

Community Our town

COMING TOMORROW: The Lake Arrowhead Chamber of Commerce presents its 31st annual Home Tour, opening five unique area homes to the public.

IN BRIEF

SENIORS

Singles group

REDLANDS — The Joslyn Senior Center presents "Fancy Free Singles Group" from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. the first and third Wednesday of each month at 21 Grant St.

The first Wednesday of each month will be a potluck or an outing at a local restaurant. The Redlands Police Department is sponsoring the event.

For more information, call (909) 798-7550.

Learn to paint

REDLANDS — The Joslyn Senior Center offers a unique opportunity for senior painters in watercolors, acrylics, oils, and pastels to meet together to paint and learn new techniques from 9 a.m. to noon every Friday at the Joslyn Senior Center, 21 Grant St.

Get the chance to further your skills in painting and learn new techniques from experienced fellow painters on hand. Seniors from beginners to advanced are welcomed.

For more information, call (909) 798-7550.

Get in the swing

REDLANDS — The Redlands Police Department is presenting "Big Band Memories" from 3 to 5 p.m. every Monday at the Redlands Community Senior Center, 111 W. Legionia Ave.

"Big Band Memories" is a weekly presentation of popular music between 1935 and 1950, which represents the Big Band Era. Participants can sit and enjoy the vintage records being played or dance if the music inspires them.

This event is free to all seniors.

For more information, call (909) 798-7579.

MEETINGS

Literacy advisory board

FONTANA — The Mid-Valley Literacy Coalition (MVL) is currently recruiting advisory board members and tutors for the Adult Literacy Program at the Adult Literacy Program, 16860 Valencia Ave.

The MVL serves the Fontana, Rialto, Bloomington and Kaiser libraries and is a voluntary community organization that provides free educational skill development in reading, writing, math and English improvement. The services include free one-on-one tutoring that is vital to the learner's education, career and financial success.

For more information, please call Maxine McElroy (909) 350-4211.

VOLUNTEERS

Help feed the homebound

YUCAIPA — The Yucaipa Senior Center is seeking able-bodied volunteers to deliver USDA Food Commodities to homebound people in Yucaipa. The volunteers are needed on the third Thursday of each month to deliver their routes.

If you are interested in serving your community in a positive way, please call the Yucaipa Senior Center at (909)797-1177.

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY SUN

ON THIS DATE

Amtrak station becomes nonstaffed

In 1999, the San Bernardino County Sun reported that after 28 years in San Bernardino, Amtrak planned to turn its station into a nonstaffed stop, according to an Amtrak interoffice memo provided to the Sun.

"What? Aw, crap," said 77-year-old Grace Kingston, punching her fist in the air after learning of the plan. Kingston was stopping in at the station when she was told of the news. "The community needs this place. I know a lot of people who come up and use this place."

Trains were still going to pick up riders outside the station, but tickets would no longer be sold, bags would no longer be checked and the restrooms were to be closed.

The station was being closed because of a \$30 million shortfall Amtrak was facing, the memo stated. Amtrak had been a tenant at 1170 W. Third St. since 1971.

Over the years, ridership in the area had been steadily declining with only two passenger trains stopping at the station a day immediately prior to its closure in 1999.

Those who did ride the train said they were frustrated at the thought of having to purchase tickets over the phone, on the internet, at the Los Angeles train station or through a travel agent.

"I think it's a bunch of bull," San Bernardino resident Bettie Jones said. "It makes me really mad that they're going to close it."



Galit Breman with "The Dancing Tree," which hangs in her dining room. She has used tree bark in some paintings to create texture.

Photos by Jennifer M. Dobbs/For The Sun

Art unleashed

By Jennifer M. Dobbs
Correspondent

Her home is her studio. The laundry room is where she paints in oils and acrylics. The island in the kitchen is her jewelry workshop, where she carefully transforms gems into necklaces and earrings.

"The art is everywhere," said a smiling Galit Breman, artist and professor of psychology at University of Redlands. "The house is filled with it."

Breman, of Highland, is filled with the desire to create art, and said sometimes it just explodes onto the canvas through a brush or through her fingers.

"Once I get it out, then I have to relax myself down again," she said. Breman was born and raised in Tiberias, Israel, near the Sea of Galilee.

At age five, she brought her first painting to her father.

"He said, 'This is nice, but you need to improve.'"

"That haunts me," she said. In high school, she got in trouble for drawing during class.

"My teacher said I shouldn't be doing that during class. But he wanted to keep my drawing."

After serving compulsory duty in the army, Breman moved to Haifa, Israel, where she earned a master's degree in psychology at University of Haifa.

There she met husband Joe Breman, who had come from the United States to Israel to study marine civilizations. She encountered him in the dorm when he was knocking on doors looking for a mutual friend.

"When I met Joe, my art really burst. It was the first time I was painting out of feeling happy. It was a transformation."

She "followed her love" back to the United States.

"He took my first painting when I met him, and was the first one ever to frame my work."

"He said, 'Galit, this is your art. I love it,' and he framed it and put it on the wall."

"Something clicked inside and changed in me. I saw it in a different light. He appreciated it, and it made a huge difference to me."

That first painting of flowers in a



Galit Breman makes her jewelry in the kitchen, after the kids are in bed. She uses all types of gems — many of which are said to have healing properties.

vase, "Tranquil Theory," hangs on the wall of her den.

Most of her paintings are flowers, trees or marine life.

"He kept bringing me flowers, so I kept painting them."

Her signature of the flower paintings is a dying flower, a new flower, and those in between.

"One of my greatest compliments was when I was painting the irises on the canvas outside. A hummingbird flew up to it and thought it was real," she said.

Joe was the first one in the family to create jewelry, making necklaces as gifts for his wife.

"I measure them," she said.

INFORMATION

- Breman's art will be on exhibit and for sale indefinitely at Farm Artisan Foods, 19 E. Citrus Ave., Redlands.
- Web site: www.ripplegems.com

"Ripple, because that is my name in Hebrew. Galit means ripple."

Not wanting to part with her original oil and acrylic paintings, Breman had prints made from the originals to sell.

"That is when the idea with the restaurant came up. I saw the art that was there, and asked if they would be interested."

She has shown in a San Diego cafe, at a gallery on the Crafton Hills College campus, and is now showing at Farm Artisan Foods in the Cope Building on Citrus Avenue in Redlands.

"Galit and Joe were very early customers," said Roberto Argentina, owner of Farm Artisan Foods.

"We were looking for different local artists. One of my waitresses pushed for Galit's art after viewing it on her Web site."

"It is a very nice restaurant," Breman said. "And I feel very honored to have my art there."

"People have really enjoyed it," Argentina said. "Nothing has really matched as well in our restaurant as her art. We have asked her to stay on, switching out her art, kind of like an artist in residence."

"I look at these pieces of my soul hanging in the restaurant, and then the people react to my paintings. That is beautiful to see," Breman said.

Each painting has a story.

"It is not just a flower. It is not just a tree. There is a whole drama going on in the painting, and it is interesting to see how people interpret it."

"It is a journey of learning for me, too, how people look at art and what it means to them."

Breman's art dominates the house. But now that sons Joshua, 4, and Jonah, 2, are getting into art, she has to share the display space.

Drawings of happy faces and boats hang on the walls and refrigerator.

"Joshua insists on hanging his felt-marker art on the wall like mommy's," Breman said of her son's masterpieces. "I want to give him the feeling that we are supporting his art. I love it."