

SJC Living

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

saturday 10.20

Architectural Walking Tour

10 a.m. Departs from the train platform at the foot of Verdugo Street. The walk includes all of the major buildings in the downtown area, from adobes to post modern, from Victorian to streamline modern and takes 60 to 90 minutes. A \$5 donation to the Friends of the Library is requested. Group tours are also available. Call 949.489.0736. Occurs every Saturday.

sunday 10.21

Historical Downtown Walk

1 p.m. Meet at the train depot near Sarducci's. Occurs every Sunday. 949.493.8444

monday 10.22

Capistrano Unified School District Board of Education

6 p.m. 33122 Valle Road. Trustees hold a special meeting to discuss the District Attorney's report on alleged violations of state public meetings laws. See the agenda at www.capousd.org

tuesday 10.23

Water Advisory Commission Meeting

7 p.m. Council Chamber, 32400 Paseo Adelanto. See the agenda at www.sanjuancapistrano.org

Planning Commission Meeting

7 p.m. Council Chamber, 32400 Paseo Adelanto. See the agenda at www.sanjuancapistrano.org

wednesday 10.24

Farmers Market

3 p.m.-7 p.m. Take a stroll and buy farm-fresh produce, flowers and specialty foods. Yorba Street at Camino Capistrano. Occurs every Wednesday.

Transportation Commission Meeting

7 p.m. Council Chamber, 32400 Paseo Adelanto. See the agenda at www.sanjuancapistrano.org

friday 10.26

Community Coffee Chat

8 a.m.-9:30 a.m. Metro Java Café, 32211 Camino Capistrano, 949.240.4672. Occurs every Friday.

Have an event?

Send your listing to editor@thecapistranodispatch.com.

Business Beat

By The Capistrano Dispatch Staff

UNDER NEW OWNERSHIP

► RANCHO ORTEGA PLAZA

27201-27231 Ortega Hwy.

The shopping center home to Ortega Handwash and Starbucks has been sold for \$11.7 million. HLB Properties sold the 23,259-square-foot plaza, built in 2001 on 2.1 acres, to Minaberry Family Trust B. Damon Wyler, Brian Sperry and Bill Casas of Sperry Van Ness represented HLB. Jerry Brown of Rancon Real Estate represented the buyer.

► MIRAMAR THEATER

1598 S. El Camino Real, San Clemente

San Juan Capistrano businessman Marc Spizzirri has purchased the Miramar Theater in San Clemente for a reported sale price of \$5.3 million. Spizzirri, who co-owns Family Automotive Group, said he's long appreciated the Miramar and what it represents. "I am excited about the possibilities," Spizzirri said.

JUST OPENED

► A FINE AFFAIR

31781 Camino Capistrano, 949.276.2117

Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 9 a.m.-7 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.

Yugoslavian-born hair stylist Milko opened his salon last month after moving to San Juan from Spa Gaucin Salon at St. Regis Resort in Monarch Beach. An award-winning stylist, Milko once lived in Washington, D.C., where, among other clients, Milko was the official stylist for the NBA's Washington Wizards dance team. Jeanette Bodker is the salon's expert colorist.



Milko (left) at his salon. Photo by Jonathan Volzke

Jennifer Connellan: Future Focused

What Are Colleges Really Looking For?



These days it seems like students need to be NASA engineers with 1,800 hours of community service and A+'s in every class they've ever taken to get

into college. While this is clearly an exaggeration, many parents are increasingly anxious about their student's chances for acceptance. They see their students working hard in high school, delicately balancing intense academic workloads with sports schedules, volunteer work and SAT prep classes. Will these efforts pay off? What are the colleges really looking for?

For the next several columns, I will address your concerns about college. You will learn valuable information here, but I also find that information tends to illicit more questions. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any specific questions you have!

Dear Jennifer,

My daughter is a junior in high school and is a very good student—by my standards anyway. She works hard in school and gets mostly As and Bs in her classes. She plays tennis for her high school team and is active

in ASB. Despite all of this, I am so worried that she won't get in to college! What are the colleges looking for in a student?

—Becky M., parent

Dear Becky,

This is a complicated question because there is so much variance from college to college, in terms of what they emphasize most in the criteria they use for admissions. I strongly advise you to find out specifically about each school that your daughter is planning on applying to, but here are the general components that colleges use to evaluate candidates:

- Academic Record: Colleges will look at your daughter's transcripts from grades nine through 11 and the courses she will be taking her senior year. The higher her GPA and class rank are, the better.

- Academic Rigor: This goes hand in hand with the GPA. Colleges want to see that students have challenged themselves in the courses they've taken. A student who receives straight As in regular classes (4.0 GPA) with no honors or AP classes is at a disadvantage for many colleges as compared to a student who took honors and/or AP classes, got a B or two and obtained a 4.0 GPA.

- Test Scores: The SAT, ACT and SAT IIs are included here. Each college has specific requirements for tests, but most schools ask for some type of standardized test score. It is acceptable, and advantageous often times, to take the test more than once to improve the score and/or to find out which test your student does better on.

- Extra-Curricular Activities: Sports, clubs and volunteer work are included. For your daughter, tennis and ASB would be considered here. Colleges want to see that a student is passionate and committed to what they choose to do outside of school. Students can best show this passion and commitment through the amount of time they spend doing an activity. The more hours per week, and the more weeks per year that a student participates in an extra-curricular activity, the more dedicated she seems. This speaks to her strengths outside of the classroom.

- Essay: Most colleges require a college essay that asks the student, in some way, to describe what makes him or her unique. This is an opportunity to set him/herself apart and let the

admissions officers get to know what the student is really like. In a world of ultra-competitive college admissions, the essay is increasingly more important at many schools.

These are five of the criteria most colleges examine for college admissions. Also important are a student's leadership roles, letters of recommendation and, in some cases, interviews.

While it is understandable to be nervous about college admissions, you can help your student most by preparing early. Ask questions, consult experts, but don't have your student take on too much. We don't want our students to be so stressed out about college that they completely miss out on all the fun opportunities high school has to offer. There are more than 2,500 colleges in the U.S. It is likely that you will find one that meets your student's needs!

Jennifer Connellan is the co-founder and president of San Juan Capistrano's Future Focused, which offers college counseling, tutoring and academic coaching for students in Orange County. E-mail Jennifer@futurefocused.com or call 949.276.4077. ■