

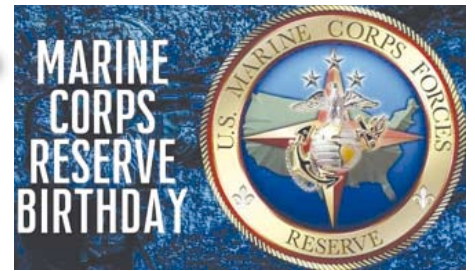
ARMED FORCES DISPATCH

San Diego Navy/Marine Corps Dispatch

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The U.S. Marine Corps Reserve
celebrated August 29.

SIXTY-SIXTH YEAR NO. 10
AUGUST 23, 2026



STARRY NIGHT FIRE Marines fire an M2 .50-caliber heavy machine gun during Adversary Force Exercise 4-26 at Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., Aug. 9, 2026. The exercise serves as an opportunity for units to receive training and certification across multiple warfighting functions in realistic force-on-force scenarios. U.S. Marine Corps photop by Sgt. Vincent Needham

ZERO8HUNDRED OFFERS VETERANS A TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE

by Scott Sutherland

Staff writer

Typically, the word 'ease' isn't at the top of the list describing the transition from military to civilian life.

Words like stress, overwhelming, or sometimes panic may best describe the experience. The Navy helps lower stress levels by offering MyNavyHR's Transition Assistance Program, or TAP. The other service branches offer similar facsimiles. Each mission statement is basically the same - providing sepa-

rating/retiring service members the skills to re-enter into the civilian work force.

Then there's Zero8Hundred, a San Diego-based, fiscally sponsored military/veteran support organization started in 2014. According to the organization's website, more than 100 San Diego County public, private and military leaders formed to

address the challenges that transitioning post 9/11 active-duty military service members, to address what spouses and recent veterans were facing. These obstacles included unemployment and under-employment, lack of affordable housing, injuries - physical, psychological and emotional - and confusion or disorientation as a civilian.

Scott Peters, a former congressman for California's 50th congressional, is a strong supporter of Z8H. While serving on the Hill in 2017, he said that every year, "more than 20,000 Sailors and Marines stationed in San Diego leave military service and roughly a third choose to stay.

"While some choose to use their GI benefits to go back to school before finding employ-

ment, most of these skilled men and women are focused on starting their next careers right away. They just need to get connected to job resources and potential employers who will benefit from their skills and experience." (Source: <https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/359510-zero8hundred-a-model-for-transitioning-our-veterans-and-their/>)

In support of the VA's suicide prevention initiative, Zero8Hundred was recently awarded grant funding under the Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program, which expands suicide prevention efforts beyond clinical settings to address both mental health and social determinants of health, such as economic hardship,

see Z8H, page 5



Department of War orders research security audits at 30 academic institutions

The Department of War has issued formal notifications to 30 domestic academic institutions, directing them to initiate immediate and comprehensive reviews of their academic, financial and research collaborations with foreign entities of concern.

These notifications address active institutional ties and collaborations with foreign entities identified under Section 1286 of the FY19 NDAA, as well as organizations associated with rebranded Confucius Institutes. Executed by the Office of the Under Secretary of War for Research and Engineering, this action is designed to protect American taxpayer-funded research investments from unauthorized technology transfer, intellectual property theft and adversarial exploitation.

"The Department of War has zero tolerance for academic partnerships that compromise our national security," said Emil Michael, Under Secretary of War for Research and Engineering. "Institutions that receive funding from American taxpayers must uphold the highest standards of research security, and these mandated audits will ensure accountability across the board."

To maintain eligibility for future federal research funding, the notified universities must complete a comprehensive audit of all identified foreign collaborations, assess the exposure of sensitive or export-controlled research, and implement strict mitigation plans, including the termination of problematic partnerships. Institutions are required to report their findings and actions directly to the Department no later than August 31, 2026.

"Universities are critical partners in executing a wide range of Department of War research programs, and the Department must therefore ensure that our research investments are well protected from foreign exploitation," said Dr. Joseph Jewell, Assistant Secretary of War for Science and Technology.

Through these audits, the Department of War will better anticipate emerging threats, adapt to evolving adversarial tactics and maintain America's position as a global leader in innovation. The Department is pursuing this effort alongside partners in Congress. Together with the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, the Department continues to build a robust research ecosystem that protects critical discoveries from exploitation.

<https://www.war.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/4575019/>

Legislation would honor America's service animals with National Mall monument

WASHINGTON - A House lawmaker a bill to establish a location for the first national monument honoring the contributions of service animals and their handlers, including those serving in the armed services and in assisting veterans, according to a congressional website. The National Service Animals Monument Location Act would authorize placement of the tribute at an undetermined site on the National Mall. "Our nation is forever indebted to the generations of extraordinary military working animals that have served our country," said Rep. Jen Kiggans in a website post.

DOW and RTX accelerate critical munitions production

The Department of War has announced a \$22.9 billion contract with Raytheon, an RTX business, awarded by the Navy, to accelerate production of the Tomahawk missile, a critical long-range strike capability. "The Department called upon industry to expand munitions production, and RTX has answered that call," said Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment Michael P. Duffey. "This Tomahawk award increases our ability to equip the Joint Force, ensuring our Warfighters never face a fair fight." <https://www.war.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/4573544/>

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The Meat & Potatoes of Life

Lisa Smith Molinari, 23-year Navy wife and mother of three, writes a regular column on parenting, marriage, pets, vacations, military life and more!

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Top 5

- New aircraft carrier heads toward Middle East after reports of issues on long-deployed USS *Lincoln*
- If long deployments are the future, endurance can't be the Navy's only plan
- Trump orders the Navy to return to an older system of launching jets off aircraft carriers
- U.S. military has lost roughly 25% of its Reaper drones as Iran war depletes arsenal

Your Military

- U.S. launching international one-way attack drone task force in the Middle East

Marine Corps

- Marine Corps identifies recruit killed at Camp Pendleton
- U.S. Marines roam far and wide from temporary Darwin base

Veterans

- For many veterans seeking help, the biggest problem turns out to be a legal one

Cyber, Space & Unmanned

- DIA's artificial intelligence chief envisions 'agent-to-agents' interactions that support military operations
- The government is recruiting tech companies to help fight its cyber battles

Defense Industry

- Marines train to shoot down combat drones with standard weapons

Ukraine

- Bomb kills Russian military officer in Crimea; reports name him as defector from Ukraine

International

- NATO defenses facing Russian drone test, German military chief warns
- Turkey lays out plans for defence pact with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia
- Putin's visit to disputed island adds to pressure on Japan
- North Korea threatens to exercise self-defense as it slams U.S.-South Korea military drills



An unmanned combat attack system launches from the flight deck of USS *Santa Barbara* while operating in the Arabian Gulf, Dec. 16, 2025. U.S. Army photo by Spc. Kayla McGuire

CENTCOM launches first-ever multinational attack drone task force

USCENTCOM

TAMPA, Fla. - On Aug. 13, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) announced efforts to establish the first-ever multi-domain, multinational attack drone task force.

The unit, called Task Force Falcon Strike, will employ one-way attack drones consisting of unmanned systems from above, on, and below the sea operated by military support staff from the United States and regional partners.

Falcon Strike's launch occurs nine months after CENTCOM established Task Force Scorpion Strike, the U.S. military's first dedicated one-way attack drone squadron in the Middle East.

Scorpion Strike rapidly

achieved key operational milestones, including the first-ever launch of an aerial attack drone from a U.S. Navy warship last December. The squadron also employed one-way unmanned aerial systems during Operation Epic Fury and during strikes on Iranian port facilities in July using unmanned attack vessels at sea.

"Task Force Falcon Strike will expand on Scorpion Strike's success given the tremendous innovation happening among our regional allies and partners," said Adm. Brad Cooper, CENTCOM commander. "Integrating and deploying our new capabilities together will help us rapidly realize the new possibilities that are on the horizon."

Marines make history with first attack drone live-fire series in South Korea

Marines assigned to the 4th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, recently conducted the Marine Corps' first series of live-fire first-person view attack drone flights in South Korea. This historic training series marks a significant milestone in force modernization, demonstrating the Marine Corps' ability to field emerging technologies in the Western Pacific rapidly. The series featured two distinct training events: an inaugural range conducted July 30 by the 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, and a second iteration carried out yesterday by the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. Both are forward-deployed units to the Pacific region under the unit deployment program.

Austal USA launches its largest vessel to date

Austal USA, Mobile, Ala., launched the Navy's Auxiliary Floating Dry Dock Medium in late July, the first AFDM built in more than 40 years and the largest vessel launched into the Mobile Channel to date. Weighing 12,000 tons and measuring 694 feet long, with a deck working area of 90,800 square feet, AFDM 15 is the largest vessel launch coordinated and executed by Austal USA's test and activation team in the company's 26-year history. "The successful launch of AFDM 15 is a proud moment for everyone at Austal USA and a remarkable achievement for our entire team," Austal USA President Gene Miller said. "Building the Navy's first Auxiliary Floating Dry Dock Medium in over 40 years is no small feat, and to see it launched into the Mobile River is a testament to the skill, dedication, and expertise of our workforce."

Hegseth renames Joint Base Charleston to honor late Sen. Lindsey Graham

Joint Base Charleston, S.C., became Joint Base Lindsey Graham during a recent ceremony to rename the installation after the late senator, Air Force veteran and South Carolina native son. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth joined South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster and Sen. Darline Graham of South Carolina to dedicate the 32-square-mile installation, home to the 437th Airlift Wing, which provides global airlift capability to the joint force with the C-17A Globemaster III aircraft. Lindsey Graham served as a U.S. senator from South Carolina from January 2003 until his passing July 11. He also served as a lawyer and commissioned officer in the Air Force's Judge Advocate General Corps, first on active duty from 1982 until 1988, then as a member of the South Carolina Air National Guard until 1995 and finally, in the Air Force Reserve until 2015.

"Sen. Lindsey Graham dedicated his life to serving this state and serving the armed forces of the United States," Hegseth said.

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Inside the course that qualifies every naval aerial target operator

by Michael Smith
NAWC Weapons Division
NAVAL BASE VENTURA
COUNTY POINT MUGU - Petty Officer 2nd Class Alexandria Culpepper sat in the classroom with console data frozen on the screen at the front of the room. The recording showed a BQM-74E aerial target holding course toward a guided-missile cruiser. The numbers looked normal. The operators' voices on the radio stayed steady. Nobody in the control room that day knew control had already slipped to another console.

Culpepper, an aviation structural mechanic from Pacific Missile Range Facility Detachment Far East in Okinawa, Japan, flew to Point Mugu for the course. The Target Training and Operating Procedures Standardization program, known across the range as TTOPS, is the standard she came to meet. She and her teammates spent three weeks in the classroom, the simulator and the control room before they could fly a live aerial target.

The recording they watched is real.

On Nov. 16, 2013, a BQM-74E struck USS Chancellorsville (CG 62) during a tracking exercise off Point Mugu, tearing a hole in the ship and injuring two Sailors. Investigators found equipment failure, communication breakdowns and emergency procedures that existed on paper but failed under pressure. No enterprise-wide training system stood behind

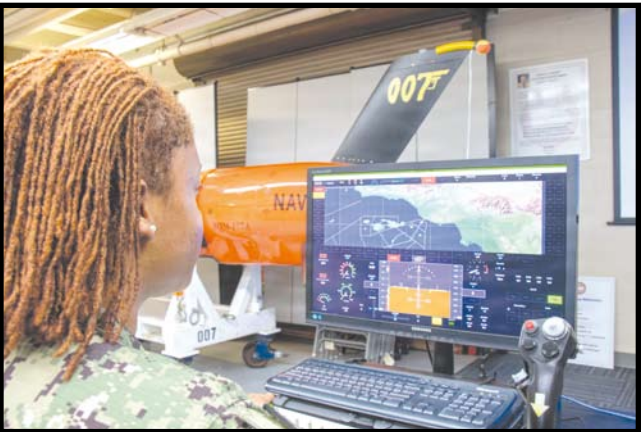
them. What the target community lacked, the investigation found, was a single written standard for how it trained and certified its operators. Kevin Gross wrote that standard.

A retired Marine Corps colonel and trained aviation safety officer, Gross served on the mishap investigation. He now directs the Threat Target Systems Department at Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division and teaches the course himself.

The course trains remote control operators who fly the targets and operations conductors who run the events. Students face two written exams, 15 simulation exercises and a final simulated evaluation. They rehearse emergency procedures in a simulator, learning what to do when a target loses its connection to the operator or strays from its programmed flight path. Seconds can separate a safe recovery from a repeat of 2013.

"The one decision that the students should carry with them is verbalize what is happening and gain help from your fellow RCOs and your fellow ops conductors," Gross said. "We need to exercise solid teamwork to ensure that we respond appropriately to emergency procedures."

The TTOPS Model manager sets the training and currency for each target type. During the most critical minutes of a flight, only the people running the mission stay in the control room. Only mission



Alexandria Culpepper reviews a target control system display during Target Training and Operating Procedures Standardization classroom training at Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division Point Mugu. U.S. Navy photo by Michael L. Smith

traffic goes over the net. Every event opens with a standard safety brief that fixes the words the crew will use. That includes the call for a target gone out of control and the criteria for stopping the mission.

Operators face an evaluation every year. Their units face one every 18 to 24 months.

For Culpepper, the course changed how she understood the job.

"This training was extremely useful for my team from PMRF Det Far East," she said. "When operating at sea, it is vital to understand the background of our procedures. While we always say safety is paramount, this course

helped us see exactly why we do what we do."

Crew resource management runs through the entire program. Alistair Lord, the lead instructor for remote control operators, said the program drove "a change from a Mission-Above All to a Safety-First culture."

Lord said human error is the leading cause of aviation mishaps. Disciplined communication, he said, raises a crew's awareness before, during and after an operation.

A formal course existed years earlier, but it lapsed, and operators learned the job alongside someone who already knew it. NAWCWD rebuilt the course and ran the

first class in April 2016. Today the Point Mugu classroom trains operators from Navy commands across the country to one set of requirements.

Gross said the department's targets let a crew make its mistakes in training, not in the moment it has to protect the ship. Every ship that deploys needs realistic aerial targets to prepare its crews to recognize threats and defend themselves. The crew at the console determines whether that training is safe enough to keep running.

Culpepper qualified July 1 on the BQM-177A and returned to Okinawa. Two days later she flew to Hawaii for Rim of the Pacific, the Navy's largest international maritime exercise. She shadowed civilian direct control operators, who handle the target at launch

and recovery. Ground emergencies turned out to be more common than she expected. When the primary target had a problem, she launched the backup under their supervision. The training, she said, is why it added no stress.

"I have not flown since school, but I noticed that having an efficient scan on the console can literally save the mission and lives," she said.

Back in the classroom, Gross lets the recording run past the point where he stopped it. The students hear what the range crews heard that afternoon: a voice from the ship, over the radio.

"Drone hit our ship."

"Something we never want to hear again," Gross said.

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San Diego



"I can't live without my two daughters."
OSC Richard Opilas
Pangasinan, P.I.

Acting surgeon general visits Naval Health Research Center, underscores importance of warfighter readiness

by Danielle Cazarez
Naval Health Research Center
SAN DIEGO —Rear Adm. Matthew Case, Acting Surgeon General and chief, U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, visited the Naval Health Research Center (NHRC) on August 7 to gain firsthand insight into the command's most recent research initiatives supporting warfighter health, readiness, resilience and recovery.

During the visit, which highlighted NHRC's pivotal role in advancing medical science for the Navy and Marine Corps, Case received comprehensive briefings on several key research programs, including infectious disease surveillance, psychological health initiatives, and environmental health studies. Case toured NHRC's state-of-the-art laboratories and engaged with the command's military officers, discussing their work and impact on service members and their families.

Case took note of the ongoing efforts in bio-wastewater surveillance, emphasizing the need for rapid translation of research findings into practical solutions for the fleet.

"It was inspiring to witness the

dedication and groundbreaking work being done at NHRC," said Case. "The research conducted by these talented professionals is absolutely vital to ensuring our Sailors and Marines are healthy, resilient and ready to meet any challenge. Their contributions directly enhance our operational capabilities and safeguard the well-being of our force."

To conclude his visit, Case presented two NHRC officers – Cmdr. Ryan Smith and Lt. Joseph Gordon III – with command coins.

Capt. Kellie McMullen, NHRC's commanding officer, expressed gratitude for Case's visit. "We were honored to host the Acting Surgeon General and showcase the breadth of our research portfolio," McMullen said. "His visit reinforces the importance of our mission to optimize warfighter health and readiness through scientific research."

NHRC supports warfighter health readiness and lethality with research and development that delivers high-value, high-impact solutions to the health and readiness challenges that the U.S. military population faces on the battlefield, at-sea, home and abroad.



Rear Adm. Matthew Case returns to Naval Health Research Center (NHRC) to meet with Navy officers and researchers. U.S. Navy photo by Danielle Cazarez

Construction group welcomes new CO

PORT HUENEME – Naval Construction Group (NCG) 1 held a change of command at Naval Base Ventura County here where **Capt. Angel L. Santiago** relinquished command to **Capt. Andrew L. Litteral**

Rear Adm. Jeffrey J. Killian, commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command, served as the guest speaker, recognizing Santiago's leadership while welcoming Litteral as the command's new commodore.

"It is an absolute honor to stand here on the NBVC parade field to preside over this ceremony," said Killian. "Captain Santiago, you have guided this force through a complex transition with vision, grit, and grace. Your thirty years of service stand as a testament to your dedication to the Navy and to the men and women you have led, Captain Litteral, you're stepping into a critical role at a critical time. You're inheriting a force that is tested, transformed and ready for whatever the future holds, including conflict, I have the utmost confidence in your leadership and I know that under your command, the Pacific Naval Construction Force will continue to build, continue to fight, and continue to win."



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A Coast Guard Air Station San Diego MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter aircrew rescues a 53-year-old man approximately three miles south of Seal Beach Pier Aug. 17, 2026. The man was located after a more than 12-hour multiagency search and transported to Long Beach Airport, where he was transferred to emergency medical personnel for treatment. Long Beach Fire Department courtesy photo

Z8H
continued from page 1
social connectedness, and access to care.

In 2023, 6,398 U.S. veterans died by suicide, averaging 17.5 deaths per day. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report, the overall veteran suicide rate was 37.8 per 100,000 for men and 13.9 per 100,000 for women.

In his review on the group's Facebook page, Daniel Chueng posted, "It's an amazing organization for veterans getting out of the military. All their efforts are set on your goals and ambitions, so they can relate to the service after separation."

To donate to Zero8Hundred, call (858) 944-0800. They're located at 4699 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 104.



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Smith
Molinari

When dinner is done and the dishes are “soaking” in the sink (i.e., I don’t feel like dealing with them yet) I assume my normal position on our living room loveseat—my head propped against one armrest, and my feet draped over the other. I grab the TV clicker and a pair of reading glasses, ready for relaxation.

Most nights, our dog Gilligan plunks down onto the floor beside me where a belly scratch is in reach, and the cat comes out of hiding to nestle herself between me and the sofa cushion. It’s a regular snuggle fest.

This nightly routine may be repetitive, monotonous, and pathetic, but it’s my favorite part of the day, when I get to put my feet up, watch a mind-numbing television show, play spider solitaire on my phone, and completely veg out.

I’ve had snooty friends who’ve claimed they only watch historical shows, read books or listen to classical music in the evenings, implying that people who watch regular TV are imbeciles hell bent on rotting their brains. Admittedly, most television shows I watch aren’t exactly culturally enriching, but if that’s the worst thing I do all day, then I’m doing just fine in life.

Although I’m fairly confident that watching TV every night is a

Daily dose of depravity

harmless vice, worry sometimes creeps in.

I was having coffee recently with my Boot Camp friends, a weekly ritual after our Friday class, and the move “Steel Magnolias” came up in the conversation. “I’ve never seen that movie,” I muttered from my corner of the table.

“WHAT??” the ladies cried incredulously, “You’ve never seen it? Are you kidding?”

“I guess I’m not much of a chick-flick person,” I said sheepishly.

“But ‘Steel Magnolias’ is a great movie, a classic,” they implored.

“She only likes murder,” Denise blurted out, and I remembered telling her my dirty secret last month.

“It’s true,” I admitted, “I’ve never seen ‘The Notebook’ or ‘My Big Fat Greek Wedding’ or ‘The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants’, but I’ve seen almost every mob movie multiple times and I love true crime documentaries.” The ladies looked on with fascination and amusement, as if I’d just revealed that I had a mutated third eye hiding on the side of my head.

We all had a good laugh about it, but the conversation gave me pause.

I admit, when my thumb punches the buttons on television clicker each night, it doesn’t stop on Lifetime movies, cooking shows, or chick flicks. It bypasses rom-coms, heart-warming dramas, and “Just Say Yes to the Dress.” To me, those shows are corny, vapid and downright boring. I seek stories that satisfy my sick fascination for human behavior hiding

in the fringes of society. I want fraud, espionage, violence, thievery, deceit, manipulation, and murder.

This week, my Prime account, knowing my appetite for true crime, fed me a particularly dark list of documentaries based on my viewing history, and I’ve been gobbling it up. In one week, I’ve managed to binge watch three series about serial killers guilty of grisly and sadistic crimes—Hadden Clark, Leonard Lake, and Lawrence Bittaker.

As if that weren’t morose enough, the audio book I’m currently listening to in my car is When a Killer Calls: A Haunting Story of Murder, Criminal Profiling, and Justice in a Small Town by FBI criminal profiler John Douglas.

Not exactly a pick-me-up. So, is my daily dose of true crime damaging my psyche?

Who knows. But I maintain that watching stories about terrible people doesn’t make me terrible ... if anything, it makes me grateful for the astonishingly uneventful life I lead. Like my friends, I’m interested in what makes people tick, I’m just less interested in what makes people fall in love, unless one of them is eventually found floating in a lake.

Perhaps that’s why “Dirty Danc-ing” and “Fried Green Tomatoes” have never made it onto my television. Give me a murder, a motive and a suspect with questionable alibis, and I’m perfectly content. In fact, consuming multiple documentaries about serial killers may be healthier for me than watching “The Notebook.” I may have a morbid fascination with death, but at least I’ll never die of boredom.

AutoMatters™ & More



by Jan Wagner

Tiki Oasis is a light-hearted, fun celebration of all things Tiki. This year, Tiki Oasis was held Aug. 5 – 9.

Billed as “The Largest Tiki Event in the World,” Tiki Oasis is a place where, for several days each year, you can escape to San Diego’s version of a tropical paradise and forget about your cares for a few fun-filled days. When I think of Tiki Oasis, I am reminded of a somewhat, but not exclusively, adult-themed version of the Gilligan’s Island T.V. situation comedy.

For the past few years, Tiki Oasis has been taking over the Town and Country Resort — a beautiful, 23-acre resort in the heart of San Diego’s Mission Valley. Participants walk about wearing Tiki shirts, caftans and themed outfits. Many spend time in and around the Town and Country Resort’s pools.

Every year has a fun theme. This year’s theme was “Psychedelic Tiki — An Island of Kaleidoscopic Color and Exotic Sounds.” As our hosts Baby Doe and Otto explained in the program: “colors shimmer, patterns swirl and flow, sounds of the East meet rhythms of the West...it’s a feast for the eyes...and an inner ear freakout! Can you dig it? Prepare to have your mind blown on this uncharted journey through a groovy blend of cosmic color

Tiki Oasis San Diego 2026

and Psychedelia Tropicalia.”

“We are excited to bring you original psychedelic explorers Strawberry Alarm Clock straight outta 1967, as well as new tropical psychedelic acts Dengue Fever, Healing Gems, Los Quinceañeros, and more. We invite you to expand your mind in enlightened seminars and open your Ajna Chakra.”

In addition to the numerous live bands on the open-air stage and elsewhere throughout the Tiki Oasis venue, there were great DJs, live ukelele music performed by King Kukulele — wearing his traditional straw hat and grass skirt, entertaining and informative seminars — many of which delved into the finer points of tropical cocktails, rum tastings, arts & crafts, a sprawling vendor marketplace with a huge selection of Tiki merchandise for sale, classic cars, pinball machines to play, photo spots, an art show & sale, a tiki-themed lamp show & sale, the “Pooch Parade,” decorated suites that hundreds of people line up to see and experience, a “Beauty BouTiki & Barbershop” for period hair styling, the Tiki Oasis Caftan Stroll presented by the Aloha Caftan Society, book signings, and much, more. There was also late-night dancing to live music, and the popular midnight burlesque shows!

The daily schedule was packed with things to see, do and enjoy, with a wide variety of seminars including these and many more: “Far Out & Fab: Psychedelic 60s Fashions,” “Pirates, Parrots and Potheads: Fear and Loathing in Margaritaville,” “The Lost Rides of Disneyland,” “Lamp Building: the Adventure Behind the Glow,” “Negronis Historic Cocktail Comeback,” “Flower Power: Psychedelic Pop Art Hair Flow-ers,” “Ahoy! Exploring mid Century Nautical Tiki,” “Don the Beachcomber: Unraveling the Myths,” “Growing

Up in a Polynesian Nightclub: From Selling Cigarettes at Age 3 to Sword Dancing by Age 11 with Debbie Chin,” and “Hang Loose: Craft a Bohemian Macramé Planter.”

Outside, in a smaller pool in the Town and Country Resort, there was “Posing for Photos...Underwater! With MeduSirena.”

Every year I vow to not buy anything, and yet I do. This year I bought a colorful Tiki painting that really comes to life when a black light is turned on. Of course, soon thereafter I ordered a black light from Amazon. Covering these events is expensive for me!

One of my favorite must-see annual events at Tiki Oasis is the Sunday morning presentation by Charles Phoenix. Each year he puts together a show for us that features families’ photos, typically from the 1950s and ‘60s, that illustrate his theme that year. This year’s theme was called “Mid-Century Home Sweet Home,” and it most certainly did not disappoint. He had the audience — myself included — laughing throughout.

On Sunday afternoon I always check out the San Diego Bartender Battle, where four top bartenders mix drinks for the judges — and the audience — to taste, and which the judges judge, to determine who made the best drink.

Next year’s Tiki Oasis San Diego will be held from Aug. 4–8.

To explore a wide variety of content dating back to 2002, with the most photos and the latest text, visit “AutoMatters & More” at <https://automatters.net>. Search by title or topic in the Search Bar in the middle of the Home Page or click on the blue ‘years’ boxes and browse. Copyright © 2026 by Jan Wagner – AutoMatters & More #941



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