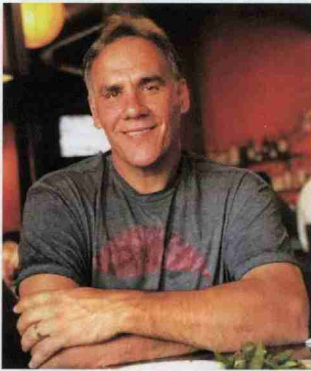


from the publisher

Totally Sweet



"What's the point in having a sweet tooth if you don't use it?" Don't you wish you could snatch it right off the cover? Make no mistake, this month's issue is as delicious as it looks: from a list of unique treats inspiring you to "Think Outside the (Chocolate) Box", to the health benefits of red wine and dark chocolate, to a picture-perfect round-up of some of our favorite Desserts in San Joaquin, flipping through these pages will have your shamelessly salivating in no time.

But it's not about you—ahem—it's about your Valentine! Pick up some serious Valentine's Day inspiration for date night locations in Nora's round up of places to wine and dine your SO in SJ. Not a wine fan? Food Editor Suzanne might be able to interest you in some brandy instead: check out "Sit and Sip" for a Side Car recipe that packs a delicious punch.

This month, we've also got some generous organizations on our radar: volunteers at Operation School Bell provide clothing for children in need, while the HUB in Downtown Stockton offers free bicycles to those who require transportation, and free bicycle repair for all.

One of the most well-known charitable organizations around these parts is, of course, the Emergency Food Bank. This issue, Section Editor Caitlin sat down with the Interim CEO Gillian Murphy to get to the heart of the work they do all year round—that's right, hunger doesn't end with the Holidays, folks! Give it a read and find out what the EFB is up to the other 11 months of the year.

This month we're focused on matters of the heart. There's no denying that love is in the air—alas, so is noise pollution. In honor of American Heart Month, we're talking about this new threat to heart health that's only recently come to the attention of the medical world. Read up to learn about local risk factors, as well as ways to transcend them in "Hear This".

As far as the emotional capacity of the heart is concerned, we encourage you to check out [Mendocino](#) for your next big romantic adventure. Let Travel Editor Nora take you on a tour through Mendocino's most romantic activities and hot-spots, from secluded beaches, to relaxing spas, to some awe-inspiring whale watching. One thing is certain: this issue is dedicated to making you and your partner fall in love all over again.

Thanks for reading,

TONY ZOCCOLI
Publisher/Editor

LAST THOUGHTS

PEARLY WHITES

Speaking of a sweet tooth, set your children up for success by helping them cultivate healthy dental habits while they're young. Check out Nora's Pediatric Dental feature "Baby Teeth" that offers tips on how to care for young teeth, including when to introduce cups over bottles, how much toothpaste to use on baby teeth, and which foods promote healthy champers. A beautiful smile is commodity these days—make sure your child has the head start they deserve!

VOTE NOW BEST OF SAN JOAQUIN

Online voting has started, and that means it's time for readers to pick celebrate and recognize their favorites in a multitude of categories from food, wine, shopping, weddings and more. Visit [SJMAG.com](#) to vote online where picking your favorites is just a click away. If you think it's too early to cast your vote, don't kid yourself—July will be here before you know it.

