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SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER GROUP

FRIDAY, APRIL 26, 2024

sdnews.com

THIS WEEK



'Happy Days' at fashion show and luncheon
SEE PAGE 14



University City High pole vaulter flies high
SEE PAGE 6



The Social Diary: supporting the Gorilla Fund
SEE PAGE 16



The coveted title of 'Best in Show' was awarded to The William Lyon Family's pristine 1934 Packard Twelve at the 18th annual La Jolla Concours d'Elegance on April 21 at Ellen Browning Scripps Park. During the event, 113 vehicles competed in 13 classes that included makes and models including Bugatti, Duesenberg, Packard, Bentley, Rolls Royce, and more. See page 16 for more La Jolla Concours d'Elegance winners. PHOTO COURTESY OF LA JOLLA CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE

After 34 years, Princess Street Trail to reopen in 2025

By DAVE SCHWAB

La Jollans Melinda Merryweather and Pam Heatherington have been on a years-long quest to re-establish beach access on a historic trail from Princess Street to the pocket beach below.

Now that goal is almost within reach. If all continues to go well securing all the necessary permitting and governmental approvals, the hope is the project could be completed next year.

"This adventure has taken over 34 years and there is a whole generation who have not had the pleasure of this access," said Merryweather, a longtime community planner on La Jolla Parks and Beaches, Inc., a nonprofit dedicated to preserving, protecting, and enhancing coastal parks. "It should be open

to the public. It is a historic American Indian trail. It is a blessing to have it back. We are hoping it will be reopened in late 2025."

Until 1979, the Princess Street Coastal Access Trail provided a point of entry to what is now known as the San Diego-La Jolla Underwater Park and Matlahuayl State Marine Reserve below. The trail also has served as a critical emergency access point for City lifeguards to an otherwise inaccessible portion of the La Jolla coastline due to rocky cliff topography.

Heatherington of the Environmental Center of San Diego, a nonprofit dedicated to preserving and enhancing the natural environment, has been working with Merryweather and others since 2017 to restore the historic trail.

See TRAIL, Page 6



Melinda Merryweather (left) and Pam Heatherington have been working for years to restore public access to the Princess Street Trail down to the beach. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



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City Tacos celebrates 10 years as a palate-expanding taqueria

By DREW SITTON

Much has changed in the San Diego culinary scene since Gerry Torres opened City Tacos in North Park 10 years ago. Some of that change is thanks to his work educating the public about what authentic Mexican food should taste like through his affordable gourmet tacos.

Torres and executive chef Eduardo Baeza are both from Mexico City. A decade ago, Torres felt like Mexican cuisine in San Diego consisted of the same menu at every taco shop with the same five ingredients in each dish plated in 25 different ways. In 2014, he opened an authentic taqueria with flavorful offerings foreign to San Diego palates.

The original menu had five tacos: Borrego (lamb), Chile Relleno, Chorizo, Pollo City, and Portobello. Customers vote on new tacos every month, building an ever-evolving menu with some favorites that have never been voted off.

"You do have to educate your client base. You do have to make them think outside of the norm," Torres said of his time helping the public embrace his philosophy of tacos.

He believes tacos must always be eaten fresh at a taqueria, remembering his time in Mexico where tacos were made to order one at a time so none went cold. It was only during the demands of the



Gerry Torres at the Ocean Beach location of City Tacos where its anniversary celebration will take place on Saturday, May 4. PHOTO BY ALT STRATEGIES

pandemic that City Tacos grudgingly began offering takeout and delivery.

Consistency is maintained throughout all locations thanks to his commissary kitchen. Making everything from tortillas to sauces from scratch and handling delivery to the shops also keeps costs down while guaranteeing quality ingredients.

"You can't mask food. It will find a way of shining through whether it's good or bad," Torres said. "It's about quality."

The growth of City Tacos has been careful and methodical. The eatery has never been in debt and

CITY TACOS

Where: 4516 Mission Blvd.
Hours: 11 a.m.-10 p.m. daily.
Info: citytacossd.com/
locations-pacific-beach.

all locations are solvent. When finding a new location, Torres walks the neighborhood to see if it is a place he would enjoy visiting. This has led him to La Mesa, Ocean Beach, Encinitas, Petco Park, Pacific Beach, Sorrento Valley, and Los Angeles. His next steps are to open a northern commissary kitchen and another location in Los Angeles with eventual plans to make it to San Francisco.

Through the growth of the business, Torres' wife of over 20 years Cristina Benavente is the unsung hero of City Tacos. He describes her as an excellent, experimental cook whose culinary endeavors are often the inspiration for tacos of the month.

"She is a foodie just like me... and she likes to excite my palate by doing creative things," Torres said.

She also took on extra childcare duties in the early years of City Tacos. Now, Torres limits himself to eight-hour days and takes one day off per week. His two adult children returned from northern California and Florida respectively, of their own volition, to help with the family business.

"It brings tremendous joy because the family has enjoyed the ride along with me. We are a very

close-knit family," Torres said.

His son Hector Aguirre is a regional manager and his daughter started the company's Instagram account in addition to being a shift manager.

"They made me hip, or tried to make me hip. The kids have been instrumental in moving the process along," he said.

His youngest son, now 13 years old, may not be old enough to officially work for City Tacos but is still an inspiration for City Tacos' most ambitious endeavor, the taco playground in Ocean Beach. Torres found his teenage son glued to his computer and had trouble relating.

"We wanted to be out and

about and enjoying life. The OB Playground is about that. It's about, turning off the devices, socializing with your kids, playing with them," Torres said. The open-air location is decorated with murals made by local elementary students and filled with giant games like Jenga and checkers.

"I've seen that flourish. I haven't seen any tablets or phones within the space, which nowadays, that's pretty much [impossible]," he said.

OB Playground at 4896 Voltaire St. will be the location of the biggest anniversary celebration as well on Saturday, May 4.

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