

THE SOUTH COAST BEACON

July 22, 2004 • Writing Worth Reading • www.scbeacon.com



South Coast Homes

Redecorating on a budget
is easier than you think.
INSIDE

Our Town

Lunar reunion has a
hometown feel for our
Sally Cappon.

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I, Opening

Hard wiring stops and the
soul takes over in I, Robot.

23

FASHION 21

CALENDAR 24-26

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CHEAP THRILLS

We may scrimp to live here, but it doesn't mean we have to sacrifice our rich lifestyles. From free concerts in the park to meal deals to wine buys to thrift shop clothing specials, the Beacon can help you live well, beyond your means. FREE!

By LESLIE DINABERG
South Coast Beacon

I knew it was going to be a good day when the woman in front of me in line at the new Starbucks in the Fairview Center Vons (175 N. Fairview Ave) said she had a 2-for-1 coupon and wanted to treat me to coffee. It's good karma to start your day with a random act of kindness from a stranger, particularly when your assignment is to drive from Gaviota to Carpinteria to see what you can get for free.

Free latte in hand, off I went on Highway 101 toward Gaviota. I gave some serious thought to picking up a hitchhiker I saw just past Winchester Canyon. After all, giving someone a free ride would certainly fit in well with my story. But screaming visions of headlines like "Journalist Gives Life in Quest for Story" got the best of me. Sorry, dude.

It's a long drive. People who commute from the North County must really love their houses! I'll take my "five minutes away from everything, cozy little rental" any day.

Finally, I pull into the Gaviota rest area. It's too cold and windy to enjoy my favorite free newspaper (ahem ... *The South Coast Beacon*) outside, so I check out the rest stop. Did you know that Gaviota is Spanish for seagull? Apparently in 1769, soldiers

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VINCENT M. LARA / *South Coast Beacon*



LESLIE DINABERG / *South Coast Beacon*

FREE TO TOUCH: David Jackson of Zoo to You introduces his pal, Bob the alligator, to a group of children and parents at the Montecito Public Library, 1469 East Valley Road. The meet-and-greet is one of the many free educational programs offered through the Santa Barbara County public library system.

Low-cost options cater to children

By LESLIE DINABERG
South Coast Beacon

Looking to track down some free family fun this summer? The library is a great place to start. Canyon and Trouble, a baby mountain lion and his bear cub playmate, made a recent visit to the **Montecito Public Library** (1469 East Valley Road) with wildlife educator duo David and Anita Jackson of Zoo to You. The children met Lucas the hawk, Chelsea the bobcat, Calvin Klein the skunk and Bob the alligator, thanks to Wild America, one of the many free local programs offered by the public library system.

Next week's schedule includes Songstress Teresa McNeil MacLean performing Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. in Solvang (1745 Mission Drive) and 2:30 p.m. at the **Central Library** (40 E. Anapamu St.); Wednesday at 10 a.m. in Goleta (500 N. Fairview Ave.) and 2:30 p.m. at the Central Library; and July 29 at 10:30 a.m. in Montecito. Storyteller Michael Katz will spin his tales at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the **Goleta Library**. Teens can participate in two-hour miniature expedition workshops (at 3 p.m. Wednesday at the **Solvang Library** and 3 p.m. July 29 at the Goleta Library) where they create inventive scenes based on imaginary journeys to Egypt, Africa, South America and more.

Ongoing activities include preschool story times at 10:30 a.m. Tuesdays at the Central Library and the Solvang Branch; Wednesdays at the Solvang Branch, Goleta Branch and the

Eastside Branch (1102 E. Montecito St.); and Thursdays at the Goleta Branch, Montecito Branch, Central Library and **Carpinteria Branch** (5141 Carpinteria Ave.). Call 964.7878 for the bookmobile story time schedule and bilingual story times.

Also running at all the libraries through Aug. 16 are summer reading programs, where children and teenagers can win prizes from **Metropolitan Theatres**, **McDonald's**, the **Chocolate Gallery** and more. The library also offers a great way to save money on late fines, visit www.sbplibrary.org/ and renew your books online.

For outdoor family fun, our many local parks and beaches can't be beat, nor can the free summer concerts on Thursdays at 6 p.m. at **Chase Palm Park** (323 E. Cabrillo Blvd.) and Sunday afternoons at 3 p.m. at **Alameda Park** (1400 Santa Barbara St.). Entry is also free at **Skaters Point Skate Park** (Cabrillo Boulevard at Garden Street) with early weekend mornings reserved for young children.

The **Goleta Depot's** "short line" miniature-train (300 N. Los Carneros Road) also offers free rides every Wednesday and the first Friday of every month, with trains running several times an hour between 1:15 and 3:45 p.m.

The **Santa Barbara Maritime Museum** (113 Harbor Way) is free the third Thursday of every month. Admission to the **Santa Barbara Museum of Art** (1130 State St.) is free every Sunday. The last Sunday of every month is free at the **Santa Barbara Museum**

of Natural History (2559 Puesta del Sol Road). And the **Carpinteria Valley Museum of History** (956 Maple Ave.) is always free.

The artfully inclined should check out **Art From Scrap's** (302 E. Cota St.; 884.0459) art workshops for kids of all ages (including adults). They're led by local artists every Saturday from 10 to 11:30 a.m. and cost just \$6. **ARTS ALIVE! Dance & Creativity Center** (1 N. Calle Cesar Chavez, Suite 100; 963.2278) also offers a variety of low-cost sample classes in dance, fabrics, ceramics, painting, sculpture and more.

Free or low-cost trial classes are also available at **MY GYM** (3888 State St.; 963.3903), **Kindermusik with Kathy** (1213 State St., Suite 1; 884.4009), **Gymboree** (5148 Hollister Ave.; 683.7780) and **Santa Barbara Gymnastics Club** (4179 State St.; 683.1724). Call for details and class schedules.

Zodo's — Bowling & Beyond (5925 Calle Real) has free bowling this summer for kids under 18. Also free for the summer is **Circus Day**. Every Monday from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at **Alice Keck Park Memorial Garden** (1500 Santa Barbara St.) you can try hula-hooping, tray spinning, twirling flags, juggling, doing back flips and more.

Also check out www.sbpark-sandrecreation.com for information on a wide variety of inexpensive youth art, sports and recreation activities. The teen programs division also has activities, some in partnership with the **Police Activities League**. Call the teen hotline at 897.2650 for information on what's going on.

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Entry deadline — Friday, July 30th, 2004

Freestyle

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if he'd run out of colors before Sue ran out of letters.

Knowing I still had a long journey ahead, I inflated my tires with free air from **Fairview Shell Auto Center** (55 N. Fairview Ave.) then had my glasses adjusted for free at **Goleta Valley Optical** (5124 Hollister Ave.).

I had more ground to cover at **La Cumbre Plaza**. Seven minutes later I sampled lipsticks at the Lancôme counter at **Robinsons-May** (3805 State St.) and contemplated a free makeover. Weighing my afternoon options, I decided to pass on the makeup and instead stopped by **See's Candy** (a girl's got to set priorities) for a free sample of a milk chocolate Bordeaux. Then I was on to **McDonald's** (3940 State St.) for a free pixie-sized kid ice cream cone. Ooof, any more free food and I'll have to go back to "Not a real Doctor" for colonic consult.

Back on the 101 South. Why is it that almost any time of day, there's still a slow-down where the traffic lights used to be, even though Caltrans removed them in 1991 — making it a free freeway. By the time I got to Summerland I was ready to stop at **The Nugget** (2318 Lillie Ave.) for *Restful Restrooms* research purposes, and of course, the free popcorn.

Next it's on to **Carpinteria State Park**. The 100-year-old ranger counsels me to avoid the \$8 parking fee by going to nearby two-hour free street parking on Linden Avenue. I stroll along the beach for a while. It's afternoon by now, and decidedly more crowded than my earlier excursions north of Goleta.

More free advice: a woman says there's a **Farmer's Market** "downtown" that afternoon, so I go on over to get delicious, free



MICAH BARBER / South Coast Beacon

samples of strawberries, peaches, avocados and that small town Carp flavor.

There' also the **Coffee Grinder** (910 Linden Ave.) where they had free wireless Internet access. Since I was laptopless that day, I passed.

Next stop was the **Carpinteria Valley Museum of History** (956 Maple Ave.) a terrific free museum where kids of all ages can actually get up close to, or even touch, most of the exhibits, including playing a player piano.

On the way back to the office I stopped by **Metro Comics** (6 W. Anapamu St.), where it wasn't free comic book day anymore, but there still were leftover Archie's to give away. Later that night I astounded my son with my knowledge of the ins and outs of Riverdale High, while enjoying the background jazz of the Lao Tizer Band, courtesy of the Santa Barbara Parks & Recreation Department's free concerts at **Chase Palm Park**. Of course, I used my annual water-

front parking permit (a bargain for any regular beachgoer at \$60 a year) and saved the \$3 parking fee.

Tired from my long day of penny-pinching, I handed the reporter's notebook and pen I stole from my office to an energetic intern, Micah Barber, who planned to explore the South Coast's free nightlife.

If I could actually do this free thing every day, maybe I could save up enough money for a down payment on a one-bedroom shack in Goleta — by 2050.

...

By MICAH BARBER
South Coast Beacon

Leslie Dinaberg passed me the cheap-skate baton for the evening, leaving me to find cheap food and entertainment in Santa Barbara. As a recent college graduate, I had plenty of ideas. A friend of mine once made a habit of attending happy

hours and, for the price of one margarita, would eat their buffet. So I began my quest at **Sharkeez** (416 State St.). The food was cheap, and drinks are two for one! Unfortunately, two for one ended up being two Coronas for \$4.75 — not a bargain, but the food made up for it. I chilled on a bar stool, watched snowboarding videos, and observed the happy-hour crowd.

My next destination was a movie. I had a few thrifty options. The **Metropolitan Cinema Twin** (6050 Hollister Ave.) features second-run flicks at \$3 a seat. My Santa Barbara Axxess card, too, lets me in to most films in the area for \$5.50. But even better, my friend, Sara, was given two free passes to a *Delovely* screening sponsored by KLITE. Better still, it was at **Paseo Nuevo**, so I wouldn't have to move my car from my free — at night — parking spot downtown.

I walked up to meet Sara for the 7 o'clock showing, stopping only for an awkward "hello" to my ex-girlfriend, eating at an outdoor trattoria (Sara and I later walked by flirtatiously as a joke — it was hilariously free entertainment). The film was enjoyable and the crowd amiable; they seemed to like free stuff as much as I.

Desiring to hit up a more social night spot, I thought about my options. **SoHo's** and **Elsie's** both came to mind. In the end we decided on **Dargan's** (18 E. Ortega St.), a good place to shoot pool, grab a drink or catch a few locals at an open mic night.

This open mic night was like many others I've experienced in Santa Barbara: it didn't happen! It could have been that we arrived too late, but one would think that at 9 p.m. at least the microphone would still be around. Incidentally, if there's a good open mic — music or poetry — in the area, I'd like to see it. So far I've struck out.

Overall, though, Dargan's was a relaxed scene and a pleasant end to my night of frugality. If only I could find a way to stop paying for gas ...

Pet Talk

GREG McDONALD, D.V.M.

Savings available in pet health care, too

Here is the best advice I could possibly give a pet caretaker concerning how to take good care of his or her pet. Do buy health insurance for all of your pets. Don't wait until they get a major illness. Veterinary costs are rising because the cost of practicing veterinary medicine is going up. If you wait until your pet gets sick you may be faced with extraordinary medical bills to get your pet back on his or her paws. Many people do not even know pet insurance is available. You need to look at the policy and determine what level of coverage you need. If you are the type of client who takes the animal in when it needs veterinary care, you will find the policy will pay for itself over the course of the year. And if that major trauma or disease hits, you won't be faced with having to choose euthanasia

rather than treatment. Visit www.petinsurance.com for more information. Do buy the best food (usually the most expensive). Don't buy the cheapest food you can find. The old saying, "You are what you eat" is also true for your pets. I feel sorry for the consumer in this area. Billions of dollars are spent on this one item and guess what, if there is money to be made, the marketing and advertisers are deep into your pockets. To level the playing field words like natural, new, improved, complete and wholesome should not be allowed on pet food labels. The only one you should trust is your veterinarian. Do call your veterinarian at the first sign of illness. Don't wait until your dog is really sick to contact your veterinarian. It befuddles me to no end why

clients don't call early at the first sign of trouble. In most circumstances the receptionist at the veterinary hospital will know if the animal should be seen. Often you can even bring a fecal or a urine sample to see if there is a problem. It is human nature to wait to see what happens at the first sign of disease. If one waits, your regular veterinarian may not be available and weekends and evenings at the emergency clinic are going to be more expensive than early treatment at your veterinarian's office. Also many, if not most diseases, can be treated very inexpensively if caught early. The most interesting fact here is that veterinarians don't charge anything for phone consultations in most cases. They are trained and experienced in asking the right questions to determine if your pet needs to be

seen. Do respond to your veterinarian's reminders for health checks. Don't decide to put off the health checks because your pet seems "just fine." Your veterinarian is highly trained to evaluate the health status of your pet. Animals age about seven times faster than their human counterparts so an annual physical exam is very important. During a simple exam your veterinarian will examine all the organ systems, get a weight and, at my hospital we conduct an annual ECG as part of the exam. Many clients may worry we will find something wrong but, in many of these cases, we often can do something as simple as change the diet to correct the disease. Physical exams can detect weight loss, hydration, dental disease, heart murmurs and skin diseases. Do control your pet. Don't let

your dog or cat run loose. Indoor cats live twice as long as their country cousins. Leash laws also protect dogs and their caretaker's pocket books. Fracture repair is not only costly but very painful to your pets. When you confine your pet to indoors or on a leash, expensive, painful accidents don't happen. These are just a few ideas that can help keep the cost of pet ownership under control. Insurance, proper nutrition and annual veterinary checks will most assuredly prevent the high cost of serious diseases in your pet.
Dr. Greg McDonald, D.V.M., practices at McDonald Animal Hospital, 225 South Milpas St., and can be reached 730.1764 or at DrGreg@doctorsforpets.com. McDonald also produces PetPointers on KTMS AM 990 at 11 a.m. Saturdays.