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Holiday Happenings

Catch the holiday spirit and join your fellow employees at the various seasonal events around campus:

President’s Holiday Reception
President Author E. Hughes and his wife, Marge, invite all employees to a holiday celebration on Thursday, Dec. 9, from 2 to 5 p.m. in the Hahn University Center Forum. For more information, call ext. 4690.

Christmas Concert
Come listen to fellow employees as the USD Community Choir, under the direction of Ron Gillis, and the Choral Scholars, under the direction of Stephen Sturk, present “A Festival of Lessons and Carols” on Dec. 10 and 11 at 8 p.m. in Founders Chapel. For more information, call Monica Wagner at ext. 4936.

Advent Penance Service
There will be five priests on hand for the sacrament of reconciliation on Thursday, Dec. 9, at 5 p.m. in Founders Chapel.

Spanish Mass
A special Spanish Mass will be celebrated on Wednesday, Dec. 12, at 7 p.m. in Founders Chapel.

Candlelight Mass
Don’t miss this beautiful tradition. Mass will be celebrated at 10 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 15, in Founders Chapel.

The Nutcracker
USD’s Department of Theatre Arts and The Lemon Grove Arts Complex present the “Nutcracker Ballet” on Saturday, Dec. 11, at 2 and 8 p.m. and on Sunday, Dec. 12, at 2 and 7 p.m. in Shiley Theatre. Tickets range in price from $4 for children and seniors to $8 or $10 for adults. For more information, call 469-7020.

Staff Employee Association Christmas Party
Food, clothing and toiletries will be collected at this party from 2 to 3 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 15, in Serra lounge. Collections will be donated to a local shelter for battered women. Join us for cookies and punch and meet your SEA representatives. For more information, call Sandi West at ext. 4627.

Calling All Lovers
We’re collecting stories about how people met their spouses for the February issue of the Alcalá View. If you would like to share your story, please write it down and send it to the Publications Office, Maher 274. (Because there won’t be a January issue of the View, this will be the only notice, so please send your stories in soon! Thanks.)

Holiday Blanket Drive
Please donate clean new and used blankets to make someone in need a bit warmer this holiday season. For more information, call Kathi Spittel at ext. 4623.

Hour of Adoration
The Immaculata holds Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament every Monday from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. You are welcome and encouraged to stop into the church and spend time in adoration and prayer.

Alcalá View Deadlines
If you have information or story ideas you would like to submit to the Alcalá View, these are the deadlines for the upcoming issues. Please send information to the Publications Office, Maher 274.

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Benefit Briefs

Employees who have a family income of $25,000 or less, and who enroll their spouse and/or dependents in USD’s medical plan, may be eligible for medical subsidy benefits. Employees must file for their medical subsidy each year. A 1994 application form and a copy of the employee’s 1992 1040 tax return must be received by human resources on or before Dec. 10, 1993, to be eligible for a benefit effective Jan. 1, 1994. Applications received between Dec. 11 and Jan. 31 become effective Feb. 1, 1994.

The monthly subsidy rates for 1993 are: income less than $16,000, one dependent = $113, two dependents = $231; income between $16,000 - $22,999, one dependent = $103, two dependents = $216; income between $23,000 - $25,000, one dependent = $83, two dependents = $168.

Tuition remission benefits are not available for 1994 intersession. We will not know if tuition benefits will be available for summer sessions until late March. Tuition remission applications must be filed each semester.

The deadline for spring 1994 tuition remission application forms is 10 days before the first day of class. Students will incur a $60 late fee if applications are received after the deadline.

Full-time students, currently enrolled or students applying for admission in the fall of 1994 should review their eligibility for financial aid. If eligible, a full-time student is required to file for financial aid/law financial aid before the deadlines within each financial aid area. Tuition remission benefits for full-time students will be restricted if the student is eligible for aid but does not file for it by the appropriate deadline. In this situation, the maximum number of units that will be approved for

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Nissenson Gets Strength From Difference

By Jacqueline Genovese

When Esther Nissenson’s grandparents set sail from their native Russia to America in 1924, they unwittingly disembarked in the wrong port.

“They didn’t speak English or Spanish, so when the boat stopped in Veracruz, Mexico, they got off, thinking they were in America,” Nissenson says with a smile.

It wasn’t until three months later that a fellow Russian was able to explain to the family where they were, but by then they had decided to adopt Mexico as their homeland.

That decision has had a lifelong impact on their granddaughter, who earned runner-up honors for the Employee of the Year Award at this year’s Employee Appreciation Picnic.

“Growing up, I was always a minority within a minority,” Nissenson explains.

“Here I was, a Russian Jew living in Mexico,” she laughs. “Even when I lived in Los Angeles and attended an all-Jewish school, I was still in the minority because my nationality was Mexican and I spoke fluent Spanish.”

Nissenson believes that being a minority within a minority will either break a person or make them stronger. In Nissenson’s case, it’s obvious that it has not only made her stronger, it has made her compassionate to colleagues as well.

As the benefits assistant in human resources, Nissenson has opened up a whole new world to USD’s Spanish-speaking community, many of whom refer to Nissenson as their “godmother.”

In nominating Nissenson for the Employee of the Year Award, Judith Munoz, director of human resources, wrote: “When Esther was hired in 1989 she brought to our office the necessary ability to communicate in Spanish. She immediately became the human resources ‘ambassador’ to the university’s Spanish-speaking employees. This connection has helped our Latino community have a better understanding of USD, its employee benefits, and to feel more a part of the university. … Esther adds laughter to the day and warmth to the hearts of employees who work with her.”

As a benefits assistant, Nissenson is responsible for the presentation of benefit and insurance plans to new employees; works with employees and insurance carriers to resolve insurance problems; and assists with the open enrollment process. She also coordinates worker’s compensation claims, fields BenUFlex questions and monitors USD’s compliance with COBRA regulations.

Nissenson says her job satisfaction comes from being able to help people. “I’ve been a manager of a company where I supervised 150 employees, and I’ve been in business for myself, so working at the university has really been a nice change of pace,” she explains. “I like to be in a position where I can make a difference for someone, even if it’s something minor.”

Education has always been important to Nissenson, who earned an associate’s degree in psychology at Cerritos College and later a bachelor’s degree in business from Centro de Capacitacion de Baja California. One of her goals at USD is to help children of Spanish-speaking employees take advantage of the university’s tuition remission policy. “If I can just help one, maybe that will start something, and make it easier for the next child,” she explains.

Away from Alcalá Park, Nissenson loves to travel and spend time with her three sons and six grandchildren. She also takes care of her mother and stepfather in Mexico.

Nissenson, who earned runner-up honors for this year’s Staff Employee of the Year Award, was her son David’s guest this spring on a Caribbean cruise.

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Department of the Month

Dining Services

1. Where is your department located?
   We are located at the back of the university center, overlooking Tecolote Canyon and Mission Bay.

2. What are the functions of your department?
   Our primary function is to serve meals to the university community. We also provide an a la carte faculty/staff dining room, gourmet-to-go meals, sick trays and on occasion, theme meals.

3. What is the biggest challenge your department faces?
   The biggest challenge we face is providing a balanced meal for a very diverse campus community. Due to our customers varied eating habits, we have to provide them with a variety of meals that are not only healthy for them but will entice them to return daily.

4. How has your department changed over the past 10 years?
   We moved from what is now Sacred Heart Hall (previously Camino dining room) to our present location. The faculty/staff dining room is now combined with main dining. The location we now occupy helps us serve 2,000 customers daily and provides us with the variety of equipment needed for the preparation of meals. Other examples of growth include a larger salad bar and added serving lines that provide a larger variety of entrees, and changing from mobile outlets to one full facility. We have changed our perspective toward the environment by recycling tin cans, paper and cardboard.

5. What is the one thing you would like the campus community to know about your department and its functions?
   The main dining room is available to serve the entire campus community throughout the year except for the major holidays. We would like to make the campus community aware that we welcome their comments and suggestions in order to serve them better.

Nissenson

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Nissenson also recently adopted Chiquita—a six-month-old Lhasa Apso—who she says adds laughter to her life. “I don’t know how I ever lived without her,” Nissenson says. “She’s precious.”

Nissenson says she felt humbled when she heard her name called as a runner-up for the Employee of the Year Award this year. “I couldn’t believe that I had achieved something like that.”
USD Job Opportunities

You can read about USD job opportunities in the following locations: career services, Copley Library, human resources, Law School administration, Legal Research Center, physical plant, Sports Center, Hahn University Center and the bulletin boards located near rooms F114, O329, L337.

In addition, job information is listed on USD's 24-hour Job Line at ext. 4626 (off-campus 260-4626). For more information, call Patrick Noma at ext. 8761.

SEA Strands

The first meeting for USD employees interested in ushering at the 1994 commencement ceremonies next May will be Jan. 20. Time and location will be announced at a later date.

President Author E. Hughes approved and signed new bylaws for the Staff Employees Association. For copies of the new bylaws, contact your SEA representative or call Diane West at ext. 4545 or Kay Norton at ext. 4557.

The SEA board members wish you a joyful holiday season and a happy new year.

New Hires, Promotions

Welcome to the following employees who recently joined the USD community: Sharon Kalemkarian, supervising attorney, Children's Advocacy Clinic; Richard Scholl, assistant manager, banquets and catering; Kim Tummold, program representative, paralegal program; Su Wyatt, nurse, health center; Jean Bates, executive assistant, development; Brett Burner, administrative secretary, development; Louisa Chambers, clerical assistant, human resources; Molly Difede, data processing assistant, undergraduate admissions; Shannon Goss, administrative secretary, development; Joanne Lavin, clerical assistant, Law School; Chris Lindberg, data processing assistant, academic computing; Francisco Martinez, custodian, housekeeping services; Thomas McKissick, library assistant, Copley Library; Deborah McMahon, clerk, printing and duplicating; Yolanda Mendoza, cook, The-Grille; Nancy Roos, faculty secretary, Law School; Elba Sims, custodian, custodial services; Maria Viegas, custodian, custodial services; Sonia Cawsey, reference librarian, Copley Library; Cheryl Forbes, administrative coordinator, Children's Advocacy Clinic; Armando Gonzales, public safety officer, public safety; Jeffrey Hardick, electrician, building maintenance; Victoria Reische, administrative secretary, athletics administration; James Salton, public safety officer, public safety; Jason Wedge, offset press operator, printing and duplicating.

Congratulations to the following employees who recently received a promotion or reclassification: Mayola Acuna, from custodian A to custodian B, custodial services; Celilia Cheatom, from administrative secretary A to clerical assistant B, graduate programs; Lillian Flynn, from clerical assistant A to clerical assistant B, graduate programs.

Faculty/Staff Dining Room Menu

The daily specials include:
- Monday: Rolled taquitos
- Tuesday: Chicken burrito
- Wednesday: Enchilada
- Thursday: Beef tacos
- Friday: Fish tacos

All served with rice and beans.

Monday, Dec. 6
- BBQ ribs, baked cod

Tuesday, Dec. 7
- Pot roast, veggie quiche

Wednesday, Dec. 8
- Chicken tacos, cheese enchiladas

Thursday, Dec. 9
- Roast pork, turkey pot pie

Friday, Dec. 10
- Chicken Calvados, cheese & spinach bake

Monday, Dec. 13
- Swiss steak, zucchini bake

Tuesday, Dec. 14
- Monterey pork chop, teriyaki chicken

Wednesday, Dec. 15
- BBQ ribs, veggie stuffed pepper

Thursday, Dec. 16
- Turkey mole, cheese enchiladas

Friday, Dec. 17
- Baked cornish hens, cod almondine

All entrees are subject to change. The faculty/staff dining room will close Dec. 17 for the holidays.