

# LOCAL EXTRA

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SUNDAY  
JULY 17, 2011

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**HAL DURIAN**  
Riverside Recollections  
**NORCONIAN  
SAW STARS**

The Norconian Hotel and resort was one of those dream complexes built in the 1920s by wealthy persons who were able to carry those dreams to reality. Among the builders of dream structures in that period was William Randolph Hearst who built his castle at San Simeon in Central California. Another was Ellen Browning Scripps, who built a women's college in Claremont.

Yet a third builder was Rex Clark, who built the Norconian in Norco. Coincidentally, all three dream structures mentioned above were paid for by fortunes from newspaper chains. Both Miss Scripps' fortune and that of Rex Clark came from the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain.

An examination of Scripps College in Claremont will suggest similarities with the Norconian Hotel. Both are built in the Spanish-Mediterranean Revival style, and both structures feature murals, sculpture and art throughout.

The Norconian in the late 1920s and 1930s attracted many of the stars of stage and screen. Comedians Buster Keaton, Stan Laurel and Joe E. Brown made films there. Mae West and Greta Garbo stayed there. Bob Hope and Robert Montgomery were often seen there.

In the world of sport, the Norconian's Olympic-size swimming pool was used as a training site for swimmers preparing for the 1928 and 1932 Olympic Games. Johnny Weissmuller, who later starred as Tarzan in the movies, trained there. More than one world swimming record was set at the Norconian pool. Duke Kahanomoku demonstrated swim and surfing techniques at the resort's lake.

Babe Ruth enjoyed the Norconian on a brief visit.

Celebrities' visits increased at the Norconian after it became the Norco Naval Hospital in 1941. Actors and actresses visited the hospital to cheer up Navy and Marine Corps patients and to show that the nation, and the film colony, wished them well.

The first lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, showed Washington's interest in the hospital and its patients as she dropped by to wish the servicemen a speedy recovery.

In 1948 my father, a Navy veteran of both world wars, was a patient in the hospital. He often spoke of the visit by actor George Raft to the hospital wards. My father had seen several of Raft's gangster films.

A long list of stars visited the Navy Hospital. Among them were: Cary Grant, Errol Flynn, Jack Benny, Humphrey Bogart, Gary Cooper, Claudette Colbert and Red Skelton.

Today the formerly elegant Norconian is vacant and fenced. At last the roof has been covered to prevent further water damage. Kevin Bash, a Norco councilman, continues to call for federal and local funding to restore the historic and artistic treasure. Bash has written "The Norconian Resort," a book that has dozens of photos and is available in book stores and in the downtown Riverside Public Library. Bash has a second book set to appear in early August. It is titled "The Navy in Norco."

## Teen now trying to assist others

**RIVERSIDE:** Easton Sherman was a 5-year-old orphan from Kazakhstan when Kidsave helped him find a home.

BY AMANDA WARNER  
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

When 14-year-old Easton Sherman was 5, he flew from Kazakhstan to the United States to meet what would become his new family. It was an accident that he was on that plane.

Kidsave International, an organization that brings "older" orphans, ages 7 to 15, to the U.S. to meet possible adoptive parents, had a specific number of families ready to host children for five weeks.

But an orphanage worker in Kazakhstan thought Easton should have a chance to meet a family, too. So she put him on the plane and sent him off — an extra child with no arranged host family. SEE **ORPHANS/C3**



SUBMITTED TO THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Easton Sherman, left, and Eldar Anderson, both 14, came to the United States from Kazakhstan on a summer program in 2002 through Kidsave International and were adopted by Inland residents soon after.



DAVID BAUMAN/THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Tonya Christopher of Corona sits at home with her pet boxer, Riley. For the last decade Christopher has been corresponding with four childhood friends in a traveling journal.

## JOURNAL KEEPS FRIENDS TOGETHER

BY JENNIFER DEAN  
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Best friends are forever, right? That's what we'd like to believe, but with time and distance childhood friendships usually fade as

careers, mortgages and children take center stage.

But not for five fast friends from Sioux City, Iowa.

Morgenne, Tonya, Dawn, Melissa and Alison first became friends

in middle school, and by high school they were a close-knit group. When they began to spread their wings, moving to different states for college or after graduating, Alison came up with the idea

for a journal to travel among the five, filled with thoughts and messages ... and the traveling journal was born.

More than a decade later, two SEE **JOURNAL/C4**

## Yucaipa congregation steps up with shoes

BY JENNIFER DEAN  
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

When Yucaipa Christian Church youth pastor Mike Frisch asked his congregation to make a sacrifice for a good cause, the response was greater than he expected.

"I asked, 'Could we do something costly to us? More than simply handing over a few dollars?'" Frisch said. "So I asked if they would give up their shoes."

Most of the congregation left church barefoot that day, and then a few members went out and bought new shoes to donate as

well. When all was said and done, the church had more than 1,000 pairs of shoes to donate.

Frisch approached Million Kids, one of two nonprofits that serve on the Riverside County Sheriff's Department Anti Human Trafficking Task Force, about donating the shoes.

Million Kids works with organizations that rescue and support children who have been abused, exploited or trafficked in Riverside and San Bernardino counties, as well as other U.S. locations and in SEE **SHOES/C2**



JENNIFER DEAN/THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Kerry Decker, left, president of the nonprofit organization Million Kids, poses with Mike Frisch, youth pastor at Yucaipa Christian Church, which donated more than 1,000 pairs of shoes to the nonprofit.

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