

# THE LITERARY ART ISSUE

## LOCAL ARTIST



Richard H. Grant | Signal Tribune

Micah Bournes poses for a portrait near colorfully painted walls in his childhood neighborhood of North Long Beach on July 14, 2023.

## A Long Beach artist's journey through music, poetry and self-discovery

Kristen Farrah Naeem

Staff Writer

Anyone who passed by Micah Bournes' childhood home, depending on the time and day, would hear either his mother singing gospel songs, his sisters playing Mariah Carrey, or his brothers bumping hip-hop.

"There was always music playing in my house," said Bournes, a poet and musician born and raised in Long Beach.

It's apparent that the diverse music influences Bournes grew up with had an impact on his creative career from the way his work jumps from genre to genre, releasing albums of folk, blues and hip-hop songs, as well as spoken-word poetry set to music.

At the same time his brothers were familiarizing him with rap and hip-hop, there were multiple Long Beach locals making

see MICAH BOURNES page 3

## PRINT MEDIA

## Long Beach's newest literary magazine proves creativity and inclusivity are King



Richard H. Grant | Signal Tribune

Marley Aikhionbare, editor for *The Kingfisher* magazine, looks at the July issue while sitting at the window of the penthouse of the Villa Riviera in Long Beach on Aug. 4, 2023.

see KINGFISHER MAGAZINE pages 6 & 7

## BOOKSTORE



Richard H. Grant | Signal Tribune

An exterior photo of Page Against the Machine bookstore on Fourth Street in Long Beach on Aug. 9, 2023.

## Page Against the Machine aims to write the next chapter of literary activism

Ryan Hardison

Design Editor

Upon entering Page Against the Machine, it's easy to get the impression that anyone who picks up a book is merely pages away from taking the next step in their desired form of activism.

With each piece of literature hand-selected by Chris Giaco, the owner of Retro Row's proudly progressive independent bookstore, creating this sense of literary optimism is the whole point.

Occupying the compact 400-square-foot space near the corner of Fourth Street and Temple Avenue are various collections of socially conscious books and zines organized into subjects ranging from race, activism and philosophy to music, gardening and medicine.

see PAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE page 5

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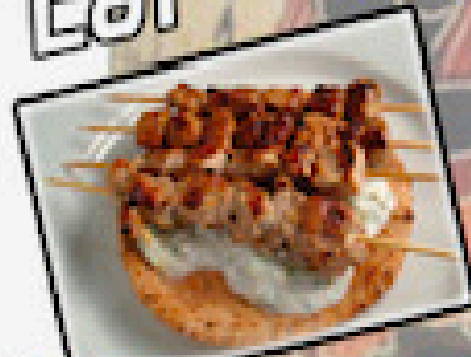


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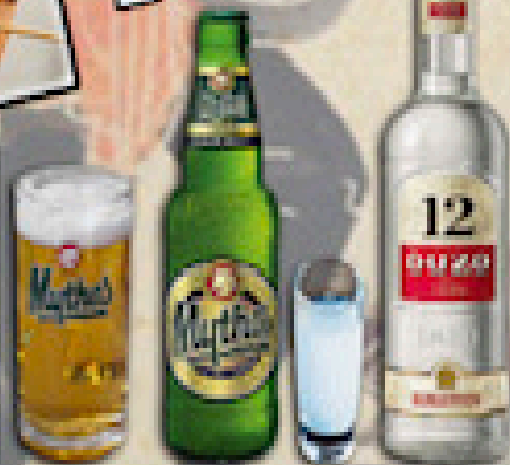
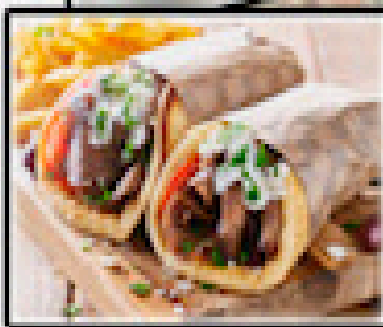
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## MICAH BOURNES

continued from page 1



Richard H. Grant | Signal Tribune

"I'm either gonna get good or I'm gonna cry and quit," Micah Bournes said of his time as a poet in Chicago.

a name for themselves in those genres. Bournes would rap along to their lyrics, his young voice becoming accustomed to the cadence of rap.

"Being from Long Beach, I had so much pride at the time of me growing up," Bournes said. "A lot of the most famous rappers in hip-hop were from our city, you know? That was dope, to see like Snoop Dogg, Nate Dogg, Warren G, all these cats, they're rapping about places that I'm familiar with."

Bournes' newest album, "De-Tox," is a message to his teenage self, and uses rap and hip-hop to unpack many of the toxic ideas he learned from those same genres as a boy. He said that although there is misogyny in many music genres, hip-hop was how he was personally introduced to unhealthy ideas about women and masculinity.

"Every single song on that album, my audience is teenage Micah, like 15-16 years old, walking around thinking crippling was cool," Bournes said. "Like, how did that kid think about women? How did that kid think about guns or what it meant to be strong, both physically and spiritually, what it means to be a leader? What does 16-year-old Micah think it means to be a man?"

While Bournes played around with writing love poems in high school, he didn't seriously start writing his own work until his freshman year of college in Chicago, when a friend interested in music production asked him to help make songs for practice. Bournes would rap over beats they downloaded from the internet, and his friend would polish and produce the final version.

“Being from Long Beach, I had so much pride at the time of me growing up.”

— Micah Bournes, Long Beach poet and musician

After showing their peers the finished product, the positive feedback they received encouraged Bournes to pursue music.

In his junior year of college, Bournes came back to visit his hometown. During his trip, a friend drove him out to LA to watch his first spoken word poetry open mic. Bournes was intrigued by the art form, and sought out similar events

once he was back in Chicago.

Bournes describes the Chicago spoken word scene as being more cutthroat than the local scene here, but it's what pushed him to grow as a poet.

"They booed you off stage if you was wack," Bournes said. "You've got to come with it. And so it was different from like, 'Oh, you know, like, thanks for being brave.' It's like if you wack, we're gonna pull you off stage, but we don't want you to stop. We want you to come back next week with a better poem. And so growing up as a poet in the Chicago scene, I feel really made me sharper, very quick, because it was like, 'Yo, I'm either gonna get good or I'm gonna cry and quit.'"

Bournes strives to live life at a slower speed while deeply observing his surroundings, which in turn inspires his music and poetry.

"I don't find anything more or less inspiring than anything else," Bournes said. "I've written poems about the most random things [...] a woman's foot, a bottle of shampoo. [...] My eyes are open and I'm listening. I'm looking, I ask a lot of questions. I'm a very curious person. And I just find the poetry all around me, I find the music all around me. As cliché as it is to say 'stop and smell the roses,' it's true."

His spoken word poem "Normal Hair" was inspired by a shower he took at a white friend's home, where he noticed a shampoo bottle that was labeled as being for "normal hair."

"My hair was normal to me. Like what does this even mean?" Bournes recalled thinking at the time. "I said, 'Oh, that's weird' and just took a shower and kept pushing, but I got out the shower, and I kept thinking about it. And I was like, 'With all the different hair types and textures in the world, how can any shampoo be labeled for normal hair? What does that even mean?'"

Bournes is working on a new book of poetry about love and grief titled "Stay." He also provides guidance for others looking to create their own poetry and music, either online or in-person, for \$60 an hour.

To keep up with Micah Bournes, follow him on Instagram @micahbournes, or visit his website micahbournes.com. To contact him, email contact@micahbournes.com.

"My hope is that I am courageous enough to create something honest," Bournes said. "And I believe no matter what I create, some people will love it. Some people will hate it. Some people will be indifferent, shoulder shrug. Some people will be challenged by it. Some people will be healed from it."

## BOOK CLUB

# Grab your favorite book and join Long Beach's quietest club

Samantha Diaz

Managing Editor

Some people would rather curl up with a good book than go out and socialize with friends. At Long Beach's Silent Book Club, they can now do both.

After a three-year hiatus from meeting in person, the Silent Book Club Long Beach has begun gathering at local parks for what's guaranteed to be Long Beach's quietest social club.

Residents bring whatever book they're currently reading, quickly introduce themselves and their accompanied novel—this part is optional, of course—then sit amongst each other in a comforting silence as they lose themselves in their books for an introvert's happy hour.

The club isn't for everyone, Katy Kilroy admits. She's been running the club alongside her friend Kejera Jolly for the past month.

"A lot of people I try to invite, they're either really into it or they think it's weird," Kilroy said, joking that her mom was one of the people who questioned the purpose of such a club.

Silent Book Clubs have been quietly popping up all over the world since two friends had the idea in San Francisco in 2012. According to the national website, book lovers have established over 300 chapters worldwide.

Kilroy and Jolly work together

at an emergency animal hospital, talking about whatever book is gripping their attention at the moment in between saving critter's lives. The two craved a community of similar-minded people without the commitment of an assigned book.

"It's just being able to go out and you are still meeting people who are introverted like you and have the same personality type in one aspect and still being able to enjoy something together," Kilroy said.

While traditional book clubs require everyone to read the same book following the same timeframe, Silent Book Club simply provides a friendly space to read whatever you choose.

Kilroy and Jolly had only attended one meeting when the former head of the club announced she was leaving and asked if anyone wanted to take over.

Although Kilroy considers herself an introvert, she and Jolly happily volunteered for the position.

Since taking over, the two friends have tried to engage the community with social media polls, book recommendations and are planning to send out a survey asking people what days and times best work for them to meet up.

It's a no-judgment environment, Kilroy said. People are welcome to bring audiobooks, paperback novels, Kindles or whatever form of reading they choose. The out-



Richard H. Grant | Signal Tribune

A man looks through the selection of fiction books inside of the Michelle Obama Neighborhood Library in North Long Beach on Jan. 4, 2022.

door space also gives residents the choice to sit near their fellow bibliophiles or spread out as they see fit.

The club members tend to socialize for a few minutes afterwards, but Kilroy said there's no judgment if someone packs up their things and leaves once the hour is up.

"Maybe some people don't go to certain things because of the social pressure ... the whole point is that everybody is coming into it with that attitude," Kilroy said.

Silent Book Club Long Beach's next meeting will be on Saturday, Aug. 19 at Los Altos Park from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Follow @silentbookclub\_longbeach on Instagram for updates.

To learn how to start a Silent Book Club chapter in a different city, visit the national chapter website.

## FEATURE

# Recommendations, advice and personal growth through writing with Long Beach's youth poet laureate

Samantha Diaz

Managing Editor

Long Beach's youth poet laureate has a critical piece of advice for aspiring writers and their ambitious anecdotes.

"If they're bad, keep going," says Claire Beeli, who has been honing new skills herself in the past two months since taking on her new role as a young role model for writers.

When Beeli recited one of her poems in early June—which earned her the title of Long Beach's first-ever youth poet laureate—it was her first time ever performing one of her pieces. Now, she says it's her favorite part of the role.

"I just love being able to meet new people, especially people who are involved in the Long Beach literary community and poetry scene," Beeli said. "It's really gratifying to be able to connect with so many different people who are also talented and to share my work with the world which is really important to me."

Since becoming the youth poet laureate, the 17-year-old Wilson High School incoming senior has read her work at a poetry book debut at Wrigley Coffee and at an event with the Long Beach Library Foundation.

She said she's enjoying learning the cadences and rhythms of performing poetry and turning it "into



Image Courtesy of Claire Beeli

Claire Beeli, Long Beach's youth poet laureate, poses in a Williams College sweatshirt while visiting her sister in Massachusetts.

a kind of music."

Beeli and the four youth poet ambassadors have been working throughout the summer to plan workshops for the upcoming year that will focus on encouraging youth to express themselves through literary art as well as creating community initiatives.

The workshops will take place at a handful of library branches and cover a wide variety of topics and niches within poetry. The young poets are also teaming up with CityHeART's magazine "Arts from Ashes" for a series of youth workshops.

Beeli said she believes that even though writing poetry isn't a type of art form that will guarantee someone a lucrative career, the connection to self and community makes it worthwhile.

"The reason anyone does poetry

isn't for money, it's for art, it's for making something beautiful," Beeli said. "It's for expressing something that you feel you might not be alone in, that other people can relate to."

Beeli has been writing for as long as she can remember, but she says her catalog grew immensely during the COVID-19 pandemic when she "had nothing better to do but sit around and type away."

From these experiences, she says her other piece of advice for writers is to "buy a really cheap notebook and write all your poems in it."

"It's not a waste of time, I promise. And as you keep reading and keep writing, you're going to get better," Beeli said. "You're going to get better at expressing your ideas and creating art. There's no way around it."

Beeli said her dream one day is to publish a novel. In the meantime, she's helping to run a literary magazine at Wilson High School titled "La Fuente." The magazine is taking submissions from youth from all over LBUSD. More details can be found on the magazine's Instagram page @lafuentemagazine.

**Claire Beeli's poet recommendations for aspiring writers:**

James Wright  
E. E. Cummings  
Ocean Vuong  
Ada Limón  
Richard Siken

# EYE ON CRIME

## CRIMES REPORTED BY THE SIGNAL HILL POLICE

### Wednesday, August 9

2:32 p.m., Criminal threats, 2200 block Walnut Ave.  
 3:20 p.m., Injury traffic collision, E. Spring St./Walnut Ave.  
 5:17 p.m., Auto burglary, E. 28th St. east of Atlantic Ave.  
 7:41 p.m., Auto burglary, 3100 block California Ave.  
 11:59 p.m., DUI, Lakewood Blvd./E. Willow St. (suspect arrested)

### Thursday, August 10

1:04 a.m., Stolen vehicle – recovered, Molino Ave./Panorama Dr.  
 6:07 a.m., Grand theft – motor vehicle, 2600 block Skyline Dr.  
 6:31 a.m., Injury hit and run, Cherry Ave./Crescent Heights  
 6:56 a.m., Elder abuse, 2000 block E. 21st St.  
 10:00 a.m., Robbery, 2800 block Cherry Ave.  
 11:46 a.m., Forgery, 2500 block E. 28th St.

### Friday, August 11

5:18 a.m., Appropriate lost property; possessing controlled substance; 2 felony warrants, 3300 block Falcon Ave. (suspect arrested)  
 11:31 a.m., Forgery, 2200 block Molino Ave.  
 11:46 a.m., Injury traffic collision, E. PCH/Coronado Ave.  
 8:48 p.m., Burglary, 3200 block Cerritos Ave.

### Saturday, August 12

### Sunday, August 13

9:56 a.m., Injury traffic collision, E. Willow St./California Ave.  
 3:46 p.m., Injury traffic collision, E. Willow St./Orange Ave.  
 5:51 p.m., Shoplifting; possessing controlled substance; appropriate lost property, 900 block E. 33rd St. (suspect arrested)

### Monday, August 14

9:57 a.m., Auto burglary, 2400 block Cherry Ave.  
 12:13 p.m., Grand theft – motor vehicle, 2100 block Gundry Ave.  
 5:48 p.m., Injury traffic collision, E. Willow St./Orange Ave.

### Tuesday, August 15

2:27 p.m., Elder abuse, 2000 block Stanley Pl  
 4:25 p.m., Assault with a deadly weapon, Walnut Ave./E. 33rd St.  
 5:55 p.m., Grand theft, 900 block E. 33rd St.  
 9:53 p.m., Felony spousal abuse, 1900 block Dawson Ave.  
 10:18 p.m., Appropriate lost property; Fake ID to Police Officer; possessing paraphernalia, California Ave./E. Burnett St. (suspect arrested)

*LBPD reporting area is too extensive to report here, but you can go to their website: [longbeach.gov/police](http://longbeach.gov/police). Once there, click on Crime Info, then Crime Incident Mapping Application. Click on Launch Crime Incident Mapping Application & type in an address.*

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Image Courtesy of Kat Wilcox on Pexels.com

# High school football coach arrested on child pornography charges

## City News Service

*Southern California Local News*

A former assistant football coach and substitute teacher was arrested on child pornography and sexual contact with a minor charges, police said Tuesday.

David Vernon Price Jr. was arrested Saturday on suspicion of contact with a minor for sexual misconduct, distribution or showing pornography to a minor, and possession of child pornography, police said. His bail was set at \$45,000.

Price was employed at schools in the Long Beach and Los Angeles areas as a substitute teacher and assistant football coach. Detectives did not disclose the schools where Prince worked or when he was employed.

Price was an assistant football coach at Poly High School and worked as a substitute teacher at Poly and Hoover Middle School, according to the *Long Beach Post*.

Investigators from the Los Angeles Police Department's Juvenile Division's Internet Crimes Against Children Unit identified one minor victim in Los Angeles. It is believed that there are additional victims,

police said. Price is believed to target girls.

Price was described as a 6-foot-tall Black man weighing 228 pounds with black hair and brown eyes.

Anyone with information that could lead to the identification of additional victims or witnesses was asked to call the LAPD's Juvenile Division's Internet Crimes Against Children Unit at 562-624-4027. During non-business hours or weekends, calls should be made to 877-527-3247.

Tipsters who prefer to remain anonymous can call Crime Stoppers at 800-222-8477.

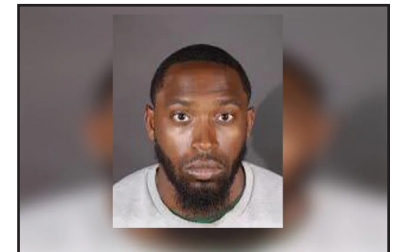


Image Courtesy of LAPD  
 Former Poly High School assistant football coach and substitute teacher David Vernon Price Jr. was arrested on Aug. 14, 2023.

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**PAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE**

continued from page 1

Customers won't find murder mysteries or romance novels on the shelves, nor cookbooks or travel guides, but rather titles such as "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," "The Anti-Fascist Handbook" and "The Communist Manifesto." It is an archive for activist reading material, with no Colleen Hoover to be seen.

The shop's playlist of rebellious tunes like "Get Together" by the Youngbloods, "Everyday People" by Sly and the Family Stone provide an accompanying soundtrack. Of course, songs by Los Angeles rap rock band Rage Against the Machine (RATM) make appearances as the fitting inspiration for the name of the store.

On the surface, the store's name could solely be perceived as a creative play on words inspired by RATM, but it also serves as a dedicated endorsement of the band's leftist musical message. With his store, Giaco's goal was to craft the literary version of their music—educational, political and revolutionary—all while creating a crucial niche.

"I think you just have to find a niche to distinguish yourself from that, and in a larger context it really comes to represent more than just a store itself," Giaco said. "It's the kind of neighborhoods you want to have and the local economy that you want to generate by supporting local businesses."

Previously, Giaco owned a vintage store called In Retrospect on Fourth Street. After it closed in 2018, the perfect mix of idea, opportunity and a fiery political climate led to the creation of Page Against the Machine a year later.

The store was conceived as a space to represent resistance and advocate for a different, more sustainable way of life. Though it can be challenging operating an independent store, the state of the world—specifically the intersection of socio-political issues in his everyday life—is what makes Giaco continue his mission.

"The crazier things get in the world of politics and our culture and the social fabric, the more resolve I have to keep the store going," Giaco said.

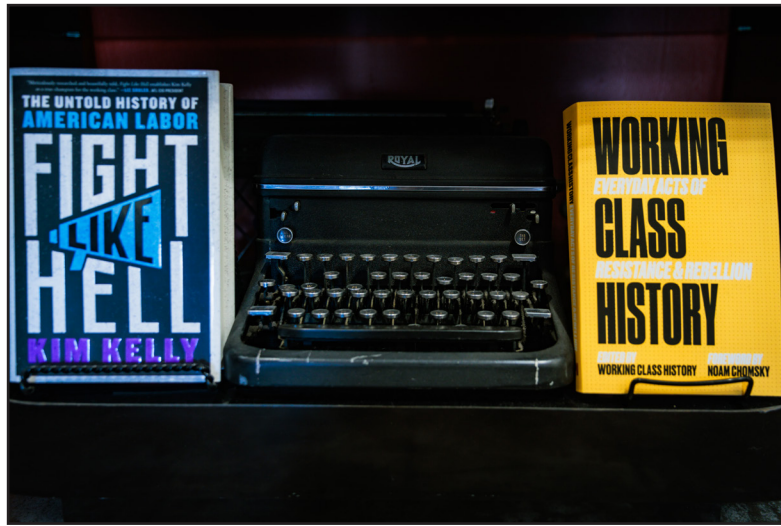
Within the first two years of opening, there was the 2020 presidential election, the murder of George Floyd and the subsequent resurgent spotlight of the Black Lives Matter movement, as well as the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Social, political and environmental injustices have inspired more young people to take action and embrace revolutionary reading, but they may not know where to start.

For younger people, Giaco thinks this is a critical time to find new and creative ways to organize. Emerging problems like artificial intelligence and climate change are hard to fully grasp through a single news story, and with literature he says there is an infinite number of themes, many of which can help people deal with the present.

"There's so many things going on, not just politics but whether you're talking about technology or the environment, people are getting overwhelmed," Giaco said. "I think coming in and maybe picking up a book on whatever subject that interests you or you want to learn more about is a good first step to wrapping your head around things ... or finding your place in all of this chaos."

Though the mission of the bookstore may come off as urgent, one of the many things Giaco enjoys about



Richard H. Grant | Signal Tribune

A typewriter is wedged between two books about the labor movement inside Page Against the Machine on Aug. 9, 2023.

the store is that he gets to speak with residents and have respectful conversations about political differences. He hosts reading groups and author events at the store to facilitate conversation and further the sense of community, and has received several book recommendations from customers.

“The crazier things get in the world of politics and our culture and the social fabric, the more resolve I have to keep the store going.”

– Chris Giaco, Page Against the Machine owner

With the intention of providing a “snapshot” of how people are feeling in the moment, the front of the store displays books that cover the most relevant subject matter, including but not limited to race, gender studies and reproductive rights.

For those who may not know where to start when it comes to activism, the store carries books on general forms of activism, including guides on how to organize and the history of significant social movements.

Giaco carries even more books on the website to give a clear view of the store's message for those unfamiliar. He'll always have well-known titles in stock—think “The

New Jim Crow” by Michelle Alexander or “Freedom is a Constant Struggle” by Angela Davis—but he adores finding hidden gems as well.

“Books and music are very similar. There's all these lost nuggets out there that people never heard of for one reason or another ... but they're no less deserving,” Giaco said.

Every month, Giaco compiles a monthly top five best sellers list which he says is oftentimes fairly representative of the most pertinent issues of the time. He also says it's indicative of books that have been challenged, as they often become more popular due to sustained public interest when access gets taken away. Page Against the Machine's July best sellers list is as follows:

1. “All About Love” - Bell Hooks
  2. “Page Boy” - Elliot Page
  3. “We the Elites: Why the U.S. Constitution Serves the Few” - Robert Ovetz
  4. “Parable of the Sower” - Octavia Butler
  5. “Gender Queer” - Maia Kobabe
- “I always love it when the list is almost like a perfect reflection of the store and therefore what people are interested in and what's going on in the air that people want to read about and learn about,” Giaco said.

Nowadays, social media is the go-to tool for information, one that has driven younger people to come into the store and ask about books that they've seen their favorite celebrity or influencer talk about. Accordingly, libraries and bookstores have adapted to the social media age,



Richard H. Grant | Signal Tribune

Chris Giaco, self-described instigator and owner of Page Against the Machine bookstore, jokes with a customer from behind the register on Aug. 9, 2023. The bookstore focuses on books about activism and organizing, social and political movements, and socially-conscious living and sustainability.

simultaneously keeping their roots while keeping up with the evolution of youth interest by adding zines and making TikTok accounts.

Though social media has its own sets of problems when it comes to verifying facts and squashing disinformation, Giaco thinks there is significant value in people learning about activist literature through TikTok or Instagram. He says as long as the message of the written word gets people motivated to take the next step, it doesn't matter

where the inspiration comes from.

“I think there's room for both. I think whatever gets someone's curiosity peaked to explore more, whether it's a TikTok video or an Instagram post,” Giaco said.

Page Against the Machine is located at 2714 E. Fourth St and is open Tuesday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. For information regarding announcements or upcoming events at the store visit their Instagram.

## FREE BACKPACK GIVE AWAY

**Saturday, August 19, 2023**  
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**KINGFISHER MAGAZINE**

continued from page 1

**Samantha Diaz**  
Managing Editor

Within the pages of Long Beach's newest literary magazine are stories of self-identity, mental health, cowboys and aliens. Most importantly, the pages have created a home for aspiring writers in typically marginalized groups.

Particularly for people of color and those in the disabled community, the magazine represents a place where writers who are often overlooked by traditional entities can tell their stories.

Marley Aikhionbare released the first edition of *The Kingfisher* on July 29 for all the undiscovered writers and wild animals. The heartbeat of the magazine is that of nature, primal instincts and child-like discovery.

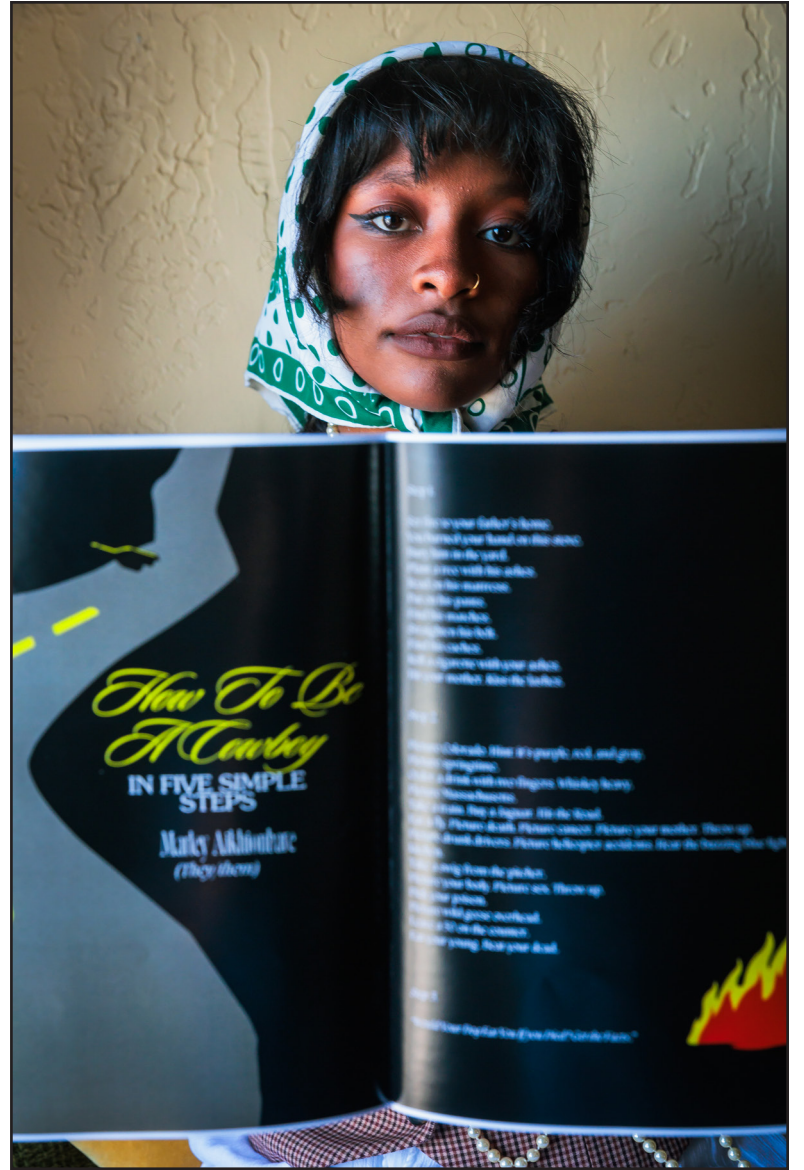
"I think it just became so important to me to highlight marginalized and specifically disabled voices in writing, because that's one thing you can really turn to," Aikhionbare said.

While growing up with autism and being nonverbal, Aikhionbare said they found it difficult to connect with people.

They found solace and connection in their writing, and hasn't stopped crafting since. Aikhionbare grew "exhausted" by the endless process of sending their writing out into the void and had the idea to create a magazine with friends where they can write whatever they desire.

"I was like, 'Oh, shit,'" said Rowan Lester, fellow editor, recalling when Aikhionbare told her the idea for the magazine. "I was obviously thrilled because I don't want to miss out. When somebody offers you a great opportunity, and that person is your friend, obviously you're gonna take it."

The two friends met while attending Wilson High School in Long Beach and connected through writing and a general desire to craft



Richard H. Grant | Signal Tribune

(Left) Two copies of *The Kingfisher* magazine rest on a desk inside the penthouse of the Villa Riviera building in Long Beach on Aug. 4, 2023. (Right) Marley Aikhionbare, editor for *The Kingfisher* magazine, holds open a page of the magazine that has one of their stories on it on Aug. 4, 2023.

and share creation with the world.

"Our focus is on disability in all of its forms: physical, mental, and the seemingly endless ways the structure of our society disables BI-POC, Queer, Trans, elderly people and many others," read a statement on *The Kingfisher's* Substack.

At 18 pages, three poems, one fictional short story, plenty of photos and original art designs, the

magazine immerses readers into a fictional world full of vulnerability and creativity: Camp Kingfisher.

The cover of the magazine is a striking mountain landscape surrounded with green and orange pine trees with a grainy, weathered look and a vintage vibrant yellow font to match. Keeping in line with its ties to nature, the pages are plastered with mossy greens, bright yellow

and images of landscapes.

Aikhionbare and fellow editor Lester are longtime fans of the cult classic TV show "Twin Peaks." They wanted to bring out their favorite themes of the show—an air of mystery, natural surroundings and a '90s-inspired palette—to their magazine.

The poem Aikhionbare wrote for the first issue is titled "How to be

a cowboy in five simple steps," and delves into ideas of self-identity, conformity and masculinity.

As a non-binary person, Aikhionbare said they've always felt connected to the cowboy trope growing up, and the freedom that comes with the lifestyle.

"It touches a lot on what it means to be a woman and what it meant

CONTINUES ON PAGE 7



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The Kingfisher magazine editors Marley Aikhionbare and Rowan Lester look over some of the pages from their July issue on Aug. 4, 2023.



Richard H. Grant | Signal Tribune

Marley Aikhionbare, editor for The Kingfisher magazine, poses for a photo with the magazine while sitting in an armchair inside the penthouse of the Villa Riviera building in Long Beach on Aug. 4, 2023.

to me to be a little girl and how restrictive it can be,” Aikhionbare said. “I think a huge part of the reason why I feel a disconnect from she/her pronouns is because I have such a desire to—not necessarily be a man, but feel that same sort of ... relaxation being out in the world, like not having to worry about as much as I do having to present as a woman.”

The name of the magazine is from “The Kingfisher” poem by Mary Oliver, one of Aikhionbare’s favorite pieces of literature.

“It’s just a reminder that we

weren’t made to worry about the things that we do on a day-to-day basis, and it’s sort of a reminder to go back to basics when you need to and be an animal,” Aikhionbare said. “Mary Oliver talks about how perfect animals are, they don’t strive for perfection, but just the way that they do things innately is perfect and humans should be that way. We shouldn’t worry about being perfect all the time.”

With this sentiment in mind, Aikhionbare quickly put together a group of friends, a theme for the issue, a social media page and a

Substack page for The Kingfisher in a process they called “low stakes.”

The Kingfisher Instagram page connects readers to multiple ways to purchase the magazine and support the mission. Through Aikhionbare’s website, a physical copy of the magazine can be purchased for \$25 and a digital version can be downloaded for \$10.

If residents visit The Kingfisher Substack page, they can subscribe to a monthly \$5 subscription for access to the digital magazine. Subscriptions range from \$5 to \$100 annually, offering readers more

ways to support.

Aikhionbare said once the magazine begins profiting, their goal is to give 30% of the proceeds to an organization that helps connect disabled people to vital resources and eventually, they wish to start a mutual aid fund.

Four people total contributed to the first edition, and Aikhionbare

said they’re ready to open submissions to the public. Writers don’t need to be local to the Long Beach area.

Those interested in submitting their writing to The Kingfisher can message the Instagram page or email kingfishermag@gmail.com. Soon a Google form will be created for people who wish to become in-

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# AROUND TOWN

A WEEKLY LIST OF THINGS TO DO IN LONG BEACH AND SIGNAL HILL



Richard H. Grant | Signal Tribune

The lights of a Deadpool-themed pinball machine light up a competitor's face while they concentrate on the ball at the Long Beach Pinball League meet-up held at Long Beach Beer Lab on Feb. 28, 2023.

**B**ook lovers can bring their children to Plantitas Saturday morning for a plant workshop and storytime, meet local authors at KUBO LB Sunday morning or bring their babies to Signal Hill Public Library Wednesday morning for stories and play.

Residents can watch a rare film screening of an Italian film at the Art Theatre of Long Beach Friday night, catch a family-friendly screening of "High School Musical" at Signal Hill Park Saturday night and have three chances to watch "The Super Mario Bros. Movie" at various parks throughout the week.

For a more musical week, residents can jam out to '80s music Friday night at LBCC, celebrate the annual Uptown Jazz Festival Saturday at Houghton Park, enjoy a youth-led summer recital at Nautilus Shell Sunday night or sing karaoke with friends at Dutch's Brewhouse Wednesday night.

## 18 FRIDAY

### CROCHET CLUB

11 a.m. to noon. The public is invited to the Signal Hill Public Library (1800 E Hill St.) to crochet together for an hour. This event is appropriate for all skill levels. For more information, call (562) 989-7323. Free.

### COMMUNITY CONCERT

6 p.m. Residents can enjoy live music from '80s cover band Knyght Ryder at Long Beach City College (4901 E. Carson St.). Food trucks, a beer garden and family-friendly games will be present. Free.

### A HOT PAWGUST NIGHT

6:30 p.m. Friends of Long Beach Animals will be hosting this benefit event at the Expo Arts (4321 Atlantic Ave.) to raise money for local animals in need. The event will feature food, cocktails, dancing, raffle prizes and more. Tickets can be purchased for \$25 on Ticketstripe.

### MOVIE IN THE PARK

8 p.m. to 10 p.m. The public is invited to an outdoor screening of the PG-13 movie "High School Musical" at Houghton Park (6301 Myrtle Ave.). Attendees are encouraged to bring a lawn chair, blanket and picnic food. The movie will begin at dusk. Free.

### HORROR FILM

10 p.m. Independent horror film fans can watch the Italian giallo hidden gem film "A Secret Dario Argento" in its original format of 16mm at The Art Theatre of Long Beach (2025 E. Fourth St.). Tickets are \$13.50 and can be purchased online.

## 19 SATURDAY

### BIKE LANE CLEAN UP

10 a.m. to noon. Volunteers are needed to help clean debris and litter from local bike lanes. Volunteers will meet at Hot Java (2101 E Broadway). A dumpster will be available near the intersection of Broadway and Gaviota. Free.

### PLAYGROUND GRAND OPENING

11 a.m. The public is invited to the grand opening ceremony for the newly rebuilt playground at Admiral Kidd Park (2125 Santa Fe Ave.). Free.

### INSECTS ROCK

Noon to 1 p.m. A hands-on presentation at the Signal Hill Public Library (1800 E Hill St.) will teach children about different insects, as well as their life-cycles, anatomy and adaptations. Free.

### OPENING RECEPTION

1 p.m. to 4 p.m. The Long Beach Creative Group will be hosting an opening reception for a group art exhibition at the Rod Briggs Gallery (2221 E Broadway). Free.

### UPTOWN JAZZ FESTIVAL

2 p.m. to 7 p.m. The 12th annual Uptown Jazz Festival will take place at Houghton Park (6301 Myrtle Ave.) featuring a lineup of jazz musicians, a beer and food garden, a Kids Zone and a variety of community vendors. Free.

### MOVIE IN THE PARK

8 p.m. to 10 p.m. The public is invited to an outdoor screening of "High School Musical" at (Signal Hill Park, 1780 E. Hill St.). Attendees are encouraged to bring a lawn chair, blanket and picnic food. The movie will begin at dusk. Free.

## 20 SUNDAY

### KIDICAL BIKE RIDE

11 a.m. Families can join this community bike ride around the Bixby Knolls neighborhood beginning at Pixie Toys (3914 Atlantic Ave.). Free.

### ISRAEL FESTIVAL

11 a.m. to 3 p.m. A festival celebrating Israel's 75th anniversary will be held at the Alpert Jewish Community Center (3801 E. Willow St.). Free.

### BOOK READINGS

11 a.m. Authors Lily Chu of "The Comeback" and Farah Neron of "Jana Goes Wild" will be reading parts of their novels at KUBO LB (3976 Atlantic Ave.). Free.

### PINBALL PARTY

1 p.m. The Long Beach Pinball League will celebrate the launch of a "Scooby Doo" pinball machine at Long Beach Beer Lab (518 W Willow St.) with a launch party and competition. The party will include two divisions of group play, giveaways, prizes and of course, homemade pizza and craft beer. Players must pay a \$10 entry fee and bring enough coins to play.

### SUMMER RECITAL

3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Youth dancers with the nonprofit WeBreak will be performing their summer recital at the Nautilus Shell (95 S Pine Ave.). Free to watch.

## 21 MONDAY

### CONCERTS IN THE PARK(ING LOT)

6:30 p.m. The parking lot in front of Howard CDM (3737 Long Beach Blvd.) will be transformed into a dance floor as Western Standard Time Ska Orchestra serenades families, friends and dogs. Free.

### MOVIE IN THE PARK

8 p.m. to 10 p.m. The public is invited to an outdoor screening of the PG film "The Super Mario Bros. Movie" at College Estates Park (808 Stevely Ave.). Attendees are encouraged to bring a lawn chair, blanket and picnic food. The movie will begin at dusk. Free.

## 22 TUESDAY

### BABYTIME

11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Parents and caregivers are invited to bring babies between the ages of 6 to 18 months to enjoy fingerplays, books and interactive songs at the Billie Jean King Main Library (200 W. Broadway). Free.

### MOVIE IN THE PARK

8 p.m. to 10 p.m. The public is invited to an outdoor screening of the PG film "The Super Mario Bros. Movie" at Bixby Park (130 Cherry Ave.). Attendees are encouraged to bring a lawn chair, blanket and picnic food. The movie will begin at dusk. Free.

## 23 WEDNESDAY

### KARAOKE

6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Residents are invited to this weekly karaoke gathering at Dutch's Brewhouse (4244 Atlantic Ave.) to belt their heart out to classic tunes. Free.

### MOVIE IN THE PARK

8 p.m. to 10 p.m. The public is invited to an outdoor screening of the PG film "The Super Mario Bros. Movie" at Silverado Park (1545 W. 31st St.). Attendees are encouraged to bring a lawn chair, blanket and picnic food. The movie will begin at dusk. Free.

## 24 THURSDAY

### MOVE IN THE PARK

8 p.m. to 10 p.m. The public is invited to an outdoor screening of the PG-13 movie "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" at Silverado Park (1545 W. 31st St.). Attendees are encouraged to bring a lawn chair, blanket and picnic food. The movie will begin at dusk. Free.

### IS THAT IT?

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A WEEKLY LIST OF EVENTS IN  
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# Short Stories

## "Houseplants (Love Spores)"

by *Eric Farrell* 

Kathy Harrison bursts through the Green Lovelies entrance. Cocobolo beads rattle against the glass door. The steely-eyed clerk is dressed head-to-toe in selvedge denim. She stares Kathy down, inhaling imperceptibly. She knows what's coming. The woman's going to start yelling.

"Everyone just stop!" Kathy hollers once fully inside the plant shop's showroom floor. A few Green Lovelies shoppers freeze in their tracks. The clerk eyes her from beyond the small forest of hanging macramé plants in the middle of the retail space. She's got everyone's attention. Part one of her mission successful. Now for part two...

"Citizens of Long Beach, I am warning you as a fellow neighbor, not to buy any of these plants! None of the succulents! None of the pothos! No tropical dwarfs at all! Because you know why!?"

The full crazy of Kathy has come out. But perhaps she may be sincere in her point.

The clerk leers on, waiting for this act of protest to play out. If it's not Kathy, it's Kandace, or Khloe. She's been in this rodeo before.

"These plants will brainwash you!" Kathy screams at the top of her lungs, swinging her arms out toward the stragglers stuck shopping. "They're genetically modified! Mutants! I'm telling you people, mutant plants sold to brainwash you!"

An androgenous couple sidles out the door, careful of the chattering cocobolo beads. A man with an unironic mullet ushers his shivering whippet out after them, the neon orange of his poopbag

holster catching the acid-bright Long Beach daylight. Once all the shoppers have been scared out the store, Kathy turns to the clerk. The look on her face is pure scorn.

The look in return is impassive, laconic. The clerk stands stiff in her untreated selvedge.

"You know, it's very brave of you to crash your way into my store," she says, confronting Kathy from the fringes of her macramé forest. "But whatever this theory of yours is about our plants... brainwashing people... Well. It's just silly. These plants here are merely products of our love. That's all we have here, just love."

"To hell with that," Kathy barks, removing her garish off-the-rack JC Penny's sunglasses. The viscous sheen of entitled furor drips down her face. Her voice remains defiant. She knows she's on to something.

"I don't know what it is about these plants, but you're going to fucking pay for what you're doing to people," she shrieks. Kathy tugs at one of the hanging macramé plants, yanking the whole net off the ceiling. She hurls the pot at the clerk, who deftly sidesteps the attack. "These plants are your minions! They're poison!"

The Green Lovelies proprietor saunters forward, sticky in fresh indigo. She gently unwraps a similar potted plant, careful not to tug another hook off the ceiling. She holds it up, a devious smile finally spreading across her stoic lips. She blinks, her eyes shuttering sideways.

Kathy doesn't have the chance to run.

## EDITOR'S NOTE:

Greetings fellow writers, readers, book lovers and collectors. We are proud to present our Literary Art issue and the many cool stories that came from it, but we are most excited and honored to share entries that came from the community.

We invited people to send in any writings they wanted to share with the world, and we were pleasantly shocked at the amount of submissions we received.

Over the next two weeks, we will be posting the full versions, more pieces and author bios from these entries onto our website SignalTribune.com, so keep checking in to finish your favorite story.

To make things easier, look for these icons next to the author's name:



- The full version of this piece will be posted on our website.



- This writer sent in multiple pieces, and you can find more of their work on our website.



- The full version and additional pieces from this writer will be on our website.

## World of Hearts

by *Hunter Reese*



*Hunter Reese is a 25-year-old who grew up in Carson, CA. He's been writing virtually his entire life and his favorite genres to write are action, adventure, and superhero.*

Why did the world go to hell? That's a question that many people ask themselves ever since the Occurrence happened. What is the Occurrence you ask? Well, I haven't the slightest idea. No one does. That's just what we call it but no one actually knows what happened. There are lots of theories of course. Some say it was a nuclear war. Some say it was an alien invasion. All that is known is that as a result of the Occurrence, most of the world is now a barren wasteland. However bad you think it was, trust me, it was worse, much worse, especially for humanity. Humans are now an endangered species. There's only a few hundred thousand of us left.

It's been a little over two hundred years since the Occurrence. Well, at least, that's our best guess. Now, we're all just citizens under the Omega-Lambda flag.

Oh yeah, I haven't mentioned that yet have I? Well, with every single nation wiped from the planet, no one expected a new one to emerge, but one did. Enter Omega-Lambda. It rose out of the ashes of a dead world, in what used to be the northeast coast of the U.S. and some parts of Canada. As for the rest of the world, well, there is no rest of the world. Most of it is unpopulated due to radiation and hot spots. I mean, it's been over 200 years since the Occurrence and the radiation still hasn't dissipated yet. Go figure.

I have yet to introduce myself.

My name is Joseph Withers. I'm 17 years old and I live in the south quadrant of Omega-Lambda, in what used to be Montreal, Quebec Canada. I live about as normal a life you can live in this day and age. My mother is a physician, and my father is a scientist who tracks radiation flow patterns, which is a big job in this day and age. And then there's my 16-year-old brother Harold. Where do I even start with him? He is a little miscreant who is constantly getting me into trouble because I'm almost always tagging along with Harold, so he doesn't get hurt.

Whenever I am feeling overwhelmed, I like to sneak out of the house during the night to throw rocks by the lake near our house as a way of clearing my head. It's my own personal time but, of course, Harold just had to ruin it by following me out to the lake one night. This night would turn out to be one we would never forget.

Eventually, Harold emerged from the lake, soaking wet, carrying a small silver heart-shaped orb that was no bigger than a soft ball in his left hand. The orb was glowing a bright blue color. Harold and I both stared at it in amazement. I can't really explain it, but it was like the light was calling out to both of us.

# The Magician's Smile

by *Nelli Veletyan*

The magician snapped—once, then twice.

Nothing happened. The audience shifted in their seats, exchanging glances, wondering if something had gone wrong.

Then, a wicked smile spread across the magician's face, his teeth gleaming in the stage light—it was all part of the show. He lifted his hand and snapped for a third time.

And the floor disappeared.

Men and women dressed in their finest evening gowns and tuxedos all looked down, their hearts in their throats. One or two screamed. Another pulled out his phone to take photos.

Where there had been a red hotel carpet adorned with blue geometric squares, there was now an endless night sky. Stars glimmered back up at the audience, a large moon off in the distance somewhere miles and miles away.

The magician said nothing.

After a moment or two, the hotel manager rushed in—someone had told him there was an emergency in the ballroom. His eyes went wide the moment his feet touched the infinite sky.

The magician shot him a look, as if daring him to keep walking. The hotel manager gave him a frightened nod, shrugged at the stunned

onlookers, and ran out of the room. It appeared that the audience was on their own.

Minutes passed like hours, when finally, the silence was broken by a man in his late fifties who stood up in the center of the room.

"C'mon, man, you gotta tell us how you're doing this! Is it safe? It's a projection or something, right?"

The magician looked at him and smiled.

Another man rose near the front, his wife clutching her purse beside him, a massive diamond ring sparkling on her finger. "Hey dude, we paid a lot of money to be here! We want to know what's going on."

And again, the magician smiled.

A woman in a bedazzled dress pulled a white fur coat off of her chair, wrapping it around her as she headed for the exit.

"This is ridiculous! We're here to see a magic show. Not to be scared out of our minds!" She yelled toward the stage.

At that, the magician smiled yet again. Only now, he raised his hand up to snap once more. And when he did, the woman disappeared.

The ballroom flew into a frenzied panic—shouting from one table then the next rising louder and louder.

Finally, someone's voice broke

through above the rest.

"Wait, stop! Can anyone else hear that?" A young woman in a velvet blue dress yelled from the back.

There was a distant shrieking coming from below them. As all their eyes fell to the floor, it dawned on everyone where the woman in the fur coat had gone.

She was there, in the infinite sky, floating somewhere past the moon.

Everyone's eyes went wide with horror.

And the magician smiled.

# Short Stories

## SUGAR HILL MOUNTAIN

by T.O.M. 

Lazy morning caravans meander through the zigzag terrain found within Sugar Hill Mountain (SHM).

After three tedious years, the villagers have managed to engineer and fabricate a mesmerizing peafowl amusement park with the main attraction being Stanley, the peacock.

SHM is nestled within a pocket of the neighboring LBC, now peppered with dilapidated sidewalks that once supported the empowered souls of Bukowski, Locklin, and Zepeda on their mystical creative journeys into the font-spawning celestial galaxy of word craft.

Dedication and preservation of the peafowl kingdom erected within SHM has always been neighbor/peacock wrangler Scott's focus in life and this village of quasi-melancholy is indebted to his commitment to the neighborhood.

Churro trucks and EZ-Ups populate the streets on weekdays after 5am to prepare for the highly anticipated audio explosions emitted from our technicolor super star, "Stan the Master Noise Blaster".

Scott runs worst-case scenario implosion drills with a Peacock Protection Team (PPT) every Sunday in Palos Verdes with stand-in peafowl to ensure safety and implement behavioral counter-measure tactics.

As dawn cracks her smile to the rest of the Universe, Sugar Hill Mountain is blessed with panic evoking shrills and gut churning Stanley howls from 3:18am to 10:27am with a secondary repeat command performance launching from 7:27pm-10:10pm...on the daily.

SHM offers something other than the mundane expensive silly fun centers of yesteryear.

We kindly ask visitors to adhere to a few mindful peace thoughts when interacting within "The-Drive-Through-Peacock-Stanley-Super-Adventure-Sugar-Hill Mountain-Wonderland"

*Peaceful suggestion one: Never rest beneath a tree within SHM.*

*Peaceful suggestion two: Use car covers when parking any vehicle within SHM.*

*Peaceful suggestion three: Use your imagination more, every day.*

## From the men who thought this was love

by Val 

I like you at 6am. I want to see you every day at 6am. It's my first time seeing you in the early violet morning. I see the strands of silver in your hair, and the different shades of orange in your eyes. It's like breathing you in, on an entirely different planet.

Oh, but 10am is when you look the best. The morning settles, as do the colors of your face. Your lips are warm and pink, and your legs are like golden arrows walking in front of me. You have optimism and coffee, a large cup of coffee. I take it all in because I don't know what you have in store for the day.

In the afternoon you pull your hair up and away from your neck. Your nose and forehead are damp from sweat, and you start to make less sense. The day is weighing on you and you won't smile until there's more caffeine kissing your lips. Something about the way you sit makes me uncomfortable, as though you're considering walking away. I come up with things to say, and you come up with looks to give.

I hold my breath for this to pass, not knowing if it will. And then by 4pm you're light on your feet, and I exhale. The hump of the day is over and the sun is kinder to us. I like the way you move at this time, almost as though you're dancing through the streets. There are more people, more lights, more hustle. Signs of life are all around us, and it's fueling you. Maybe we were too alone.

The sunset touches your shoulders and that's where I want to kiss you. This is when I tell you that I love you, that you look like a dream and I'm happy. I use that silly word happy, and you laugh a little. You don't look at me, you look around me, like you're searching for something to say. I shouldn't have said that word, happy.

We spend time looking at the ground together, before you jump up with a brilliant idea. You love to dance and I love to see you do it, so we find a place that suits our needs. The night is changing and you're there with it. You're the perfect amount of visible; hidden in a crowd, but a bright light on the dance floor. You're holding on tight to a cocktail and you laugh loud with your spirit.

Life around us is starting to quiet down. You say you feel alive, but I say the place is dead, and I decide we should come back to my house. You speak boldly, and there's a richness to your voice as midnight rushes past us. Your speeches can be easily dismissed for sad nonsense, but I hear you anyway. I still want you. I go to hold your hand as you fumble through a discovery you made about yourself. You stand up just then, and pretend it's because you're dramatizing your words.

## A Fine Meal

by Dan Vinson 

Kaz, what's the dish under that lid?" I inquired.

"Ah, you can't wait, can't you?" Kaz purred seductively.

Without waiting for a reply, Kaz called out to the rest of the assembled diners in tongues that still evades my translation. The remark was unintelligible only to me as the crowd cried out in agreement. Everyone had finished dining and was ready for a show. Kaz motioned for me to stand and another round of cheers rose up with me.

Across the dining room, an old man stood with me and walked over to the domed dish of what would be my next course in humility. A gap toothed grin parted his lips as he motioned me over to join him. My curiosity overwhelmed the tension of the moment. As I moved past the other seated diners, their attention and cheers slapped me back into reality.

Groups of men will happily make asses of strangers, no matter the culture. It may be a test of manhood or a primitive ploy to out an outsider. Either way, the unknowing subject of the group's entertainment is usually the only one failing to cheer in the moment. I stayed silent during my walk across the dining hall as this multicultural phenomenon hit home.

From about five feet away, I knew what lay under that lid before the old man's hand lifted it. The head of the lamb we just consumed lay on a bed of lettuce. Roasted to obvious perfection, the flesh hung off the cheeks in stringy flaps and released an intoxicatingly delicious aroma when the lid was raised. I couldn't gasp without simultaneously feeling disgust and hunger.

The lamb's eyes stared lidless into space. I tried not to match the gaze on that I was about to graze. I looked back at Kaz for assurance.

Kaz yelled out, "It's time for dessert!" and then translated to the rest of the crowd.

They didn't wait for the translation. I didn't need one. Whatever the Arabic phrase is for "Ew! He's gonna eat an eyeball" was shared repeatedly among the assembled diners turned audience. The refrain bounced around in my own head enough that it found echoes in different languages.

The old diner dove in first by plucking an eye from its socket and holding it up for me. My grandmother taught me that it was rude to turn down offers of food when one is a guest, but she wasn't about to mow down on a sheep's peepers either. Still, I was inclined to indulge because all the exoticness offered thus far had been divine. So, I reached out and grabbed the greasy orb- which is the only way I knew how to retrieve one.

The cooked eye and its attached muscle was larger than I thought. This wasn't a teaspoon of regret. I was about to get a mouthful of my own words. This thought replaced the earlier chorus as I opened up for a fresh roasted dessert of my boast.

## The Flower Family

by Summerain Diaz

Once upon a time, there was a Queen.

Meet the Queen and her daughters.

The first daughter is Rose. The second daughter is Tulip.

The Queen is Peony and they all live in a castle.

Rose loves to draw, paint, read, write, and model.

Tulip loves to play, eat, and dance.

And the Queen loves to protect the castle.

They have a beautiful garden that was overflowing with flowers.

One day Tulip, Rose, and the Queen went to the park to have a picnic.

Suddenly there was thunder, lightning, and an earthquake.

When they got home the castle was broken!

Peony, Rose, and Tulip started to cry.

Guess what, the tears were magical!!

The castle was there again so they lived HAPPILY EVER AFTER.

# POETRY

## Phases

by *Cooper Evans*

“To the moon and back,” he said whimpering once more...  
Be the star for those in search  
As I was long before

I am a waning moon  
But you are a full moon  
Shining high from the East  
While I am sitting in the West

For shall you use your power to reflect those surrounding you  
And be the one who others depend to  
Be around till morning dew

And I will shine like the wise moon I am  
Until I fade below the horizon

I will see you tomorrow  
What a humbling time it has been  
For when sunrise strikes again

## Spite of a Teacher's Lover

by *Jessica King* 

We had the same argument last night  
the one problem in the exam  
that doesn't have a formula:

Time: a man-made construct  
so nonexistent in nature  
yet so tangle in our minds

The clock didn't pause  
while his students ran out of  
time, and breath, and peace

*Tik, tik, tik*, yawned the midnight hour  
progress reports looming at dawn  
one misstep away from the principal's door

But his mind has dried elsewhere  
between the assignments  
and so many quizzes

To the boy in the hospital  
bed, resting with dread  
of his father's impending anger

To the girl afraid of her classmate  
six feet too close, lips  
poised for a scream

To the coworkers too tired  
or too gone in the weekend  
sipping wine for a distant dream

Saturday night, his eyes so intimately  
careful with each keystroke  
volunteered hour after hour

And I waited in the cold bed  
waiting for the midnight bell to ring

## Letter to my inner Child

by *Alvin Fogleman* 

I'm not sure if this is possible.  
I'm not sure an inner child exists within.  
I have looked within that mental room and found nothing.  
Shadows cast upon bare walls.  
Echo's reverberate with each breath or step.  
It is as if those memories were fluid  
Leaking out over time.  
Expelling into the ether.

There is an absence of an inner child  
No memory of one lies hidden.

I had not the opportunity to exist within the world  
Childhood was stolen.  
How could an inner child exist.

Forced to adapt into adulthood  
I but a mere child  
Wandering alone I found those rare moments  
Childish one might even say  
Chastised, beaten and told to act my age  
Was the compliment of each day.  
A child in age  
Though no child resides within.

Any indication of an inner child dissipated  
You may even say drained away  
There is no inner child here.  
Just a Man finally acting his age.

## Seventeen

by *Arlene Plata*

sitting on the concrete  
outside of Jack in the Box  
it's mid-April  
you look like a girl but you sit like a boy  
(mom always said)  
your arms resting on your knees, your feet apart

it's sunny and warm  
but you're wearing a black zip-up hoodie  
over your polka-dot tank top  
you're busy concealing your arms yet  
the cup of your bra is slightly exposed

and you're making that dumb face  
where you scrunch up your nose  
and stuck out your tongue –  
it's that face you make  
whenever you're uncomfortable

you're uncomfortable  
'cause you're usually the one taking pictures  
but your friend takes your camera  
(a lifetime later, you're extremely grateful)

and you're uncomfortable  
'cause the guy you were in love with  
just called you boring annoying and weird,  
and worse, not to your face

you're twice that age now and you think you'd be over it,  
but remembering still makes your stomach turn

and some things don't change,  
you still make that face  
and you laugh at the fact that you always felt fat  
but you were ok

you still take pictures and you're still kind of weird  
but you're ok  
Life is ok

## Professional Foosball

by *T.O.M.* 

Wally's Tavern is our refuge.

Beneath the neon green beer lamp our team is  
stationed.

We are suspended on warm steel rods which impale  
each player from hip to hip.

Spit and cigarette burns rage  
within our atmosphere.

Tiny wooden men speared into pleasuring  
a society of quarter droppers.

Chipped grimaces and rosebud cheeks are  
painted upon our pint-sized bodies.

Sweaty, off-colored jerseys are thrown upon our  
backs paired with butt-hugging jogging shorts

coupled with termite infested soccer cleats.  
Spinning and slamming to and  
fro defines our mobility.

Fiberglass weapons are loaded into funnels and shot  
at our souls, while hope ignites from within  
that our human puppeteer has wits enough to block  
the speeding demon before it splinters our  
shrunk spirits any further.

Drunken, elderly men laugh and curse as we scream  
silently in search of a victory. Injuries are  
frequent, leaving discarded piles of sawdust upon  
the badly bruised arena floorboard.  
Our contractual therapy commences once the flesh  
warriors depart, and the jukebox marionette  
jettisons to slumber land.

After business hours we loosen ourselves from sus-  
pended agony and meander over to  
“Chippers” with our Tinkertoy partners for fiesta  
bravo nights seasoned with log jam coolers,  
whistle blasts and pogo dancing.

When sunshine cracks her morning smile, we hob-  
ble back to Wally's to prepare for another  
treacherous match against fate.

# HORROR

## THE SHADOWBROOK WOMAN

by *Brandon Wai* 

“Why is it so foggy?” Whispered Ivan.

“I don’t know. Stay close. Be on the lookout.” I replied. I clicked the flashlight on, the enormous beam shooting out and hitting a wall of fog that reflected into my eyes. I saw a wave of stars that had nothing to do with the sky above. I switched off the flashlight and flipped it around in my hands with the intention of using it as a bludgeoning weapon.

I could hear her as clear as day, those same shuttered gasps as she struggled to pull in air. It was coming from behind us. We made our way around the tent, our shoes crunching over the dry leaves that littered the campsite. The sounds of the woman getting louder and louder. Why was she the only thing that I could hear? That we could hear? I heard no signs of an attacker, I couldn’t hear the swaying of the trees overhead, or the wildlife that surrounded us, it felt as though Ivan and I were the only ones with the gasping woman...

And then we saw her.

Through the fog, I could see the silhouette of a body hanging from one of the tree’s branches. I could see her outline as she swayed with the wind, listlessly from left to right. I watched with stunned silence as her hair blew to the right, before gently resting on her shoulders. The branch that she hung from creaked and groaned in the silent night, I could hear the tips of her sneakers as they brushed across the earth beneath her.

“What the f\*\*k.” Ivan whispered.

“We have to get her down.”

We made our way through the fog toward her, and then we stopped. I felt my blood run cold; I felt the air exit my body. At that moment I’d wished we’d stayed in our tent. I wish we’d gotten in my truck and gone home. I wished we’d never gone camping.

Dry and brittle black hair covered most of her face, but I could still see what horrified me. Her skin was whiter than the fog that surrounded us, I could see the dead veins that ran along her neck and

up her chin. Her eyes bulged so far out from her skull that I thought they’d fall from their sockets. Her mouth was open, and her tongue was out, it went past her neck, swaying lazily across her chest.

“We need to get the f\*\*k out of here.” Ivan said, his voice hoarse.

I could see Ivan turn around from the tent through my peripherals, his hand wrapped around my wrist as he pulled me with him. I was about to turn around, my brain screaming for me to focus on the path back to the tent.

And then I saw her blink.

Her head snapped to the left; her eyes locked onto mine as the branch groaned with feeble protest. I could feel her bulging eyes as they peered into my soul, making every inch of my skin crawl with imaginary maggots. She watched my every move as I backed away from her, and then her mouth curved into a smile...

### COMMUNITY

## Friends of the Long Beach Public Library sets sights on National Banned Books Week 2023

Ryan Hardison

Design Editor

Local nonprofit Friends of the Long Beach Public Library has begun preparations for National Banned Books Week 2023, with events taking place nationwide from Oct. 1-7 commemorating the theme of “Let Freedom Read!”

Banned Books Week is an annual week-long event that promotes literary freedoms by bringing together librarians, teachers, students and residents to celebrate equitable access to literature.

The event was first created in 1982 by activist Judith Krug to counteract a movement to ban books deemed “controversial” by select organizations, with one notable controversy resulting in the Island Trees School District vs. Pico Supreme Court case.

In this contentious 1982 case, the Supreme Court ruled on the issue of local school boards removing books from middle school and high school libraries, with the court ruling that public schools could not restrict speech even if they don’t agree with the content.

Since then, banned books have morphed into an element of the national freedom of education movement as book censorship has become a prominent right-wing political topic.

Republican politicians such as Texas Governor Greg Abbott and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis have approved measures challenging the existence of books containing depictions of racism, LGBTQ+ content and sexual content in school and public libraries in their respective states.

According to the American Library Association’s Office of Intellectual Freedom, the list of the most challenged books of 2022 include “Gender Queer” by Maia Kobabe, “The Bluest Eye” by Toni Morrison, “Flamer” by Mike Curato and “The Perks of Being a Wallflower” by Stephen Chbosky. Reasons for challenges and removal from libraries include sexually explicit content, excessive profanity and depictions of drug use.

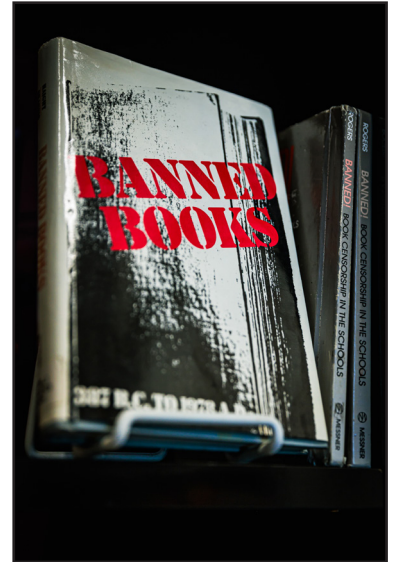
The origins of the Friends of the LB Public Library dates back to 1962, when head librarian Blanche Collins opposed a city councilmember who wanted to ban Nikos Kazantzakis’ “The Last Temptation of Christ.”

Refusing to bow to pressure and with vocal community support, the Friends of the LB Public Library was created the following year to fight against local literary censorship.

Though Long Beach is currently far from the frontlines of the war for literary freedoms, Ellen Butler of the Friends of the Library is working to raise awareness of this nationwide issue.

“Libraries are for everyone and libraries need to offer a diverse range of materials that are for everyone, so no one group of any kind should be dictating what other people have available to them,” Butler said.

Butler has been a part of the Friends of the LB Public Library for about 18 years and in recent years, has been devoting her attention to the fight against banned books.



Richard H. Grant | Signal Tribune

A book about banned books on display at Page Against the Machine in Long Beach on Aug. 9, 2023.

She suggested the Friends of the LB Public Library participate in Banned Books Week last year, resulting in a small event in front of local bookstore Page Against the Machine.

This year, the Friends of the LB Public Library are looking to grow its presence, and with an earlier start on planning and a larger volunteer committee, they are incorporating zine-making, live music, trivia contests and interactive activities to get younger people involved.

They also plan to pass out flyers with contact information for local representatives and educate community members on the history of banned books.

Though Butler would certainly prefer if the issue of banned books would go away altogether, it seems likely that divisive controversies involving education and literary freedoms will play a pivotal role in the run-up to the 2024 U.S. presidential election. Because of this, she said she believes it’s imperative for the Friends of the LB Public Library to spread awareness rather than stand by and say nothing.

“I think it’s not judicious of us to let down our guard and think everything’s going to be okay. It’s clearly not if you look at what’s happening in the world,” Butler said. “And I definitely want to push back against the kind of censorship that I see, the kind of book banning and the kind of intolerance. The anti-LGBTQ intolerance is just appalling to me.”

The Friends of the LB Public Library currently have four events in the works to celebrate National Banned Book Week, beginning with an event on 4th Street on Sept. 22 and finishing with an appearance at the Bixby Park Farmers Market on Oct. 7.

Depending on how this year’s events go, Banned Book Week festivities throughout the city could potentially expand in the future, Butler said.

To learn more about National Banned Book Week 2023 and the most challenged books in the United States, visit <https://banned-booksweek.org/>. Residents can keep up with news related to the Friends of the LB Public Library’s National Banned Book Week events here.

## Moving Forward with Grief

by *Sun Yen Cumby* 

As a widow, after the socially acceptable mourning period, the world almost expects you and everything in your life to go back to “normal,” or as some like to call it, a “new normal.” It’s been five years since my husband Sean died, and I’m still trying to figure out what my “new normal” looks like. Instead of a “new normal,” I usually feel like I’m living at the verge or on the cusp of something. I was 39 years old when Sean died, and I knew nothing about grief, so I thought I would be “okay” and back to “normal” after a year also. When it didn’t happen as I had expected, I grew very frustrated and stuck in my grief, especially since I’m the type of person who’s used to “managing” and “controlling” my life towards achieving goals and benchmarks I set for myself.

I had to learn the hard way that grief doesn’t have a timetable nor can it be managed or controlled. How can I ever be “normal” again let alone live a “normal” or even a “new normal” life when the biggest part of my life disappeared. There

was a gaping hole in my heart and in my life, and no way to rectify how I was robbed of so many things like my life partner whom I loved and was my entire world, the life we built over the last 14 years, all the unfinished plans we had, and a future we felt was owed to us. I was even robbed of the ability to fully grieve my grandmother’s death, who was like a mother to me, when she passed six months after Sean since I didn’t have the emotional or mental space to grieve her natural death that “made sense” unlike Sean’s sudden and traumatic death.

I was incredulous when Sean died to the point where my response to the ER doctors when they informed me was, “No, you’re wrong. My husband didn’t die. You must have the wrong person.” There was even a moment where I turned to his best friend, who was at the ER with me since he happened to be at our house that morning, and asked earnestly, “Is this a joke?!” since my husband was a total prankster. I was certain this

was one of the wildest and most elaborate pranks he conceived. I kept staring at the entrance of the ER, waiting for a camera crew to rush in and say, “Surprise!! You’re on candid camera!!” but that never happened.

The day Sean died was so traumatic that it played on repeat like a broken record in my head for a year. I was barely able to process what was happening to me. It felt like time had stopped, and my entire world came crashing down without any notice. I couldn’t understand how the world could keep moving like nothing happened when I was frozen, terrified, and unable to breathe let alone imagine a life or a world where he did not exist. I couldn’t rationalize how everything in my life looked exactly the same yet nothing was the same. It felt like I was watching a movie where I was trapped in an alternate universe and everything looked exactly the same but also in complete juxtaposition to my own life.

FEATURE

# Once Read Books lines its shelves with history as Long Beach's oldest used bookshop

**Samantha Diaz**  
Managing Editor

Roger Grunsky, founder and owner of Long Beach's longest-running used bookstore, is a man of few words, but many, many books.

At 65,000 and counting, Grunsky has filled nearly every square-inch of Once Read Books with an eclectic array of novels.

Bookworms can search for rare historical books, military novels, children's books, cookbooks, science fiction books, romantic novels, Long Beach history and more within the handmade shelves that scatter the shop.

It was 1987 when Grunsky decided to leave his job as a recreational therapist and follow his dream of owning a bookstore, cementing a literary stronghold in the Lakewood Village neighborhood of Long Beach. He said he "discovered" libraries when he was 14 years old and never looked back.

"That's pretty much what I did [as a kid]," Grunsky said.

Before making the leap to lease a location, Grunsky had already collected over 20,000 books in his free time from various garage sales, thrift stores and local bookstores.

He started keeping his beloved books in a small storage unit, then a larger one, then the largest unit they offered him. Finally, he decided to buy his books in their own home and established Once Read Books in Lakewood in the late '80s.

Once Read Books moved to its current location in the Parkview Village shopping center in Long Beach in 1999.

Since then, Grunsky has been selling vintage novels and trading books with fellow bibliophiles to build on his collection.

His strategy is simple: "What I think I can sell is what I accept," Grunsky said, adding that he cares much more about the subject matter of a book rather than the quality. So far his method seems to be working.

Grunsky said he made enough money to cover his rent within the first month of opening in 1978 and hasn't come short once. He said the hardest part was handcrafting the shelves where his books would wait for curious customers.

"I have very supportive customers, they didn't even know who I was when I opened," Grunsky said. "I was surprised, but I didn't know better, I was just like, 'Okay let's do this.'"

Grunsky remembers when used



Richard H. Grant | Signal Tribune  
A reading chair rests at the intersection of three bookshelves inside Once Read Books on Aug. 16, 2023.

bookstores were dotted throughout Long Beach and Orange County. Long Beach now has three, including Once Read Books. Planet Books, which recently moved to Signal Hill, opened in 1998 and houses many rare first editions of novels and other collectible items.

Gatsby Books, a popular destination for cat lovers and local poets looking for a cozy environment to perform, has been around since 2010.

Grunsky said that most of the used bookstores in Long Beach closed because "the book dealers just got sick and passed away ... I've just been very fortunate in my health that I've held up."

Now his shop is the longest-running used book store in Long Beach, boasting a long list of categories filling nearly every empty space in the quiet shop.

He still keeps his favorites—mostly military and Southern California history books—adorning the five bookshelves in his home, and the "overflow" in his garage. The rest, he allows the community to peruse through and trade for seven days a week.

For readers who wish to keep their collections fresh but don't want to break the budget doing so, Once Read Books trades for novels on a 3:1 ratio within a respective genre. Residents can trade three romance novels for one from Grunsky's inventory, for instance.

Grunsky said about 20% of his customers shop for their favorites online rather than coming into the store. Roughly 35,000 books of all types are listed on the website's online catalog.

*Once Read Books is located at 5422 E. Village Road and is open Mondays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sundays from noon to 5 p.m. The shop does not make trades on Sundays, and residents are asked to call ahead if they're bringing in a large inventory to trade or sell.*

**TST6998  
NOTICE OF \$10,000 REWARD OFFERED BY THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles has established a \$10,000 reward offered in exchange for information leading to the apprehension and conviction of the person or persons responsible for the murder of 12 year-old Eric Gregory Brown III, who was fatally shot while walking on the sidewalk with friends near the 2200 block of Lewis Avenue in Long Beach on May 9, 2023, at approximately 11:32 p.m. Si no entiende esta noticia o necesita mas informacion, favor de llamar al (213) 974-1579. Any person having any information related to this crime is requested to call Detectives Michael Hubbard or Jesus Espinoza at (562) 570-7244 at the Long Beach Police Department or Crime Stoppers at (800) 222-8477 and refer to Report No. 230022639. The terms of the reward provide that: The information given that leads to the determination of the identity, the apprehension and conviction of any person or persons must be given no later than September 3, 2023. All reward claims must be in writing and shall be received no later than November 2, 2023. The total County payment of any and all rewards shall in no event exceed \$10,000 and no claim shall be paid prior to conviction unless the Board of Supervisors makes a finding of impossibility of conviction due to the death or incapacity of the person or persons responsible for the crime or crimes. The County reward may be apportioned between various persons and/or paid for the conviction of various persons as the circumstances fairly dictate. Any claims for the reward funds should be filed no later than November 2, 2023, with the Executive Office of the Board of Supervisors, 500 West Temple Street, Room 383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, Los Angeles, California 90012, Attention: Eric Gregory Brown III Reward Fund. For further information, please call (213) 974-1579. CELIA ZAVALA EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES CN997788 04066 Jun 30, Jul 7,14,21,28, Aug 4,11,18,25, Sep 1, 2023

**TST7014 / 2023 147161  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

The following person is doing business as: 1. CARE2TEACH EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES, 2. CARE2TEACH, 2108 N ST STE N, SACRAMENTO, CA 95816. Mailing Address: 1780 PARK AVE APT G, LONG BEACH, CA 90815 County: SACRAMENTO. Registrant: CARE2TEACH EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES LLC, 1780 PARK AVE APT G, LONG BEACH, CA 90815. State of Incorporation/Organization: CA. This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. Signed: SHANNON MARTIN, CEO. The registrant has begun to use this fictitious business name. The registrant began using this fictitious business name in June, 2023. This statement was filed with the county clerk of Los Angeles County on July 6, 2023. NOTICE: This fictitious business name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed prior to that date. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Pub. The Signal Tribune: July 14, 21, 28 & August 4, 2023

**TST7054 / 2023 174346  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

The following person is doing business as: MILO PROPERTIES MGT, 10337 RENOVA AVE, SOUTH GATE, CA 90280. County: LOS ANGELES. Registrant: MILO 99 LLC, 10337 RENOVA AVE, SOUTH GATE, CA 90280. State of Incorporation/Organization: California. This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. Signed: MIGUEL ANGEL LOPEZ, PRESIDENT. The registrant has not begun to use this fictitious business name. The registrant began using this fictitious business name in N/A. This statement was filed with the county clerk of Los Angeles County on August 10, 2023. NOTICE: This fictitious business name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed prior to that date. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Pub. The Signal Tribune: August 18, 25, & September 1, 8, 2023

**TST7055 / 2023 174349  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

The following person is doing business as: V&S TRANSPORTATION LLC, 11336 PENNSYLVANIA AVE, SOUTH GATE, CA 90280 County: LOS ANGELES. Registrant: V&S TRANSPORTATION LLC,

11336 PENNSYLVANIA AVE, SOUTH GATE, CA 90280. State of Incorporation/Organization: CALIFORNIA. This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. Signed: VICENTE PEREZ JR, PRESIDENT. The registrant has not begun to use this fictitious business name. The registrant began using this fictitious business name in N/A. This statement was filed with the county clerk of Los Angeles County on August 10, 2023. NOTICE: This fictitious business name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed prior to that date. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Pub. The Signal Tribune: August 18, 25, & September 1, 8, 2023

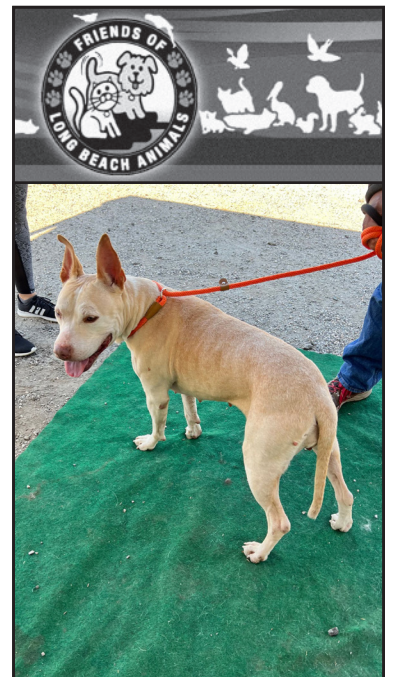
**TST7056 / 2023 174011  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

The following person is doing business as: 1. UNIVERSAL COMPOUNDING PHARMACY, 2. UCRX, 2895 TEMPLE AVE, SIGNAL HILL, CA 90755. County: LOS ANGELES. Registrant: GOLD STALLION, INC., 2895 TEMPLE AVE, SIGNAL HILL, CA 90755. State of Incorporation/Organization: CA. This business is conducted by: a Corporation. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. Signed: HENRY TRUONG, PRESIDENT. The registrant has not begun to use this fictitious business name. The registrant began using this fictitious business name in N/A. This statement was filed with the county clerk of Los Angeles County on August 10, 2023. NOTICE: This fictitious business name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed prior to that date. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Pub. The Signal Tribune: August 18, 25, & September 1, 8, 2023

**TST7057 / 2023 169167  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

The following person is doing business as: EAUMUSE, 733 HINDRY AVE A305, INGLEWOOD, CA 90301. County: LOS ANGELES. Registrant: SCOTT MICHAEL BRITTON, 733 HINDRY AVE A305, INGLEWOOD, CA 90301. State of Incorporation/Organization: N/A. This business is conducted by: an Individual. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. Signed: SCOTT MICHAEL BRITTON, OWNER. The registrant has begun to use this fictitious business name. The registrant began using this fictitious business name in July, 2023. This statement was filed with the county clerk of Los Angeles County on August 4, 2023. NOTICE: This fictitious business name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed prior to that date. The filing of this

statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Pub. The Signal Tribune: August 18, 25, & September 1, 8, 2023



**Pet of the week:  
Missy**

Missy is a pretty girl with a big grin. She seems to be around 6 years old and a mix of pit bull and cattle dog. She walks well on a leash and balances her energy between zoomies and settling down for a nap. Missy has never lived indoors, to the staff and volunteers' knowledge, so she's learning what to do with toys. Treats she understands, though! She doesn't care much for other dogs, but does she love people! You can speed the process to adopt or foster Missy and any of our other pets by emailing [PetAdopt@longbeach.gov](mailto:PetAdopt@longbeach.gov) or [petfoster@longbeach.gov](mailto:petfoster@longbeach.gov). You can also call (562) 570-4925. Even better, stop by during our walk-in hours every Wednesday through Sunday from 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Our shelter is located at 7700 E. Spring St. Ask for ID#693982 to meet Missy. We're at capacity, everyone needs homes, and Missy needs to get out in the best way possible!

**CONSULTANT DIAGNOSTIC MEDICAL PHYSICIST for THERAPY PHYSICS, INC.**

Consultant Diagnostic Medical Physicist for Therapy Physics, Inc. to provide physicist testing services for radiology equipment

Salary: \$124,000 to \$216,000//yr.  
Reqs: MS+4 yrs experience

Extensive travel in CA; 1-2 times/year to AK & ID; & travel across US for conferences & training seminars

Jobsite: Signal Hill, CA

Email resume to [tyler@therapyphysics.com](mailto:tyler@therapyphysics.com)

**The Studio**  
@ LONG BEACH PLAYHOUSE

**Closing Weekend**

**THE MOTHERF\*\*KER WITH THE HAT**

**562-494-1014 LBPlayhouse.org**  
**5021 E. Anaheim St.**

**TST7026**  
**NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF: JANICE RUNYON AKA JANICE LEE RUNYON CASE NO. 23STPB03015**

To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the WILL or estate, or both of JANICE RUNYON AKA JANICE LEE RUNYON. A PETITION FOR PROBATE has been filed by YESENIA GONZALEZ in the Superior Court of California, County of LOS ANGELES. THE PETITION FOR PROBATE requests that YESENIA GONZALEZ be appointed as personal representative to administer the estate of the decedent. THE PETITION requests the decedent's WILL and codicils, if any, be admitted to probate. The WILL and any codicils are available for examination in the file kept by the court. THE PETITION requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the personal representative to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the personal representative will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority. A HEARING on the petition will be held in this court as follows: 08/23/23 at 8:30AM in Dept. 9 located at 111 N. HILL ST., LOS ANGELES, CA 90012 IF YOU OBJECT to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney. IF YOU ARE A CREDITOR or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58(b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law. YOU MAY EXAMINE the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk. Attorney for Petitioner JENNIFER N. SAWDAY - SBN 228320, JANA HAGEKHALIL - SBN 340962, TREDWAY, LUMSDAINE & DOYLE, LLP 3900 KILROY AIRPORT WAY, SUITE 240 LONG BEACH CA 90806, Telephone (562) 923-0971 BSC 223729 8/11, 8/18, 8/25/23 CNS-3725379# THE SIGNAL TRIBUNE

**TST7042 / 2023 166497**  
**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

The following person is doing business as: 1. MR MARVEL WINDOW CLEANING, 2. YOUR BACKYARD PROJECTS, 4051 SAN CARLOS ST, LOS ANGELES, CA 90650. County: LOS ANGELES. Registrant: JONATHAN MARAVILLAS, 4051 SAN CARLOS ST, LOS ANGELES, CA 90063. State of Incorporation/Organization: N/A. This business is conducted by: an Individual. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. Signed: JONATHAN MARAVILLAS, OWNER. The registrant has not begun to use this fictitious business name. The registrant began using this fictitious business name in N/A. This statement was filed with the county clerk of Los Angeles County on August 1, 2023. NOTICE: This fictitious business name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed prior to that date. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Pub. The Signal Tribune: August 4, 11, 18, 25, 2023

**TST7040 / 2023 149919**  
**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

The following person is doing business as: WELCOME HOME THERAPY, 3050 E 5TH ST APT. 7, LONG BEACH, CA. 90814. County: LOS ANGELES. Registrant: WELCOME HOME THERAPY LICENSED PROFESSIONAL CLINICAL COUNSELOR CORP, 3050 E 5TH ST APT. 7, LONG BEACH, CA 90814. State of Incorporation/Organization: CA. This business is

conducted by: a Corporation. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. Signed: AMANDA RIZO, PRESIDENT. The registrant has begun to use this fictitious business name. The registrant began using this fictitious business name in July, 2023. This statement was filed with the county clerk of Los Angeles County on July 11, 2023. NOTICE: This fictitious business name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed prior to that date. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Pub. The Signal Tribune: August 4, 11, 18, 25, 2023

**TST7021 Case No. 23NWCP00285**  
**ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME**

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, 12720 Norwalk Blvd., Norwalk, CA 90650 PETITION OF: Preston Scott Jeffrey Frost for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: 1. Petitioners: Preston Scott Jeffrey Frost, by and through Valerie A. Frost, mother, has filed a petition with this court for a decree changing his name as follows: Present Name: Preston Scott Jeffrey Frost Proposed Name: Presscott Jeffrey Frost 2. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: Date: September 25, 2023; Time: 9:30a.m., Dept. C, Room 312. The address of the court is the same as above. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county, THE SIGNAL TRIBUNE, 1860 Obispo Ave., Ste. F, Signal Hill, CA 90755, July 28 & August 4, 11, 18, 2023 \_\_/ss//\_\_ Olma Rosales, Judge of the Superior Court Dated: July 25, 2023

**TST7022 / 2023 152733**  
**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

The following person is doing business as: CUTTING EDGE OUTDOOR LIVING, 1868 PACIFIC AVE, LONG BEACH, CA 90806. County: LOS ANGELES. Registrant: BUILDER BOY INC., 1868 PACIFIC AVE, LONG BEACH, CA 90806. State of Incorporation/Organization: CA. This business is conducted by: a Corporation. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. Signed: JEROME JAMES, PRESIDENT. The registrant has begun to use this fictitious business name. The registrant began using this fictitious business name in July, 2023. This statement was filed with the county clerk of Los Angeles County on July 14, 2023. NOTICE: This fictitious business name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed prior to that date. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Pub. The Signal Tribune: July 28, & August 4, 11, 18, 2023

**TST7036 / 2023 163414**  
**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

The following person is doing business as: ARGE GRILL, 14807 S GIBSON AVE, COMPTON, CA. 90221. County: LOS ANGELES. Registrant: ARGENIS REYES ARMENTA, 14807 S GIBSON AVE, COMPTON, CA. 90221. State of Incorporation/Organization: N/A. This business is conducted by: an Individual. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. Signed: ARGENIS REYES ARMENTA, OWNER. The registrant has not begun to use this fictitious business name. The registrant began using this fictitious business name in N/A. This statement was filed with the county clerk of Los Angeles County on July 27, 2023. NOTICE: This fictitious business name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed prior to that date. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Pub. The Signal Tribune: August 4, 11, 18, 25, 2023

**TST7037 / 2023 163410**  
**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

The following person is doing business

as: PUPUSAS LAS HERMANAS, 6485 ATLANTIC AVE APT 26, LONG BEACH, CA 90805. County: LOS ANGELES. Registrant: DOMINGA DEL BARAHONA COELLO, 6485 ATLANTIC AVE APT 26, LONG BEACH, CA 90805. State of Incorporation/Organization: N/A. This business is conducted by: an Individual. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. Signed: DOMINGA DEL BARAHONA COELLO, OWNER. The registrant has not begun to use this fictitious business name. The registrant began using this fictitious business name in N/A. This statement was filed with the county clerk of Los Angeles County on July 27, 2023. NOTICE: This fictitious business name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed prior to that date. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Pub. The Signal Tribune: August 4, 11, 18, 25, 2023

**TST7038 / 2023 163412**  
**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

The following person is doing business as: GALLARDO'S BARBER BEAUTY SALON, 415 E COMPTON BLVD, COMPTON, CA 90221. County: LOS ANGELES. Registrant: CYNTHIA C GALLARDO, 12426 WILLOWBROOK AVE, COMPTON, CA. 90222. State of Incorporation/Organization: N/A. This business is conducted by: an Individual. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. Signed: CYNTHIA C GALLARDO, OWNER. The registrant has not begun to use this fictitious business name. The registrant began using this fictitious business name in N/A. This statement was filed with the county clerk of Los Angeles County on July 27, 2023. NOTICE: This fictitious business name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed prior to that date. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Pub. The Signal Tribune: August 4, 11, 18, 25, 2023

**TST7041 / 2023 166499**  
**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

The following person is doing business as: EXODUS DRIVING SERVICES, 5139 LIVE OAK ST APT 1, CUDAHY, CA. 90201. County: LOS ANGELES. Registrant: OSCAR FERNANDO CANEDO ROMERO, 5139 LIVE OAK ST APT 1, CUDAHY, CA. 90201. State of Incorporation/Organization: N/A. This business is conducted by: an Individual. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. Signed: OSCAR FERNANDO CANEDO ROMERO, OWNER. The registrant has not begun to use this fictitious business name. The registrant began using this fictitious business name in N/A. This statement was filed with the county clerk of Los Angeles County on August 1, 2023. NOTICE: This fictitious business name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed prior to that date. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Pub. The Signal Tribune: August 4, 11, 18, 25, 2023

**TST7043 / 2023 168446**  
**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

The following person is doing business as: KILLER MODELS BY PAUL, 3731 W. WARNER AVE, SANTA ANA, CA. 92704. Mailing Address: 2240 STANLEY AVE., #3, SIGNAL HILL, CA 90755 County: ORANGE. Registrant: PAUL THOMAS KILLINS, 2240 STANLEY AVE., SIGNAL, CA 90755. State of Incorporation/Organization: N/A. This business is conducted by: an Individual. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. Signed: PAUL THOMAS KILLINS, OWNER. The registrant has not begun to use this fictitious business name. The registrant began using this fictitious business name in N/A. This statement was filed with the county clerk of Los Angeles County on August 3, 2023. NOTICE: This fictitious business name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed prior to that date. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another

under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Pub. The Signal Tribune: August 4, 11, 18, 25, 2023

**TST7024 / 2023 163284**  
**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

The following person is doing business as: 1. DSJ LOGISTICS AND FULFILLMENT, 2. DSJ TRADING USA, 3711 LONG BEACH BLVD SUITE 4057, 4TH FLOOR #1004, LONG BEACH, CA. 90807. County: LOS ANGELES. Registrant: DSJ CREATIVE MANAGEMENT LLC, 3711 LONG BEACH BLVD SUITE 4057, 4TH FLOOR #1004, LONG BEACH, CA 90807. State of Incorporation/Organization: CA. This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. Signed: ZUL A AMAT, PRESIDENT. The registrant has begun to use this fictitious business name. The registrant began using this fictitious business name in July, 2023. This statement was filed with the county clerk of Los Angeles County on July 27, 2023. NOTICE: This fictitious business name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed prior to that date. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Pub. The Signal Tribune: 8/11, 18, 25 & 9/1, 2023

**TST7025 Case No. 23CMCP00129**  
**ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME**

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, 200 W. Compton Blvd., Compton, CA. 90220 PETITION OF: Pamela Sandra Johnson for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: 1. Petitioners: Pamela Sandra Johnson has filed a petition with this court for a decree changing her name as follows: Present Name: Sandra Pamela Johnson Proposed Name: Pamela Sandra Johnson 2. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: Date: October 3, 2023; Time: 8:30a.m., Dept. A, Room 904. The address of the court is the same as above. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county, THE SIGNAL TRIBUNE, 1860 Obispo Ave., Ste. F, Signal Hill, CA 90755, 8/11, 18, 25 & 9/1, 2023 \_\_/ss//\_\_ Michael Shultz, Judge of the Superior Court Dated: July 18, 2023

**TST7044**  
**Notice of Public Lien Sale**

Notice is hereby given in accordance with the provisions of the California Self-Storage Facility Act Code, Section #21700, the undersigned will be sold by public auction at: Storco Self Storage, 3050 Orange Ave, Long Beach, CA 90807, County of Los Angeles, and State of California. Auction date of: August 29th, 2023 at 12:00 p.m. Terms of sale: Cash sale, all sales are final and purchased at buyers own risk. No guarantees or warranty of any sale are promised by seller. Storco Self Storage reserves the right to refuse any bid or cancel auction. Facility owner or its representatives has the right to bid on any and all units or stop sale at any time. Name of the auctioneer: Cimlars Auction Services. The following units are scheduled for sale: Unit # & Customer Name: Unit # B137/ Pamela Mitchell - C034/Harold Lucambio - Unit # C059/Daniel Ramos - Unit #A027/ Managers Unit. Unit/s contents may include but are not limited to: Electronics, furniture, appliances, garage items, toys, clothing, sporting goods, tools, automotive and miscellaneous household goods, unless otherwise stated. Publish Dates: 08/11/2023 & 08/18/2023.

**TST7052 / 2023 153304**  
**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

The following person is doing business as: PACIFIC TERMINAL SERVICES COMPANY, LLC, 250 W WARDLOW RD, LONG BEACH, CA. 90807. County: LOS ANGELES. Registrant: PACIFIC TERMINAL SERVICE COMPANY, LLC, 250 W WARDLOW RD, LONG BEACH, CA. 90807. State of Incorporation/Organization: DE. This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. Signed: TIFFANY TITUS, MANAGER. The registrant has begun to use this fictitious business name. The registrant began using this fictitious business name in July, 2017. This statement was filed with the county clerk of Los Angeles County

on July 14, 2023. NOTICE: This fictitious business name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed prior to that date. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). Pub. The Signal Tribune: August 11, 18, 25, & September 1, 2023

**TST7039 Case No. 23NWCP00281**  
**ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME**

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, Norwalk Courthouse, 12720 Norwalk Blvd., Norwalk, CA 90650 PETITION OF: Placido Valentino Cano for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: 1. Petitioners: Placido Valentino Cano has filed a petition with this court for a decree changing his name as follows: Present Name: Placido Valentino Cano Proposed Name: Valentino Cano Onac 2. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: Date: September 25, 2023; Time: 9:30a.m., Dept. C, Room: 312. The address of the court is the same as above. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county, THE SIGNAL TRIBUNE, 1860 Obispo Ave., Ste. F, Signal Hill, CA 90755, August 4, 11, 18, 25, 2023 \_\_/ss//\_\_ Olivia Rosales, Judge of the Superior Court Dated: July 24, 2023

**TST7053**  
**KERN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT METROPOLITAN DIVISION - JUSTICE BUILDING CITATION TO PARENT CASE NO. BAT-23-003016**

In Re The matter of: The Petition of: ROBIN RENE FERGUSSON to Declare: JUSTICE ALFONSO RAMIREZ and JORGE JOEL TRAVIS RAMIREZ, Minors, for freedom from Parental Custody and Control THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA To: BREANNA LEIGH REYES: By order of this court you are hereby advised that you may appear before the judge presiding in Division F of this court on SEPTEMBER 29, 2023, at 8:30 am, then and there to show cause, if any you have, why JUSTICE ALFONSO RAMIREZ and JORGE JOEL TRAVIS RAMIREZ, should not be declared free from your custody and control.

The following information concerns rights and procedures that relate to this proceeding for the termination of custody and control of JUSTICE ALFONSO RAMIREZ and JORGE JOEL TRAVIS RAMIREZ, and require such protection that court will appoint counsel to represent them, whether or not they are able to afford counsel. JUSTICE ALFONSO RAMIREZ and JORGE JOEL TRAVIS RAMIREZ, will not be present in court unless they so request or the court so orders. 2. If a parent of JUSTICE ALFONSO RAMIREZ and JORGE JOEL TRAVIS RAMIREZ, appears without counsel and is unable to afford counsel, the court must appoint counsel for the parent, unless the parent knowingly and intelligently waives the right to be represented by counsel. The court will not appoint the same counsel to represent the minor child and the parent. 3. The court may appoint either a public defender or private counsel. If private counsel is appointed, he or she will receive a reasonable sum for compensation and expenses, the amount of which will be determined by the court. That amount must be paid by the real parties in interest, but not by the minor, in such proportions as the court believes to be just. If, however, the court finds that any of the real parties in interest cannot afford counsel, the amount will be paid by the county. 4. The court may continue the proceedings for not more than 30 days as necessary to appoint counsel and to enable counsel to become acquainted with the case. Attorney for Petitioner: George R. Horrigan, Esq. State Bar No.: 134450 LAW OFFICE OF GEORGE R. HORRIGAN, APLC 900 Truxtun Avenue, Suite 310 Bakersfield, California 93301 (661) 489-3100; Fax: (661) 489-3500 DATED: July 26, 2023 Ramarah Harber-Pickens, County Clerk By: K. Figueroa Pub.Signal Tribune 8/11, 18, 25 & 9/1

# Personal Essays

## Lessons from Therapy

by Nina Jacinto 

I've been in therapy on and off for over ten years. In that time there have been many lessons.

Lesson #34: My inner child is real. She needs a hug and a cupcake.

I didn't like the concept of an inner child. That was some sort of pop-psychology myth, I'd concluded. If not for others, then at least for myself. Even after I had started to delve into early experiences and memories as a child, I was too cool for an inner child.

And then there was a turning point. Over a series of conversations about my own rigidity, self-judgment and criticism, she broaches the subject again. "A part of you is extremely critical and harsh about yourself and where you 'should be' in your life. And you describe another part of you, who wants to be more forgiving, more

compassionate. Who are those parts protecting?"

"I don't know....this....vulnerable, squishy part of me. Like a 2 year old Nina. Little Girl Nina."

"Who is Little Girl Nina?"

"I don't know. She's this younger part of me that needs protection and care and wants to play and be loved and seen and I'm simultaneously protecting her and also ignoring her."

We sat in silence.

"Fuck." I say. "She's my inner child isn't she."

My therapist smiles.

Little Girl Nina (LGN) makes her appearances regularly now. She's a personified, soft, squishy bunch of memories and vulnerabilities. She squeaks out her feelings and wants to be heard and seen and hugged. She also wants a cupcake. But she doesn't want to be silenced with 5

cupcakes.

I talk to her. Sometimes, when I'm overwhelmed and on the verge of tears, I ask myself, "What do you need right now Little Me?" like some distorted fairy tail villain. I try to hear her answer. Healing. Space. Rest.

"We are the parent and we are the child," my therapist says. The parent cares for the child, keeps her safe, gives her space to play and grow. The child reminds the parent to follow the path of authenticity, to be emotional and raw, to take life less seriously. The child reminds the parents of old wounds that the parent must then process for the both of them.

"We want to end our suffering by sending the child to a deep place inside, and staying as far away as possible. But running away doesn't end our suffering; it only prolongs

it." Thich Nhat Hanh says. My therapist reads the quote to me. I write it down in my phone to look at over and over again.

Sometimes I have a dream that I'm holding a small girl's hand on the beach. She pulls away from me and gets close to the water. She gets pulled into the waves and I feel so terrible but I think about waiting, to see if she'll come back to shore on her own. She doesn't. And so I dive in. The water isn't cold - it feels like soft jelly. We grab each other's hands and we hug each other tightly and the water pushes us onto the sand. I burrow my face into the top of her head and think, "our hair is the same." And then I wake up. But she's still with me, burrowing deep in my heart.

## DEAR DAD

by Gina Overholt

Dear Dad,

I just want to thank you for the opportunity to plan your 80th birthday party this summer. As the eldest, and dare I say closest, of your four children, it was my pleasure to take on the role of lead party organizer. I know it meant a lot to you to see the memorabilia table. I carefully selected the photos and artifacts on display, including your Air Force fatigues, circa 1965-1966 when you did two tours of duty in Vietnam.

At first, you did not want a big party, but eventually you came to see things my way. The party was an opportunity for us, your family, friends and former co-workers to honor you. In the spirit of full disclosure, the details were a welcome distraction because the party planning began to feel like a race against time. In recent months, your cognitive decline has become more apparent, and we were worried about whether you'd be able to remember who everyone is.

Your personality is larger than life, and it's heartbreaking, Dad, to watch you disappear. I know that you have been dismayed, frustrated, scared and even angry about your memory problems. Your fear sometimes gave way to obstinacy and defensiveness when we tried to get you to see the doctor or to sell your home. Once you realized you needed to take better care of yourself, you moved in with your girlfriend Carla and began to soften.

In the meantime, I will remind myself to live in the now and choose to be grateful for every moment we share. You still amaze me with what you do recall and remember. I continue to love hearing your stories. Thanks to your wonderful girlfriend, you are starting to take action with over-the-counter neurological supplements and, now, a prescription dementia medication.

You have more good years ahead and so much to share with the world. I am here to share it with you for as long as possible.

Love, your daughter,  
Gina

## Letter of Forgiveness

by Alvin Fogleman 

Hey, "you", here I go again writing a letter to forgive you. I've already walked this road many times and found nothing has changed. All the other times I did it for you. To ease your conscience and heartache. This is the last time.

This isn't for you, this is for me.

This is so that I can heal and grow and move on. With or without you.

This is for me.

When I've broached topics before you tried to break me down. To make me feel small. Like I either didn't know what I was talking about or I was lying. That whatever it was was my fault. I remember. I remember everything. I can recall—vividly—my childhood. I don't blame you. I know you did the best you could given the hand you were dealt. You somehow, miraculously, managed to both protect and aban-

don all in one fluid motion. A paradox for real.

You abandoned us and then became vindictive when we sought love, nurturing and support elsewhere. As if we were in the wrong. I always came back to you. Given the choice I came back to you every time.

Fast forward to when I was a teenager. I had buried my dad at age sixteen. You left me homeless on the streets for years—both before and after his death. I roamed around looking for you and when I found you you treated me as if I were an acquaintance. Like I was just a random person you had once met in passing. I needed you. I didn't know how to deal with all life was throwing at me. And I especially didn't know how to deal with my dad's death. Yet you shunned me.

I've never told anyone, but I was distraught, alone and hopeless with no clue what else there was for me to do. So I used a rusty razor blade in my friend's backyard while they were away in hopes of bleeding out. I still carry those scars.

Right before I turned 18 I discovered I was supposed to have been receiving monthly social security checks following my father's death. For nearly two years you hid this from me. You left me to rot in the gutter while you got high on the money intended to clothe and feed me. I had to panhandle change, sleep on park benches or under bridges while you shackled up in motels with the flavor of the week on my money. By the time I had found out it was far too late. The funds stopped coming when I became an adult. All I had to show

for it was the last check stub and a new born baby.

Still you somehow managed to concoct your story to make you the innocent party and blamed me or rather my memory of actual events as you see it.

Yet still I came back to you.

I've forgiven you before, though I did it for you and always held a grudge. I forgive you again. This time it's not for you. I'm taking charge and this one is for me. This is so that I can move on with my life and grow. I'm no longer holding on to my anger towards you. Forgiving doesn't mean forgetting....

I'm free of those self imposed chains of anger, remorse or regret. I hope you too find it in you to forgive yourself.

## Lessons From A Long Walk

by Nicole Ecklund 

I closely experienced my own neighborhood, where I'd lived all my life. I found out there's a man who likes to clean the gutter on hands and knees. I learned where every cat belongs, and that people here eat a lot of garlic bread.

I watched the leaves come back to the trees, grow, and die again. During that year, I became a new person.

My daily routine was about caring for and spending time with my grandma, and dog. With both of them gone, what was left? It was just me. What am I going to do, when I'm free to do anything?

Well, mostly that was playing video games and crying. But I was always walking. I don't know how well I would have gotten through that time in my life if I didn't have that goal to achieve every single day. And towards the end of the year, I was ready to clean out my grandma's room.

This was harder than it sounds. Hoarding runs in my family, and my grandma was the hoard queen. Though she only took up one room in my house, it was full of so many things. The path from her door to her bed resembled a trench. She would sometimes lean against the

trench wall to spy on neighborhood drama through the large window on the other side. She entertained herself endlessly lying in her bed and turning her pile of junk, opening boxes and finding treasure to place inside while my dog slept beside her.

As I cleaned her room I opened every purse, every pocket. Jewelry boxes full of pennies and pen caps. Scraps of paper she wrote names on over and over in perfect cursive. I let go of it all.

It sounds kind of ridiculous that the thing I'm most proud of achieving is walking a long way, especial-

ly because this walk took place on a sidewalk in a suburb and not on a treacherous mountain. But the thing is, it took so much perseverance.

It was 40,000 hours of being alone with myself. Most of the time I didn't want to be doing that, and doing it wasn't going to get me anything concrete. I only did it to prove I could, and that was something I needed to know. I needed to learn that the only thing separating people who can and who can't, is the practice in between. There is no magic I don't possess.

Completing this goal I set for

myself despite experiencing huge personal changes in the time I had to complete it, gave me confidence in myself I didn't have before. I learned I was capable of more than I believed I was, and that to keep growing I needed to keep setting goals.

I was able to step into my new life unburdened by the past, instead of succumbing to my family's hoarding compulsion. Sometimes it feels like all being alive is, is persevering. So, what I really learned was how to be alive. Alive with the cats, the leaves, and the guy who just wants a clean gutter.



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