deeply committed to making a positive impact on the Asian American community and is an active member of Rosemead High's Chinese Culture and Ecology clubs. He plans to major in global affairs and political science in hopes of working with nonprofit organizations or continuing his academic endeavors in law school, in alignment with his aspirations to advocate for social change.

"It is a very exciting feeling for me and my family," Huang said. "Washington University is a beautiful campus full of kind people, and I'm looking forward to pursuing my interest and continuing my advocacy efforts upon attending college."

Tu has participated in several AP courses and Arroyo High's Dual Enrollment program with Rio Hondo College and UCLA. He holds leadership roles in several clubs, including Science Olympiad, and has a distinct passion for animals and biology. He plans to attend Pomona College in Claremont and major in

molecular biology or liberal arts.

"I could not believe it when I got that message on my screen, 'Congratulations, You Matched,'" Tu said. "It took a while for me to fully grasp the extent to which this will affect my future. I am thankful for all the amazing teachers, friends, faculty, and family who have helped me achieve my dreams."

Flores will attend USC in the fall, majoring in global health at USC's Keck School of Medicine. He aspires to become an anesthesiologist to continue his commitment to academic excellence and community service, exemplified by his involvement in Mountain View High's Associated Student Body, The Viking Regiment, and Key Club.

"I am very grateful to have been selected as a QuestBridge Scholar," Flores said. "Being a low-income student, it is truly a financial stress relief, especially with my goal of becoming a health professional. This scholarship ensures I can make my dreams a reality."

ASB Leadership Day Inspires Future Leaders



El Monte Union's Associated Student Body (ASB) members recently came together to celebrate leadership and community engagement at the District's annual ASB Leadership Day on April 19.

Held at Fernando R. Ledesma High School, this vibrant event provided an opportunity for students to hone their skills, share experiences, and inspire positive impacts in their schools and communities.

With the theme of "Cars," inspired by the Pixar film, the event aimed to

cultivate leadership skills, foster teamwork, and inspire innovation among the District's future leaders. The chosen theme added an element of excitement and creativity to the day's activities.

Throughout the event, students actively engaged in interactive workshops designed to enhance their leadership abilities. These workshops provided valuable insights and practical knowledge to help them grow as effective leaders.

Additionally, team-building activities were organized to promote collaboration and strengthen interpersonal relationships among the participants.

Student's engagement in this annual leadership day will undoubtedly contribute to their personal growth and the overall betterment of the El Monte Union District.

District Supports Child Abuse Prevention Month

El Monte Union demonstrated solidarity in April by standing united in support of Child Abuse Prevention Month. The district, including students, staff, and administration, wore blue attire to symbolize their commitment to creating a safe and nurturing environment for all children.

Child Abuse Prevention Month, observed annually in April, serves as a reminder to protect children from abuse and neglect. Its objective is to raise awareness about the signs of abuse, promote prevention strategies, and provide resources to assist affected individuals and communities.

El Monte Union actively participated in this nationwide initiative by organizing events and activities to educate and engage the community. Wearing blue attire served as a visual representation of their collective dedication to ensuring a secure environment for children to learn and

develop.

Additionally, El Monte Union collaborated with local organizations to promote child abuse prevention workshops and awareness campaigns. These initiatives aim to equip parents, educators, and community members with the knowledge and tools necessary to identify signs of abuse and develop a protective environment for children.



Health & Fitness

The League of American Wheelmen: A History of National Bike Month

Dance, Dance, Dance The Night Away...



May has become widely recognized as National Bike Month in the United States, with many events and activities taking place across the country to promote cycling as a form of transportation, exercise, and recreation. But how did May become the month for celebrating bicycles? Let's take a look at the history of May as Bike Month.

The origins of National Bike Month can be traced back to 1956, when the League of American Bicyclists (then known as the League of American Wheelmen) established National Bike Month.

The League was founded in 1880 and is the oldest bicycle advocacy organization in the United States. Its mission is to promote cycling for fun, fitness, and transportation and to advocate for better bike infrastructure and policies.

National Bike Month was established as a way to promote cycling and raise awareness about the benefits of cycling for individuals and communities.

The first National Bike Month was held in May of 1956 and featured events and activities across the country, including group rides, safety demonstrations, and bicycle races.

In the years that followed, National Bike Month continued to grow and gain popularity. The League of American Bicyclists began promoting National Bike to Work Week in 1973, encouraging commuters to try cycling to work instead of driving. National Bike to Work Day was added in 2000, and the week-long celebration has since been renamed National Bike Month.

May was chosen as the month for National Bike Month for several reasons. In many parts of the country, May marks the start of the cycling season, as warmer weather and longer days make it more comfortable to ride. May is also a popular month for bike races and events, including the Tour of California and the National Bike Challenge.

May also includes several important dates for cycling. May 3-9 is recognized as National Bike to School Week, encouraging students to bike to school and promoting the

benefits of active transportation. May 17-23 is recognized as National Bike to Work Week, culminating in National Bike to Work Day on May 21. These events are designed to encourage more people to try cycling as a way to get around, reduce traffic congestion, and improve public health.

National Bike Month has become a popular annual celebration across the United States, with events and activities taking place in cities and towns of all sizes. Many cities and towns organize group rides, safety classes, and bike festivals throughout the month. Local businesses and organizations often participate by hosting events or offering discounts to customers who arrive by bike.

In addition to promoting cycling as a fun and healthy activity, National Bike Month also serves as a way to advocate for better bike infrastructure and policies.

The League of American Bicyclists uses National Bike Month to promote its Bicycle Friendly America program, which recognizes communities, businesses, and universities that are working to make cycling safer and more accessible.

In conclusion, May has become the month for celebrating bicycles in the United States, thanks to the efforts of the League of American Bicyclists and the popularity of National Bike Month.

The month-long celebration serves as a way to promote cycling as a form of transportation, exercise, and recreation, and to advocate for better bike infrastructure and policies.

Whether you're an avid cyclist or a casual rider, National Bike Month is a great time to get out and explore your community on two wheels.

Dancing has been a part of human culture for centuries and is enjoyed by people of all ages. It not only brings joy and entertainment but also offers numerous health benefits. In this article, we will discuss the health benefits of dancing and why it is an excellent form of exercise.

Improved cardiovascular health

Dancing is a great aerobic exercise that gets your heart rate up and improves cardiovascular health. The repetitive movements involved in dancing increase blood circulation and oxygen flow throughout the body, which helps to reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke. Dancing also helps to lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, which are both major risk factors for heart disease.

Weight management

Dancing is a fun and effective way to burn calories and maintain a healthy weight. Dancing can burn anywhere from 200 to 600 calories per hour, depending on the intensity of the dance style. This makes it an excellent form of exercise for those looking to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight.

Increased flexibility and strength

Dancing involves a wide range of movements that can help to increase flexibility and improve muscle strength. The repetitive movements in dance help to tone and strengthen the muscles, particularly in the legs and core. The stretching involved in dance also helps to increase flexibility and range of motion, which can reduce the risk of injury and improve overall physical performance.

Improved balance and coordination

Dancing involves complex movements that require balance and coordination. Practicing dance can help to improve these skills, which can reduce the risk of falls and injuries. Improved balance and coordination can also enhance athletic performance and make daily activities easier.

Reduced stress and anxiety

Dancing is an excellent way to reduce stress and anxiety. The physical activity involved in dancing releases endorphins, which are natural mood boosters. Dancing also provides an opportunity to socialize and connect with others, which can help to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Improved cognitive function

Dancing is not only good for the body but also for the mind. Research has shown that dancing can improve cognitive function, including memory, attention, and decision-making skills. Dancing requires coordination, rhythm, and creativity, which can stimulate the brain and improve neural connections.

Boosted self-confidence

Dancing can also help to boost self-confidence. Learning a new dance style or mastering a challenging routine can provide a sense of accomplishment and boost self-esteem. Dancing also provides an opportunity to express oneself creatively and confidently, which can improve overall confidence in social situations.

Improved social skills

Dancing provides an excellent opportunity to socialize and meet new people. Participating in dance classes or events can help to improve social skills and build friendships. Dancing also requires communication and cooperation with dance partners, which can improve interpersonal skills and teamwork.

Whether you prefer to dance solo or with a partner, there is a dance style for everyone. So why not put on some music and start dancing your way to a healthier and happier life!

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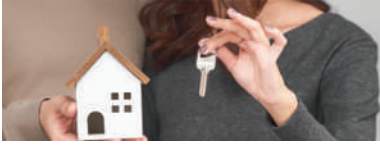
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Can Solar Panels Increase Your Home's Value?



As the world is moving towards more sustainable and eco-friendly living, the installation of solar panels has become a popular trend among homeowners. Apart from being an environmentally friendly source of energy, solar panels also offer numerous benefits to homeowners, including an increase in home value. In this article, we will explore how solar panels can increase a home's value and the factors that determine their impact.

Studies show that homes with solar panels sell for higher prices than those without them. According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), home buyers are willing to pay a premium of up to \$15,000 for a home with a solar panel system installed.

One of the primary reasons why solar panels increase a home's value is the savings they provide on utility bills. The average homeowner can save up to 50% on their electricity bills with a solar panel system.

This means that a home with a solar panel system is more affordable to maintain, making it more attractive to buyers.

A lower energy bill is also a significant selling point for potential buyers who are looking for a cost-effective and sustainable living solution.

Another factor that influences the value of homes with solar panels is the Solar Investment Tax Credit (ITC). This credit is available to homeowners who install solar panel systems and may cover some of the installation cost. Homeowners can claim this credit when they file their tax returns, and it can result in significant savings.

Solar panels also increase a home's value by improving its energy efficiency. An energy-efficient home is a valuable asset, and solar panels can help reduce a home's carbon footprint, making it more attractive to buyers who are environmentally conscious.

An energy-efficient home also translates to lower heating and

cooling costs, making it more affordable to maintain in the long run.

The location of the home is another factor that determines the impact of solar panels on its value. Homes located in areas with high electricity rates, such as California and New York, tend to benefit more from solar panels.

In these areas, the savings on energy bills can be significant, making solar panel systems a valuable addition to the home. On the other hand, homes located in areas with low electricity rates may not benefit as much from solar panels in terms of their impact on home value.

The age of the home is another factor that determines the impact of solar panels on its value. Homes that are newly constructed or recently renovated are more likely to benefit from solar panels.

This is because solar panel systems are easier to install during the construction phase or during a renovation. The installation of solar panels in older homes may require additional work, which can be expensive and reduce the impact on home value.

The size and quality of the solar panel system also play a role in determining its impact on home value. A larger and higher quality solar panel system will provide more energy savings and be more attractive to potential buyers. High-quality solar panels are also more durable and require less maintenance, making them a valuable investment in the long run.

The impact of solar panels on home value is influenced by several factors, including the location of the home, the age of the home, and the size and quality of the solar panel system. Homeowners who install solar panels before the Solar Investment Tax Credit expires in 2024 will benefit from the credit and increase the value of their homes.

Overall, solar panels are a valuable investment for homeowners who want to reduce their energy costs and increase the value of their homes

The Money Is In The Kitchen

When it comes to increasing the value of a home, there are several factors to consider, including the overall condition of the home, its location, and the current real estate market. While all rooms in a home can contribute to its value, some rooms are more likely to have a higher impact on a home's overall value than others.

Typically, the kitchen is considered the most important room in a home when it comes to adding value. A well-designed and updated kitchen can be a significant selling point for potential buyers, making it easier to sell the home for a higher price. This is because the kitchen is often considered the heart of the home and is where families spend a significant amount of time cooking, eating, and entertaining.

One of the main reasons why the kitchen is so valuable is that it is often one of the most expensive rooms to renovate. According to Remodeling Magazine's 2021 Cost vs. Value report, a minor kitchen remodel can cost around \$26,000, while a major kitchen remodel can cost upwards of \$75,000. However, these investments can pay off in the long run, as an updated kitchen can increase a home's value by up to 10%.

Another important room that can add

value to a home is the bathroom. Like the kitchen, the bathroom is a space where people spend a lot of time and is often a reflection of a home's overall condition. An updated bathroom with modern fixtures and amenities can be a significant selling point for potential buyers, increasing a home's overall value. Additionally, adding a bathroom or converting an existing space into a bathroom can also increase a home's value, especially in homes with only one or two bathrooms.

While all rooms in a home can contribute to its overall value, the kitchen is often considered the most important room when it comes to increasing a home's value. An updated kitchen with modern amenities can be a significant selling point for potential buyers, and investing in a kitchen remodel can pay off in the long run.



New Home Sales Surge Fueled by Increased Inventory



In a positive turn, new home sales in the United States rebounded in March following a brief slowdown in February. The number of newly constructed single-family houses sold increased by 8.8% month-over-month and surged by 8.3% year-over-year.

This surge in sales represents the strongest pace since September 2023. The rise in sales can be attributed to rising interest rates, which prompted more homebuyers to explore the new home market. Additionally, builders continued to offer price discounts, mortgage rate buy-downs, and other incentives to counter the declining affordability of housing.

Ample Inventory Fuels Sales

One contributing factor to the increase in new home sales is the ample inventory available in the market. The supply of new homes has continued to rise, reaching its highest level since February 2021.

In March, the count of housing units for sale climbed to 477,000, indicating a significant increase of 10.2% compared to the same month last year. This surge in inventory has led to a

supply of 8.3 months, surpassing the historical average of 5.9 months.

The availability of diverse options and increased choices for buyers has played a key role in the recent surge in sales.

Stabilizing Prices

While prices for new homes experienced a slight increase from February, they declined by 1.9% compared to the previous year. The national median price for new homes in March was recorded at \$430,700.

This decline in prices, coupled with the rise in inventory, offers homebuyers an opportunity to explore the market and find homes within their desired price range. The stabilization of prices, along with the additional incentives offered by builders, has created a favorable environment for prospective buyers.

The rebound in new home sales in March showcases the resilience of the real estate market. Rising interest rates, combined with ample inventory and attractive pricing, have driven the surge in sales of newly constructed homes.

Builders' incentives and discounts have provided further support to counter the challenges posed by declining housing affordability. As the market continues to offer a wide range of options and increased inventory, real estate professionals can capitalize on this momentum to assist homebuyers in finding their dream homes.



Eye On Finance

Be a Local Hero: The Benefits of Shopping Local for Small Businesses



Shopping locally means supporting businesses that are owned and operated within your community. There are several benefits of shopping local, including:

Boosting the local economy

When you shop locally, you are supporting small businesses in your community. These businesses, in turn, create jobs and pay taxes that help to boost the local economy. By supporting local businesses, you are helping to create a stronger and more resilient community.

Supporting your neighbors

Local businesses are often owned and operated by people who live in your community. When you shop locally, you are supporting your neighbors and helping to build a stronger sense of community. Local business owners are more likely to reinvest their profits back into the community, which can lead to a more vibrant and prosperous local economy.

Reducing your carbon footprint

Shopping locally can help to reduce your carbon footprint. When you buy products that are made locally, they don't need to be transported long distances, which reduces the amount of energy required for transportation. This, in turn, reduces the amount of greenhouse gases that are released into the atmosphere.

Finding unique products

Local businesses often offer unique products that you won't find at larger

chain stores. By shopping locally, you can discover new and interesting products that are not available elsewhere. This can add to the charm and character of your community and make it a more interesting place to live and shop.

Personalized service

Local businesses often provide a higher level of personalized service than larger chain stores. When you shop locally, you are more likely to be served by the owner or a knowledgeable employee who is passionate about the products they sell. This can lead to a more enjoyable and satisfying shopping experience.

Keeping money in the community

When you shop at a large chain store, the profits often leave the community and go to shareholders or corporate headquarters. However, when you shop locally, the money you spend stays in the community and is reinvested back into the local economy. This can help to create a more sustainable and self-sufficient community.

By supporting small businesses in your community, you can help to boost the local economy, support your neighbors, reduce your carbon footprint, find unique products, receive personalized service, and keep money in the community.

Next time you need to make a purchase, consider shopping locally and supporting the businesses that make your community unique and vibrant.

Advantages of Being Debt-Free: A Path to Financial Freedom



With each passing month, the amount saved can grow exponentially, creating a solid financial cushion and paving the way for future financial success.

Without the burden of debt, individuals have the freedom to make choices based on their own priorities and values. They can take advantage of opportunities that may arise, such as pursuing further education, starting a business, or traveling. Being debt-free offers the flexibility to adapt to life's changes and challenges without being tied down to monthly payments or the fear of falling deeper into debt.

In today's consumer-driven society, living without debt may seem like an unattainable dream. However, for those who embrace the principles of financial freedom, being debt-free is not only possible but also highly advantageous.

In this article, we will explore the numerous benefits of living a debt-free life and how it can pave the way to a secure and prosperous future.

One of the primary advantages of being debt-free is the unparalleled sense of financial peace of mind it brings. By eliminating the burden of debt, individuals can sleep better at night, free from the constant worry of meeting monthly payments and avoiding creditors.

This newfound peace allows them to focus on building a strong financial foundation and pursuing their long-term goals without the stress and anxiety that debt can bring.

Living debt-free opens up a world of possibilities for saving and investing. Instead of channeling income towards debt repayments, individuals can allocate those funds towards building an emergency fund, saving for retirement, or investing in assets that generate passive income.

Contrary to popular belief, being debt-free does not mean having a poor credit score. In fact, by responsibly managing finances and avoiding debt, individuals can build a solid credit history based on timely bill payments and responsible use of credit cards.

This can lead to better interest rates on loans, lower insurance premiums, and increased negotiating power when it comes to financial transactions.

The advantages of being debt-free are numerous and far-reaching. From the peace of mind it brings to the increased financial flexibility and future opportunities it offers, living without debt is a path to true financial freedom.

By embracing these principles and working towards a debt-free life, individuals can secure their financial well-being and enjoy the benefits for years to come.

Redesigning Your Interior: Budget-Friendly Tips



diligently, and provide them a new abode.

Paint is your best friend for budget-friendly interior design. For merely a few dollars per room, paint has the power to completely transform its appearance.

Remember, white is not the sole hue available to grace your walls.

Embrace the wonders of color experimentation. Freshly painted walls not only breathe new life into your room but also influence the aura of the furniture and decor that adorn it.

Resourcefulness is key. Seek inspiration from unconventional sources and explore thrift stores, flea markets, and online platforms for affordable treasures that exude character and charm.

Keep in mind, it is not the price tag that dictates the elegance of your interior, but the thought and creativity poured into its arrangement.

By employing a few modest yet impactful techniques, you can fashion an environment that reflects your unique personality and style, without breaking the bank.

In our hardworking lives, we cherish what we have, even if our decor may not be the finest. What many fail to realize is that there are ways to transform your interior on a limited budget.

With a touch of diligence and a bit of knowledge, you can take what you possess, add a dash of creativity, and witness an interior that mirrors the work of a skilled designer.

Begin by repurposing existing items within your home, saving a substantial sum of money in the process. In truth, you need not spend a dime. Analyze your belongings with fresh eyes, and you will discover an entirely new perspective on your possessions.

Familiarity breeds contempt. Take those items and reimagine their purpose. Relocate them, cleanse them



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Three Dot Lounge...

Cracker Barrel

by Mike McClure



...so the other day I saw on the news that there had been another attack on a bus driver. This has to stop. I admit that I have a bias. I have a close friend who drives for Metro so I worry every time one of the drivers is harmed.

What the news doesn't tell you is that many of these drivers grew up in the inner-city communities that they are now working in. Some have enough seniority to move to safer routes but have a sense of community pride that keeps them in the inner-city.

We can never underestimate the value of their example to the youngsters that are served by the bus transportation and of seeing drivers that look like them. Recently the drivers staged a sick-out protest and Supervisor Solis issued a statement about their problem, "The protesting operators are concerned about the increased number of assaults on our bus operators, a concern that I share. The safety of our employees and patrons is my top priority. That's why

the Metro Board recently passed an emergency declaration to expedite the purchasing and installation of new, full-length barricades on all 2,000+ buses. Safety is of utmost importance, and I will continue to call on Metro to prioritize strategies that bolster security."

Thank you Supervisor Solis, as I said, I have a bias. Not only do I have friends who work for Metro but El Monte is a transportation hub for this region. Many of our workers, our businesses, our families and children depend on Metro for safe and convenient transportation in and out of El Monte and South El Monte.

We support the Supervisor in her goal to find the resources necessary to keep the system safe.



Working OverTime

by Cynthia Huizar



So much to do...

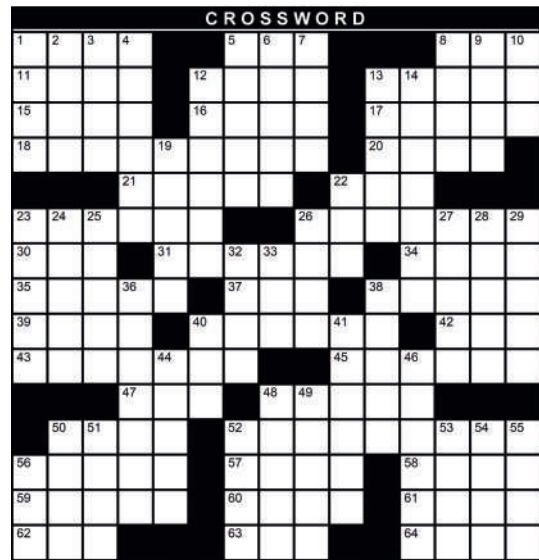
Mother's Day is this Sunday. This is the day set aside to celebrate our mothers and show our appreciation to them. I lost my mom 20 years ago to cancer and so did Profe's, but their memories are always with us. I have 4 kids, 2 boys and 2 girls, they are each a blessing and between them I have 17 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren (and still counting, I'm sure!). They live in different states so it is a challenge to see them all on a regular basis but we text and tik tok back and forth.

I already have had one party for Mother's Day. The building where Profe and I live held a Mother's Day Tea/Luncheon the other day. Jackie, the Manager and her assistant Linda are great in developing fun ideas and then Deondra the service coordinator and Pedro our maintenance guy, with Patrick, his helper. Implement, they are a well-honed team! We all had a great time, good food, some entertainment, some arts and crafts: thank you everyone for a great event.

Profe and I are going dancing Saturday night. Ray Carrion is having another one of his great shows that we look forward to. This time we are going to the City of Industry's VFW Post 1944 to see my favorite, Lily Lulu Cardona.

You might remember me talking about the nice shout out she gave us when she heard that we had finally got engaged, (Profe is trying to figure out if we can get her to perform at our wedding reception, don't tell anybody you might jinx it, lol). Ray and Thee Latin Allstars are performing along with Pepe Marquez and several other top groups singing and playing the old tunes.

Then off to Palm Desert, celebrating Mother's Day out by the pool. Not a bad week for an East L.A girl with 4 kids, 17 grandkids and 9 great grandkids. I didn't even have space to mention Thursday we are going to the County Fair, oh well next week!



THEME: THINGS WITH WINGS

ACROSS

- 1. Country alliance
- 5. Fish of liver oil fame
- 8. *Stinging pollinator
- 11. Prefix in levorotary
- 12. *Dark home to #33
- Down
- 13. Sudden growth
- 15. Like certain Steven
- 16. Symphony member
- 17. Type of feather
- 18. *Comfy seat (2 words)
- 20. Don't put these into one basket?

- 21. Full nelson is ___ wrestling ___
- 22. Santa ____, Orange County
- 23. Puts down
- 26. Et cetera (3 words)
- 30. Pen point
- 31. With signs of wear and tear
- 34. Beyond natural, in U.K.
- 35. Messes up
- 37. Chitchat
- 38. Willow twig
- 39. Evening purse
- 40. Win a race
- 42. Tucker of "Modern Family"
- 43. Army bathroom

- 45. Eucharist plates
- 47. Opposite of WSW
- 48. French composer Erik Alfred Leslie ____
- 50. "Back to the Future" antagonist
- 52. *Beatle with Wings
- 56. Poodle minus d
- 57. England's medieval royal house
- 58. Rabbit's cousin
- 59. Nymph chaser
- 60. Genealogist's creation
- 61. Blackhearted
- 62. George Gershwin's brother
- 63. "For ___ a jolly..."
- 64. It often goes with a rod
- DOWN**
- 1. What the Big Bad Wolf did
- 2. First name in jeans
- 3. "Pop it in the ___!"
- 4. Cuban drums
- 5. Secret clique
- 6. Roundish
- 7. Chronic wasting disease carrier
- 8. Plug for a barrel
- 9. *As opposed to urns
- 10. Pilot's estimate, acr.
- 12. Herb for treating menopausal symptoms
- 13. Shop till you drop, e.g.
- 14. *Flying stallion
- 19. "The Queen's Gambit" game
- 22. Take your pick
- 23. *Biblical Gabriel, e.g.
- 24. All plants and animals
- 25. Approximately
- 26. Shortened word, abbr.
- 27. Drink request
- 28. Home to largest mammal
- 29. Socially acceptable behaviors
- 32. Malaria symptom
- 33. *Nocturnal mosquito eater
- 36. *Lightning beetle
- 38. Recording studio sign
- 40. Next to nothing
- 41. Same as intake
- 44. Reason by deduction
- 46. Restraint
- 48. Academy Award for Best Original ____
- 49. Chunks of 43,560 square feet
- 50. Wild hog
- 51. Itty bit
- 52. Urban legend
- 53. Part of cathedral
- 54. Great Lake
- 55. Holler
- 56. Tire meas.

Riddles

What can you catch but not throw?

What do you get if you put a radio in the fridge?

What lies in bed, and stands in bed? First white then red. The plumper it gets the better the old women like it?

What has a head yet it never weeps, has a bed but never sleeps, can run but can not walk, and has a bank but not a penny to its name?

When young, I am sweet in the sun.
When middle-aged, I make you happy.
When old, I am valued more than ever.

					8	3		6
4	5		6	7		9		
1	8				3		4	
2	7	9						1
5						6	2	4
	4		2				6	3
		5		3	7		9	2
3		2	8					

THEATER
From Page 1

will help with anxiety.”
EMCSD has been recognized by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) as a Best Community for Music Education for three consecutive years.
Musical Theatre serves as a vibrant extension of these programs, offering students a platform to explore their creativity, find their inner voice, and gain valuable experience in production and performance. It’s not just about hitting the right notes or mastering intricate choreography; it’s about fostering confidence, teamwork, and a lifelong appreciation for the arts. Ms. Valdez added, “I have seen students’ self-esteem grow. They learn how to help each other and how to work together.”
Superintendent Dr. Maribel Garcia

emphasized the importance of providing lanes for art, “At EMCSD, we believe every child can find an outlet of expression within the arts and that is why we prioritize creating spaces for them to make that connection. By providing access to enriching musical and artistic opportunities through musical theatre and beyond, we are committed to nurturing the creative spirit within each student, empowering them to be confident in themselves, exploring their passions, and developing new ones.”
EMCSD has planned a showcase at El Monte High School Auditorium on Tuesday, May 14th, to bring together performances from all 14 schools, uniting students, staff, teachers, and families in a dazzling display of talent and camaraderie. The general public is invited to attend, and programming will begin at 5:30 p.m.

CHESS
From Page 1

playing chess is great for children as it improves visual memory, attention span and spatial-reasoning ability. In chess concentration and memory are key just like in school. Playing chess also enhances reading and math skills because it requires decoding, thinking, comprehension and analysis, and fosters logic, critical thinking and creativity.
According to Celina Garcia, Chess Competition Coordinator, there are many social and academic benefits to playing the game of chess.
“Playing chess is very beneficial for our students. From a social aspect there is etiquette around the game and players learn to respect their opponent by not rushing them. Patience is also a part of the game, by respecting the opponent’s thought process and decision-making,” said Garcia. “Chess also supports the development of higher-order thinking as you try to capture the King in as few moves as possible.” “It’s really fun to play chess. I’ve played for a year now, my dad taught me how to play the game and Mr. Owen has helped me to get better,” said Josue Romero, sixth grader from Parkview School.
For Sofia Torres, a fourth grader from Monte Vista School, learning to play chess has helped her math skills. “When you play chess you learn a lot and it has helped me with math. I just joined our club last month and Mr. Bowers is a good coach and teaches us how to play better,” she said.
“I find the game of chess amusing,”

said Thomas Tran, sixth grader from Payne School. “I’ve been playing for two years and I enjoy it very much. Our club meets two days a week after school and Mr. Campa makes it fun.”
Clenching top honors in the Level 3 division and the title of 2024 Chess Competition Champion was Ben Nguyen from Monte Vista School. Placing a close second was Josemanuel Tzarax also from Monte Vista.
The Level 2 winner was Kenneth Zeng from Payne School and finishing second was Anthony Alvarez from Monte Vista.
In the Level 1 Division first place went to Yalitzia Pineda and second place to Emberly Nguyen both from Monte Vista.
MVP awards were also presented to two students who started playing chess with little knowledge but have made amazing progress and growth and went to Andre Camacho from Parkview and Tracy Urena from Payne.
Each competitor was awarded a 2024 Chess Competition medal and a certificate, and the top finishers were awarded with championship level chess boards.
“Congratulations to our winners and to all of our participants and coaches,” said Garcia. “It was a great afternoon of competition and you all displayed incredible skills, great concentration and wonderful sportsmanship. We are very proud of your efforts and hope you continue to play chess and come back next year for our annual competition.”

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Puzzle Answers

9	2	7	1	4	8	3	5	6
4	5	3	6	7	2	9	1	8
1	8	6	9	5	3	2	4	7
2	7	9	3	6	4	5	8	1
8	6	4	5	2	1	7	3	9
5	3	1	7	8	9	6	2	4
7	4	8	2	9	5	1	6	3
6	1	5	4	3	7	8	9	2
3	9	2	8	1	6	4	7	5

B	L	O	C	C	O	D	B	E	E			
L	E	V	O	C	A	V	E	S	P	U	R	T
E	V	E	N	O	B	O	E	P	E	N	N	A
W	I	N	G	C	H	A	I	R	E	G	G	S
A	H	O	L	D	A	N	A					
A	B	A	S	E	S	A	N	D	S	O	O	N
N	I	B	S	H	A	B	B	Y	U	N	C	O
G	O	O	F	S	G	A	B	O	S	I	E	R
E	T	U	I	O	U	T	R	U	N	C	A	M
L	A	T	R	I	N	E	P	A	T	E	N	S
E	N	E	S	A	T	I	E					
B	I	F	F	M	C	C	A	R	T	N	E	Y
P	O	O	L	E	Y	O	R	K	H	A	R	E
S	A	T	Y	R	T	R	E	E	E	V	I	L
I	R	A		H	E	S		R	E	E	L	

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EL MONTE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Board of Education, at a meeting held on April 22, 2024 provisionally appointed Mr. Cesar Peralta to a vacancy on the Board.

The vacancy was created by the resignation of Mrs. Christina Flores on February 20, 2024. Unless a petition containing an appropriate number of signatures is received within 30 days of the date of the provisional appointment (April 22, 2024) the appointment shall become effective. EC Section §5092

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VALLEY FAMILY CENTER**

The San Gabriel Valley Family Center is a community based, not-for-profit organization serving the cities of El Monte, South El Monte and surrounding communities. It was founded in 1964 by members of the El Monte Civitan Club.

The Family Center conducts two food pantries, reaching over 350 local families each week. The Center fills an important role in helping to maintain community health by providing nutritious food to families in need.

The Center serves extremely low-income neighborhoods with high rates of poverty, unemployment and large number of elderly persons.

We invite you to visit our website for more information at www.sgvfamilycenter.org.



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