

MISSION VALLEY NEWS

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CITY COUNCIL CLEARS PATH FOR MEDICAL MARIJUANA



By Jeremy Ogul

Mission Valley News



The first thing you notice when you walk into Mission Valley's only medical marijuana dispensary is not the signature aroma of weed; rather, it's the spacious waiting room designed to look like a suave coffee house.

The waiting room at Kindest Meds, on Camino Del Rio South, is decked out with faux wood floors, comfy leather couches, potted palms, artistic pendant lighting from IKEA and an attractive young receptionist with tattooed arms. You can hardly smell the marijuana until you're invited beyond the waiting room, where the dried leaves are showcased in glass jars.

None of this is exactly legal. While California law permits medical marijuana collectives, they have been effectively banned by the city of San Diego's zoning laws.

The City Council last month, however, approved an ordinance that will permit a small number of dispensaries throughout the city, subject to numerous restrictions designed to minimize the dispensaries' impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

Until now the City Attorney's office has attempted to shut down the illicit dispensaries, but several have managed to stay afloat, such as Organic Roots in North Park, 5StarMeds in City Heights, Nature Knows Best in Ocean Beach and Kindest Meds in Mission Valley.

By press time, the City Attorney's office

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Latino filmmakers celebrated on movie screens in Mission Valley



A screenshot from *Who is Dayani Cristal?* starring Bernal, playing at The San Diego Latino Film Festival.

By Elisse Miller

For the Mission Valley News

With the official end of awards season, many may believe that the celebration and discussion of films is on its annual hiatus. Thanks to The San Diego Latino Film Festival, this simply isn't true.

The San Diego Latino Film Festival is celebrating its 21st anniversary this year, providing 11 straight days of thought-provoking entertainment. From March 13 to 23, the festival will take over UltraStar Mission Valley Cinemas at the Hazard Center and the Digital Gym Cinema for an expected audience of 20,000 people.

The festival, first organized in 1994, seeks to highlight tal-

"We believe in providing a positive democracy in that everyone needs to be involved with telling their story and having access to the tools needed."

- Ethan van Thillo

ent from creative individuals of underrepresented communities. These artists may not have had any previous opportunities to share their work. It was this passion for showcasing marginalized art that first inspired executive director and founder Ethan van Thillo to create the

festival.

"For young Latinos growing up, we wanted to provide them with opportunities to see, 'Oh my gosh, I can be a lawyer, I can be a doctor,'" van Thillo said. "The larger goal is to help young Latinos see positive images of themselves but then at the same time it's to help people and promote Latino filmmakers and get their stories across."

The festival began as a small student film showcase, complete with films from San Diego colleges, but it quickly expanded and led to the creation of Media Arts Center San Diego in 1999. This nonprofit organization now hosts several events outside the film festival including writing workshops and media technology camps.

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CITY APPROVES NEW RULES FOR FOOD TRUCKS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

By Ray Huard

For the Mission Valley News

Food trucks were given the nod to do business in much of San Diego under an ordinance adopted by the City Council on March 3rd.

The ordinance eliminates what had been a city prohibition against operating food trucks on private property and most streets.

Without the change, food truck operators had been subject to fines of up to \$1,000.

The ordinance does restrict food truck operations in the Gaslamp District along 5th Avenue from Broadway to Harbor Drive, along a six-block area of Little Italy and at the beaches, said city senior planner Amanda Lee.

It also prohibits food trucks near residences late at night.

In general, food truck operators say they can live with the regulations in the ordinance.

"The San Diego regulations are good," said Christian Mur-

See **FOOD TRUCKS** page 5

► Film, from page 1

"We believe in providing a positive democracy in that everyone needs to be involved with telling their story and have access to the tools that are needed," van Thillo said.

The San Diego Latino Film Festival does much more than provide opportunities; it provides entertainment. The festival not only includes movie screenings, but also guest appearances, art, parties and live music.

The festival is conveniently divided up into 13 different showcases, each with its own theme. Showcase topics include horror, LGBT life, documentaries and Cuban films.

Individual tickets for each film are \$11, with discounts for students, seniors and members. Festival passes are available for purchase, including the affordable 5 Movie Ticket Pass for \$45. Not a Spanish speaker? Fear not, most screenings include English subtitles. ■



With 155 short- and full-length films being shown, the options can get a little overwhelming. Here are our must-see picks from the lineup:

Cesar's Last Fast

Genre: Documentary

Directed by: Lorena Parlee and Richard Ray Perez

Show times: March 13 at 8:00 p.m., March 17 at 8:00 p.m., March 22 at 7:30 p.m.

Marvel at Cesar Chavez's last protest of his life—a 36-day hunger strike to raise awareness of the harmful side effects pesticides bring to farmers. Including previously unseen footage, viewers take an intimate look at the life one of the most significant civil rights activists of the 20th century. This film recently premiered at Sundance and is van Thillo's top pick for the festival.



A screenshot from *Cesars Last Fast*, playing at The San Diego Latino Film Festival.

Who is Dayani Cristal?

Genre: Documentary

Directed by: Marc Silver

Show times: March 14 at 6:15 p.m., March 18 at 8:30 p.m., March 22 at 2:30 p.m.

When a body tattooed with "Dayani Cristal" was found in southern Arizona, director Marc Silver wanted to know who Dayani Cristal was and how he ended up dead in a border town. This Sundance-winner takes viewers on a journey as they follow actor Gael Garcia Bernal and other migrants from Mexico to the United States. The film exposes the harsh reality of the current state of immigration across the border.

Espacio interior

Genre: Drama

Directed by: Kai Parlange Tessmann

Show times: March 13 at 7:00 p.m., March 16 at 5:00 p.m., March 21 at 9:45 p.m.

This based-on-a-true-story film tells the horrifying account of Lazaro, a man kidnapped for ransom, and placed in a tiny room. While his family works with authorities, Lazaro reflects on the life he's lived while considering the definition of freedom and his relationship to it. His vivid imagination and a trusty red marker allow viewers to get inside the mind of Lazaro. Be sure to attend the showing on March 13 with special appearances from the cast and crew.

Anina

Genre: Animated, family

Directed by: Alfredo Soderguit

Show times: March 15 at 11:30 a.m., March 23 at 11:30 a.m.

Anina is a spunky, adventurous girl who struggles to fit in at school and at home. Her inimitable energy leads to a fight with another classmate, and afterward, she receives a peculiar punishment from a school official. With a unique and engaging animation style, Anina combines fantasy with relatable themes to create a heart-warming tale.

No sé si cortarme las venas o dejármelas largas

Genre: Comedy

Directed by: Manolo Carlo

Show times: March 17 at 7:30 p.m., March 21 at 7:00 p.m., March 23 at 2:00 p.m.

Two couples live happy, simple lives as neighbors, until a handsome ex-soccer player moves into their apartment complex. This new neighbor, along with mysterious gunshots that put everyone at a crime scene, allows for tensions to rise and confessions to spill. This character-driven dramedy is equally fun and tense.

El Paseo 2

Genre: Comedy

Directed by: Harold Trompetero

Show times: March 14 at 8:00 p.m., March 20 at 5:30 p.m., March 22 at 9:15 p.m.

The massive Calvo family, led by patriarch Lucho (John Leguizamo) decides to take a road trip to Cartagena for a much needed break from the daily grind. But when his wife Gloria's ex-boyfriend shows up unexpectedly, the entire experience turns into a zany and entertaining series of misadventures punctuated by Lucho's frustration.

Rent Sense: Another Economic Perspective

By Neil Fjellestad and Chris De Marco
FBS Property Management

We have built a healthy San Diego business out of advising independent real estate investors, acquiring and managing rental properties for clients while providing superior housing alternatives for qualified renters. More than four decades with properties in 69 zip codes throughout the region provides us a realistic view of the local economy in real time.



Here are some highlights:

» Most renters pay their rent on time every month. Especially during uncertain times this becomes a financial priority.

» Rent is clearly their largest household expense and growing as a percentage of household income. In this region a significant number pay more than half of their income as rent.

» Renters want the privacy, security and convenience of paying their rent online. Those using this alternative pay sooner and avoid additional late charges.

» Rental owners faced with vacancies that improve their properties even if forced to borrow funds to do so and/or must perform capital improvements gradually are rewarded with more qualified applicants to lease.

» Existing residents will more likely renew and/or pay a higher rent to live longer at a property that is well managed and maintained.

» Most rental owners are concerned about leaving a property vacant and will adjust rent realizing that number of days rented is more important than holding out for the highest rent rate.

» Real estate investors that are buying are satisfied. Those that are selling or re-financing in the current market environment remain frustrated with the lack of expected results and/or inadequate estimate of time to accomplish.

» Many of the jobs lost over the last 3-5 years are gone. Though other jobs are being created with different requirements and rewards the transition is longer than hoped.

» Existing small businesses will create jobs when and if they can control risks (the cost of doing business) while believing that the benefits of growth outweigh the alternatives. Much of this risk will be driven by new businesses. ■



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