



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**THE "BLUE WALL,"** on display at "Metamorphosis: Mending the Wound" at the Irvine Fine Arts Center. The work features collaborative print-based works by members of Lynk Collective and guest artists.

## Printmaking emerges anew in 'Metamorphosis' show

A collaborative effort by the Lynk Collective explores natural evolution, while an artist examines a different kind of shift at the Irvine Fine Arts Center.

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

The concept of metamorphosis conjures up notions of change, natural evolution and even a supernatural shift. The Irvine Fine Arts Center exhibition, "Metamorphosis: Mending the Wound" explores the idea of evolving through works by members of the Lynk Collective, an organization that has evolved itself.

"The Lynk Collective is group of printmakers and artists who work in print-based techniques,

and they formed in our printmaking studio," said Virginia Arce, exhibitions program coordinator at the center.

Formed in 2017 at the Irvine Fine Arts Center's printmaking program, the collective is "very dear" to the Irvine Fine Arts Center, Arce said, and the exhibition that features its members as well as guest artists is a full-circle moment.

Presented in the Central Gallery and curated by Christina

See **Emerges**, page A3



**STRING AND** polymer details in "A Fragile Web," a project led by Karen Feuer-Schwager at the Irvine Fine Arts Center.

## Baristas at Via Lido Starbucks in N.B. petition to form union

BY ERIC LICAS

Employees at the Starbucks on Via Lido in Newport Beach became among the latest to organize for better working conditions and compensation from one of the world's most recognizable corporations by submitting a petition to unionize last week.

The petition was filed Saturday, organizers at Starbucks Workers United said in a news release. It sets the stage for a vote of about 15 baristas at the Newport Beach location who could potentially be represented by the union.

The petition comes in response to stagnating wages that have failed to keep up with inflation,



said Mia Visiconti, a shift lead who has worked at the Via Lido location for six years. She commutes from Huntington Beach and is going to school to earn an industrial certificate, partly be-

**A PIN BEARING** the logo of Starbucks Workers United, a union representing the corporation's baristas, decorates the apron of Mia Visiconti, on Wednesday.

Eric Licas

cause she says she can't afford to pursue a degree in environmental sciences at a four-year university.

"They're giving us a little bit of

See **Union**, page A2

### ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



Courtesy of Akachen Jewelry

**BOWERS MUSEUM OFFERS FREE ADMISSION TO 'ETERNAL GARDEN' FOR SOCIAL MUSEUM FREE-FOR-ALL DAY** PAGE A3

**FAN FAVORITE SWEETS AND MANY NEW TREATS AT DISNEY FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL** PAGE A4

## Development plans for Laguna church site ready for review



Courtesy of KTGy

**A RENDERING** of a 44-unit affordable housing development and spiritual center shows plans for buildings to be built on the Neighborhood Congregational Church site in Laguna Beach.

BY ANDREW TURNER

After years of discussion surrounding what the future of the Neighborhood Congregational Church in Laguna Beach could look like, those close to the transformational project say they are prepared to submit an application for entitlements to the city.

The planned mixed-use development would put a 44-unit affordable housing complex on the lot, which represents a reduction of nearly 40% from the original plan for 72 units. There will also be a new spiritual center of approximately 7,000 square feet and a subterranean parking structure.

Bill Witte, the chairman and chief executive of Related California, said the project would likely be submitted to the city on Mon-

day under the guidelines of California Senate Bill 4, legislation enacted in 2023 that streamlines housing development on certain sites, such as churches, and exempts them from environmental review.

"This applies to sites owned by either religious or educational institutions and that must be 100% affordable housing," Witte said of the legislation. "It basically calls for an approval process to take place within 90 days of submission of a complete entitlement package."

Critics of the project had expressed concerns over neighborhood compatibility. Keith Labus, the principal architect with KTGy, said the project was downsized in response to the community's input.

"After receiving feedback from the community, and specifically our adjacent neighbors through a combination of both public and private meetings, we arrived at this final design, which is 44 units and has removed the [earlier proposed] entire third floor of the residential footprint of the building," Labus said. "Also, to visually kind of reduce the scale of the building further, we've used three distinct architectural styles, so the building will appear to be three separate smaller developments."

The spiritual center will be given "modern character," Labus said, while a "beach cottage style" has been planned for the residential building.

See **Plans**, page A8

## City has no love for spa's plans

La Palma council denies salon owner permit after inspection finds business advertising massage services.

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

An application for a massage permit by a local spa rubbed the La Palma City Council the wrong way.

After a code enforcement inspection sent Starlight Day Spa employees and customers exiting out the back door "with haste" last year, city officials sent the owner an Aug. 19 cease-and-desist letter alleging that he illegally operated a massage business.

On Tuesday, City Council members pressed Tom Scott, Starlight Day Spa's owner, during a public hearing with evidence in hand that the spa ran suggestive massage ads on websites like Craigslist and RubMaps, whose tagline is "where fantasy meets reality," in violation of the Massage Therapy Act.

Councilman Nitesh Patel asked Scott point-blank if he knew what RubMaps was.

"I believe that is website for massage parlors," Scott said.

"What kind of massage parlors?" Vivek pressed the spa owner.

"I assume ones that are not focused on beauty and wellness," Scott said.

Both websites have been linked to sex work and trafficking.

The location has caused La Palma trouble before.

In 2018, city staff inspected a number of massage parlors and closed four of them down, including Diamond Spa, where Starlight Day Spa currently resides.

In May, Starlight Day Spa received a business license to run a beauty salon at the location, but it wasn't allowed to offer massage services. On Aug. 15, Scott sought a conditional use permit and sub-

See **Salon**, page A2



# School district ousts trustee, citing other civic role

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

During a special meeting on Monday, the Anaheim Elementary School District Board of Trustees voted to vacate a seat held by Mark Lopez.

In November, Lopez won election to the North Orange County Community College District Board of Trustees. Since then, he has continued to hold both seats.

At the special meeting, trustees raised issues whether serving on the boards of an elementary school and a local community college district at the same time was “legally incompatible.”

“We recognize that this is a difficult situation,” said Juan Alvarez, AESD board president. “We regret that we have to take this action.

However, our duty is clear. We must ensure that our governance remains in compliance with the law.”

Lopez’s supporters argued that the school board lacked the legal authority to make such a determination, much less act on it.

“There’s actually a substantial gap between these two entities,” said Ryan Bent, a NOCCCD trustee. “This absolutely needs to be sent to the attorney general’s office. If you haven’t, that’s on you, not Mark Lopez.”

On Jan. 15, the school board voted 3-2 during closed session to ask state Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta’s office to review Lopez’s eligibility.

An attorney for the district noted during that same meeting that board members could resolve any

vacancies through an appointment of a new trustee from the same area or call for a special election.

“I’m a little confused as to why we’re talking about this and putting the cart before the horse,” said Trustee Ryan Ruelas during the Jan. 15 meeting.

A school board majority voted to direct district staff to prepare for an appointment process before censuring Lopez on account of guidance from legal counsel that claimed the two seats he held were in conflict, per state attorney general determinations in other districts.

During Monday’s special meeting, Denis Bilodeau, an Orange city councilman, warned that AESD risked litigation if a majority of trustees voted to oust Lopez from his elected seat.



Screenshot by Gabriel San Román

**THE ANAHEIM** Elementary School District Board of Trustees moved to replace Mark Lopez’s seat by appointment.

“There’s no case law nor attorney general opinion on point on this specific fact pattern,” Bilodeau said. “No one has had the audacity like Mr. Lopez to be on an elementary school

board and then run for a community college district, I guess. That question has never been asked and it’s never been litigated.”

He further claimed that the board lacked the “spe-

cial powers” to take any action.

Lopez, who works as a teacher at Gilbert High School in Anaheim, first won election to the board in 2018 and has represented Trustee Area 4 ever since. He retained his seat in 2022 when he ran unopposed.

His term was set to end next year.

Lopez kept comments in his defense short while disputing the legal rationale for his potential removal.

“The board here cannot make that determination of incompatibility,” Lopez said. “That’s something we already voted on in January.”

Alvarez stated that the issue had nothing to do with Lopez’s professionalism on

See **Trustee**, page A3



Courtesy of Ali Taj

**TAJ ANNOUNCED** his 2026 campaign for the 67th Assembly District in September.

## Artesia Mayor Ali Taj hopes to earn O.C. vote for 67th Assembly District

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

For Artesia Mayor Ali Taj, a chance to serve in the state Assembly is another opportunity to continue his American dream.

He announced his 67th Assembly District campaign back in September after more than a decade of service on the Artesia City Council.

But with a housing crisis in California, Taj is concerned that the same dreams of a better life that prompted him to immigrate from Pakistan are going unrealized by the next generation — whether immigrant or not.

“When I came here 25 years ago, I could buy a house and make ends meet,” said Taj, a Democrat. “I feel that American dream is slipping away, it’s diminishing. I want to change that.”

Success didn’t come immediately for Taj, 57, when he left Lahore, Pakistan for Artesia to be with family.

Though he had an undergraduate degree in economics and political science and a master’s in public administration, Taj couldn’t find work for six months

before taking odd jobs mopping floors when he arrived in 1999.

He later became a salesperson for the Good Guys electronics store in Artesia and earned \$4.35 an hour.

Taj eventually worked his way up to become a vice president of American Express financial services before starting his own business. He first won election to Artesia City Council in 2013.

“That’s the American dream,” Taj said. “Those first six months after coming to the U.S. were very hard on me. But now looking back, that was the best thing that ever happened to me.”

With his eye on the 67th Assembly District, which encompasses cities in southeast Los Angeles County and north Orange County, housing is a crucial issue to keep that dream alive for others, including his own son in Fullerton.

On the policy front, Taj stresses the importance of boosting housing stock in the state while ensuring that affordability remains an available option.

See **Taj**, page A3

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## UNION

Continued from page A1

a pay cut while the executives are making millions, hundred million dollars a year,” she said. “And the people around me are on food stamps or can’t move out of their parents’ homes.”

She added that current procedures don’t give workers an adequate say on discipline, promotions and other management decisions directly impacting them and their store. Visconti noted that one barista

who had been promised a promotion was passed over due to scheduling issues, even though multiple other shift leads stepped forward and offered to adjust their working hours so she could upgrade her position.

Another employee she described as a hard worker — who attends classes at two different college campuses — recently had their hours cut, disqualifying them from benefits.

A date for a vote to unionize the Via Lido location had not yet been set, Visconti said. If their bid to organize does pass, workers

there would join 11,000 other baristas at 550 locations spread across 45 states and the District of Columbia who have done so.

Starbucks Workers United and Starbucks Corp. had been negotiating a contract for the better part of 2024. But talks broke down in December over economic issues like pay and benefits. The two sides have agreed to work with a mediator to find a path forward.

“We have made progress over the last nine months of bargaining, and we are

committed to continuing to work together — with a mediator’s assistance — to navigate complex issues and reach fair contracts,” representatives for Starbucks Corp. said in a statement Thursday.

About 5,000 baristas in California and 42 other states walked off the job last Christmas Eve in protest. Workers United submitted 90 unfair labor practices complaints in January. They allege the company has closed locations that have attempted to organize, targeted pro-union employees for excessive disci-

pline over minor issues, cut hours and performed other forms of retaliation.

Representatives for the company say they respect employees’ right to organize.

“We respect our partners right to choose, through a fair and democratic process, to be represented by a union or not to be represented by a union, and will continue to work together to make Starbucks the best job in retail,” a company spokesperson said.

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Eric Licas

**VIA LIDO** Starbucks shift lead Mia Visconti poses for a photo Wednesday.

## SALON

Continued from page A1

mitted a floor plan for a suite that included five massage rooms.

After receiving the application, code enforcement visited the business.

The inspection found lighted signage already advertising massage services at the front of the spa. Photographs taken inside showed a list of massages

— from Swedish to deep tissue — offered at different time intervals and rates.

City officials also documented a code violation when they discovered concealed cameras in the faux flower decorations at the reception desk, which massage parlors are otherwise prohibited from installing to alert the entrance of law enforcement.

With the property emptied out due to employees and customers fleeing, La

Palma police arrived onsite as back up until a manager showed up.

Scott referred to the inspection as the “incident” during the hearing and denied anything sexual in nature happened at the spa when Councilwoman Janet Keo Conklin bluntly asked if it did.

“We were conducting beauty services,” he said. “The aesthetician that was there had just completed a waxing on a customer and

the customer was leaving.”

Scott claimed the spa worker knew little English and fled in fear.

Still seeking permit approval, he apologized to the city and stated that all massage advertising had been pulled in accordance with the cease-and-desist letter.

“We want to move forward,” Scott added. “We want to be successful, and we want to bring rejuvenation to the business and to the community we’re doing

our business in. We’re operating in full compliance with all city regulations while continuing to provide quality wellness and beauty treatments.”

He even offered to work closely with city officials while operating under a probationary period.

But Patel admonished him for the massage ads that ran before the city granted a permit for such services. Scott, who owns wax spas in Anaheim and

Santa Ana, claimed he had never applied for a conditional use permit before and jumped the gun in expecting a quick turnaround on the process.

The argument did little to sway council members who denied Starlight Day Spa a happy ending and voted its permit request down.

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# Bowers, other venues to open up for Museum Free-for-All March 16

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

The Bowers Museum in Santa Ana will join more than 30 museums and cultural institutions in Southern California in this year's Museums Free-for-All day. The regionwide tradition welcomes art and culture lovers to enjoy free general admission to participating museums on March 16.

As part of the free-for-all day, Bowers Museum will offer free general admission that will include full access to its featured exhibition, "The Eternal Garden: Titanium Art by Aka

Chen."

"We're proud to welcome our community for this special event," Bowers president Sean O'Harrow said in a statement.

Featuring the work of renowned Taiwanese artist and founder of Akachen Jewelry, "The Eternal Garden" is organized by Bowers Museum, with major support provided by the Taiwan Academy of Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Los Angeles and the Ministry of Culture (Taiwan). Additional support is provided by Anne and Long Shung Shih and AUO

Display Plus America Corp.

Chen is known for crafting luxury sculptures from titanium, using the precious and innovative material to create bending branches or textured rocks encrusted with rare gems like diamonds, sapphires and pearls. At Bowers, the exhibition uses Chen's sculptures to create a radiant garden that imagines a gilded world in which nature's beauty gets drenched in opulence.

Chen opened his jewelry studio in Taipei in 1989 and

See **Museum**, page A8



Courtesy of Aka Chen

**"THE ETERNAL GARDEN:** Titanium Art by Aka Chen" features titanium sculptures with rare gems like diamonds, sapphires and pearls.



Dr. David I. Lee is a nationally recognized fellowship-trained urologist who specializes in prostate cancer surgery.



## TAJ

Continued from page A2

"Building more housing across California is something that is needed, but the cost of building is very high," he said. "There are fees that I think we should really take a look at, like development fees."

Taj also points to his work on making Artesia a starting point for the future light rail Southeast Gateway Line to downtown Los Angeles as something expected to stimulate transient-oriented development in an otherwise fully built-out city.

In addition to housing, Taj is interested in legislation that will encourage small business growth and keep such companies in the state.

Is it a message that will resonate in Orange County cities across the 67th Assembly District?

The campaign scooped up endorsements from a majority on Buena Park City Council and incumbent Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk-Silva in Fullerton.

"Taj is a leader who truly understands the needs of our community and has the experience to deliver on his promises," said Quirk-Silva, who is term-limited in 2026. "I have no doubt that he will be an outstanding representative."

The race is shaping up to be a competitive one.

Earlier this year, Ada Briceño announced her candidacy. She is the former chair of the Democratic Party of Orange

County and serves as co-president of Unite Here Local 11, a hotel workers union.

As an immigrant from Nicaragua, Briceño is making her own appeal to voters as an embodiment of the American dream.

"When I was just 7 years old, my family and I came to the U.S. as refugees and arrived with nothing but hope and determination," she said. "California gave me the chance to build a better life, and I am committed to ensuring that future generations have those same opportunities."

She points to her experience organizing for higher wages as the basis for a legislative agenda focused on affordable housing, expanded job training and access to education.

Taj enjoys an early fundraising lead.

Since October, he has amassed \$234,000 in campaign contributions. Briceño has raised \$46,400 since the start of the year.

If elected in 2026, Taj's campaign believes he would be the first known Pakistani-born member of the state legislature. He stresses that hard work is as important as anything in running a successful campaign.

"It's not just fundraising, but also having a good, solid team that understands the district," Taj said. "I'm very confident that things are moving along well and we will get to the finish line together."

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## TRUSTEE

Continued from page A2

the board.

"He's been a dedicated, highly respected board member," Alvarez said. "His service and contributions to our students, staff and community have been invaluable."

The board president thanked him for his time on the board before calling for a vote.

Three school board

members voted to vacate the seat. Ruelas joined Lopez in voting against his removal.

A separate 3-2 vote established an ad hoc committee to vet applications to replace Lopez on the board as they come in. Two school board members will be named to serve on the ad hoc committee at a later date.

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## EMERGES

Continued from page A1

Yasmin Fesmire and Jared Millar, "Metamorphosis: Mending the Wound" is on view now through May 24, with each artist exploring the idea of metamorphosis in the traditional sense and through more complex ideas.

"Blue Wall," a project led by Christina Yasmin Fesmire, features work from every exhibiting artist, collaged together in unifying blue, with different representations of metamorphosis on display. Amphibians and cocooned insects appear beside cityscapes like Fiorito's "Trapped by Wealth," a lithograph of unboxed people boxed in high-rise buildings.

"The inspiration came from the salon-style exhibitions of the late 19th century, early 20th century, and it is a big collage of artists responding to a theme," said Arce. "A lot of the printmaking processes that we are able to support in our studio are here."



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**A DETAILED PRINT** is part of the "Blue Wall," a project led by Christina Yasmin Fesmire at the Irvine Fine Arts Center.

A litany of types and multitude of techniques make printmaking a practice that can be new to the artist. It is also an ancient art that seems even more subversive in a time when digital media reigns.

"It is a really interesting time to emphasize the hand, when we are dealing with digital media and how artists are incorporating AI or having hesitation about working with it," said Arce. "It is nice to see a little imperfection in the appli-

cation of ink or how a line is really characterized by the pressure you apply to a plate. I think that is really special."

Another collaborative effort is "Cocoon," led by Andra Broekelschen and incorporating prints made on teabags layered together to create a large chrysalis. The feeling of the piece is echoed by an installation titled "Lágrimas de las Chicharras," by Yvette Trujillo and Dusty Guerra. Inspired by the distinct

cries of cicadas, winged insects hang on rose gold wires and paper pulp hives.

The most breathtaking is "A Fragile Web," a project led by Karen Feuer-Schwager. A clear web traps words and pictures within its tangles, spelling out the word "Fragile" while also depicting endangered animals and plant life, a reference to the delicate balance we all share.

The naturally dyed yarns and fibers are held together with a type of adhesive glue, and the colors change organically as the installation ages.

The exhibition exists not far off from the printmaking studio where the Lynk Collective began.

"The studio really runs with the help of our volunteers, they help give a lot of the instruction and support to the folks who use it," said Arce.

In the Project Gallery, an exhibition from Los Angeles-based artist Michelle Andrade explores a different kind of shift with "Michelle Andrade: Everything's Fine." The work examines the area that

teeters between relaxed and anxious, cheerful and depressed. The distinct visual style in the mixed-media work includes drawings and brightly colored, humorously titled books.

"Everything about the work kind of synthesizes her practice. It is very diastrophic in nature," said Arce. "You can think of it as a self-portrait, and it is so relatable."

Arce curated "Everything's Fine" herself and felt an immediate connection to Andrade's work when she encountered it.

"It was funny, it was poignant, it was very tongue-in-cheek, but it is also so sincere and honest," said Arce.

The piece "I Felt Pretty Good One Day Last Week" incorporates pop-art sensibilities with self-deprecating humor, while "Self-Help," a project the artist began in 2019, feels deeply personal. The 24 individual books selected for the show were created during the COVID-19 lockdown, and the fictional titles are reflective of the intrusive thoughts that developed

within many people's heads during that time.

"I think it is really remarkable to see how we are all having these thoughts and feelings and we are all trying to live them," said Arce.

Titles like "The Art of Masking Your Depression" or "Awkward Situations and How to Relieve Them in Your Head in the Middle of the Night" are all blank inside, a commentary on the lack of answers or concrete information that can be found within the self-help industry.

Arce believes a community art center should support the community and said that by featuring the Lynk Collective, Irvine Fine Arts is making sure the local art scene continues to evolve and grow.

"It is really nice to be able to support the folks who use the studio, especially in Orange County where we don't have too many spaces and places for artists to show," she said.

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Photos by Sarah Mosqueda

**STEPHANIE YEE**, pastry sous chef at Disneyland Resort's central bakery, pipes peanut butter ganache into a Mickey-shaped macaron.

# Fan favorite sweets, lots of new treats at Disney Food & Wine Festival

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

A Mickey-shaped macaron made with Snickers bar pieces is carefully piped with peanut butter ganache by Stephanie Yee, pastry sous chef at Disneyland Resort's central bakery.

"You can never have too much ganache," Yee said during a cooking demonstration in Anaheim at the opening day of the Disney California Adventure Food & Wine Festival.

The chocolate sweet returns each year for the Food & Wine Festival, which kicked off on Feb. 28 and runs through April 21. The annual event brings chef demon-



**A FAN FAVORITE**, a Mickey-shaped macaron made with Snickers bar pieces, returns to Disney California Adventure Food & Wine Festival this year.

strations, special entertainment and more than 100 food and beverage items to the park, inspired

by the diverse cultures and fresh ingredients

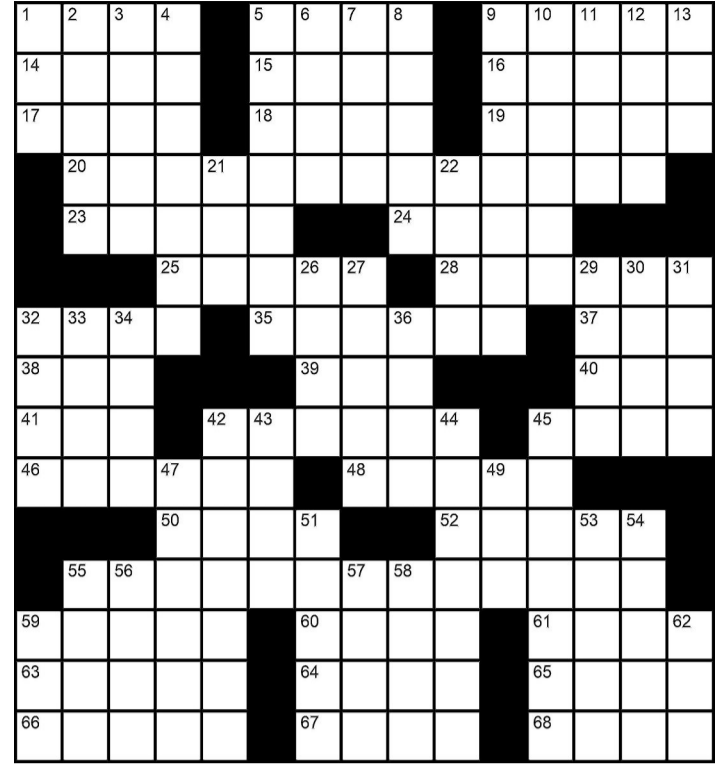
See **Festival**, page A8

## THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Stella Zawistowski

### ACROSS

- 1 Thick piece of stone
- 5 Connect the \_
- 9 Made a selection
- 14 Tempo
- 15 Musk of Tesla
- 16 Demonstrate
- 17 Creative pursuits
- 18 Multigenerational story
- 19 Evergreen trees
- 20 Suffragists' goal: 3 wds.
- 23 Came up
- 24 Make simpler
- 25 Parts of phrases
- 28 "You're getting on my \_!"
- 32 Throw gently
- 35 Makes fun of
- 37 Garden of Eden resident
- 38 Need to repay
- 39 Character in Progressive ads
- 40 "Golly!"
- 41 Lawyer's charge
- 42 Shows interest: 2 wds.
- 45 Damages
- 46 Disconnect from a socket
- 48 Defendant's story
- 50 Old Apple music player
- 52 Parent's sisters
- 55 Mental grasp
- 59 Sirius medium
- 60 Strauss of jeans
- 61 Boast
- 63 Leaves out
- 64 Showy spring flower
- 65 Most populous continent
- 66 On edge
- 67 Shaker seasoning
- 68 Stop, drop, and \_



## SUDOKU

By the Mephram Group

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit [sudoku.org.uk](http://sudoku.org.uk).

	2		4		9			
	6		3	5	1			2
					7			4
		6	5					
				8				9
					4	8		
2			4					
7			8		3		4	
	5			2			3	

For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A7.

### DOWN

- 1 Self-care spot
- 2 Caterpillar, e.g.
- 3 Movie performer
- 4 Confers (upon)
- 5 Pie or cake
- 6 "Frozen" snowman
- 7 For takeout: 2

wds.

- 8 Trap
- 9 Fights against
- 10 Coating under paint
- 11 Color variation
- 12 Divisible by 2
- 13 \_ Moines, Iowa
- 21 This, in Spanish

- 22 Diminish
- 26 Highly skilled
- 27 Dip with tortilla chips
- 29 Singer Suzanne
- 30 Happily \_ after
- 31 Gets a glimpse of
- 32 Bean curd
- 33 Actor Wilson
- 34 Trickle
- 36 Aretha Franklin's genre
- 42 "What if..."
- 43 Composer Stravinsky
- 44 Keyboard performer
- 45 In-room hotel amenity
- 47 Restrictions
- 49 Mass transit option
- 51 Sandwich shops
- 53 Trunk of the body
- 54 \_ mail
- 55 Showed up
- 56 Chief Norse god
- 57 Queen of the Greek gods
- 58 Villainous
- 59 Go bad
- 62 Square-dance attendee

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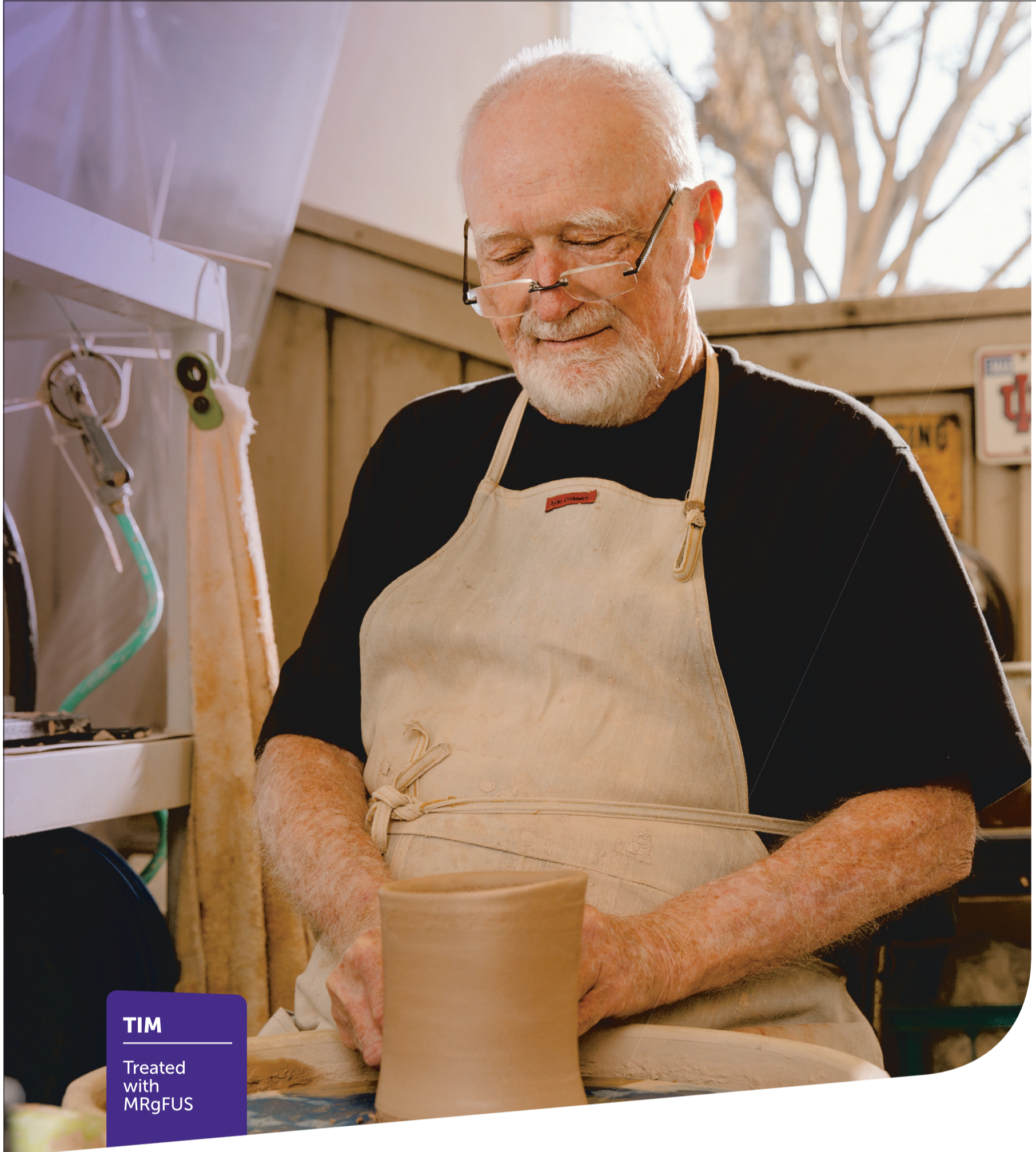
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forum

MAILBAG

# Who was that guy at the Spaghetti Bender?

When my son Ryan was younger, still single and without a spouse and kids and still going to college we used to frequent the Spaghetti Bender often for the excellent food.

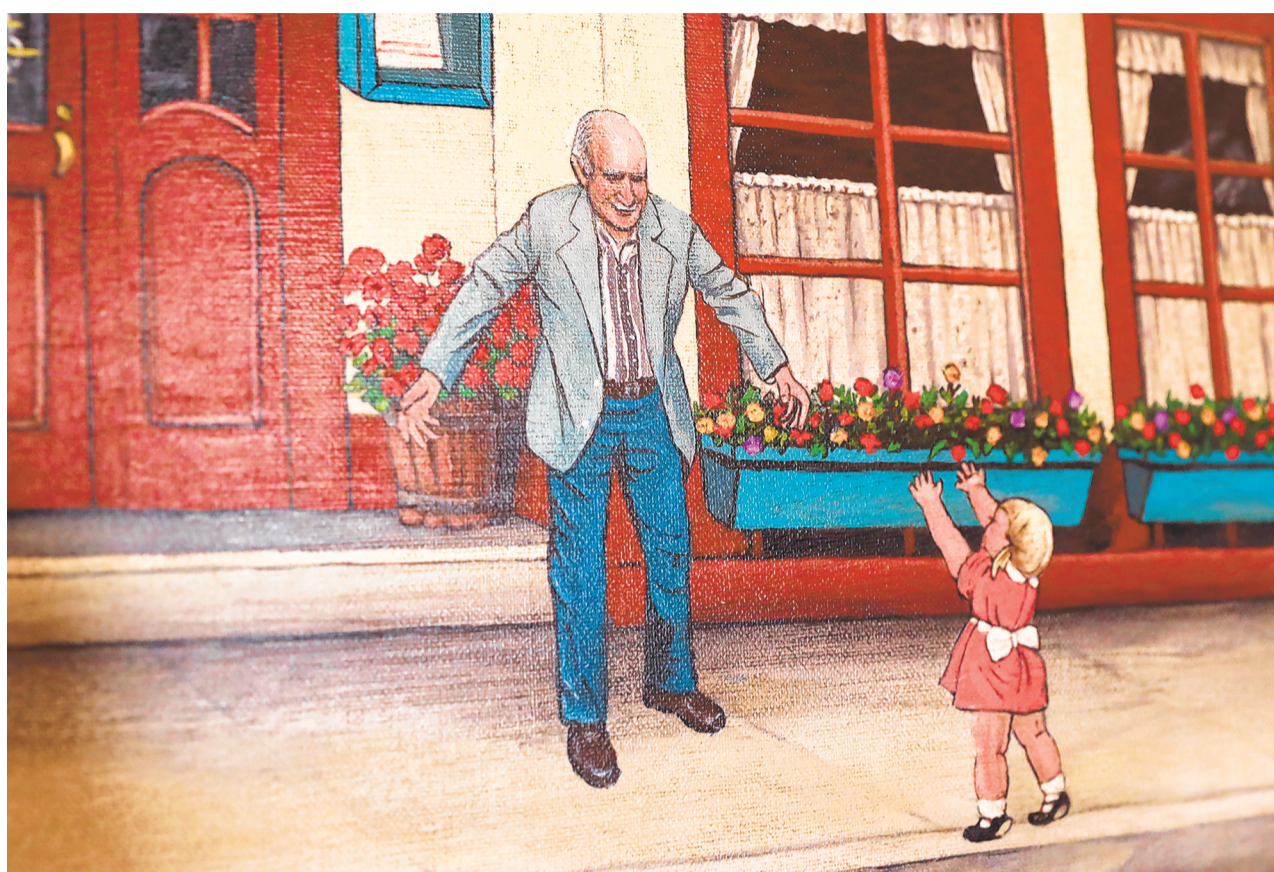
I vividly remember one such night while he was still attending law school sometime between 2001 and 2004 we were at the Bender sitting at our table waiting for our meal to come, when Ryan out of the blue, and with no forewarning, asked me a sports question. "Dad, do you know who were the two baseball players that hit three home runs in a World Series game?"

What we were talking about prior to that escapes me, but I was floored by that question and did not have a response. He said to me very casually, Babe Ruth was one of the players and the other guy is sitting

right over there across the room at a table by himself. I said, "What are you talking about?" I looked around and saw some guy at a table by himself and named the other guy who hit three home runs in a World Series game.

I didn't recognize him at all, but it was indeed a former player and one of the most controversial who ever played the game. The Pilot's Feb. 28 article regarding the closing of the restaurant states, "Regulars at the Spaghetti Bender includes a former pro baseball player who often sought special treatment." And owner Michael Hoskinson said, "I would never put up with his s—."

The article did not however give the actual name of the baseball player, but the coincidence in seeing him there at that time leads one to conclude who it might have been. No mat-



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**A PAINTING OF** Papa Lorenzo greeting a child at the Spaghetti Bender adorns a wall in the now-closed restaurant.



**Jack Croul**

June 8, 1924 - February 23, 2025

John "Jack" Vedder Croul, a military hero and veteran of "The Greatest Generation" passed away peacefully at his Newport Beach residence on February 23, 2025. Jack lived his motto; "Just do the right thing and think of other people." He was born June 8, 1924 in Hartford, Connecticut to Gertrude and Rex Croul.

Raised in San Marino, California with his three brothers, Ed, Richard and Jim, he took the "Red Car" of the Pacific Electric Rail to and from South Pasadena High School during the early 1940's.

In 1943 at 18 years of age, Jack enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II. By 1944 he was a lead navigator for the 96th Bomb Group, 338th Squadron, flying thirty-three, B-17 missions, including two on D-Day. Jack earned a Purple Heart, the Air Medal and the Distinguished Flying Cross. Postwar, he received the French Legion of Honor Medal for his service. He retired as Captain, Army Air Corps, in 1945.

After the war, Jack enrolled at Stanford University, transferring to Claremont Men's College when he began to date Janet Behr, whom he married in 1950. Jack was a "Pacesetter" and a member of one of the first graduating classes at Claremont Business School. As an alumnus, he endowed multiple scholarships and professorships, including the Janet Croul Memorial scholarship to honor Janet who died in 1993, the John V. Croul Professorship of European History and the Kingsley Croul Professorship of American History, among others.

Upon graduation, Jack turned his energy to the business world and was hired as an early employee of Behr Process Corporation. He was instrumental in building Behr Process Corporation, a paint company, into one of the largest private companies in Orange County, with more than 1000 employees. Eventually, he rose to prominence as the Chairman of Behr. Around the time of his retirement from Behr, Jack met his second wife Kingsley Roney Brosnan and the two of them traveled the world together.

A passionate collector of postwar European automobiles, Jack amassed an impressive collection of sports and race cars. He didn't just collect cars – he drove them, navigating the winding mountain roads from California to Asia, Africa, South America and Europe. Jack's collection was inspired by the famous Italian Mille Miglia car races that took place in the first half of the 20th century, and his cars participated in twenty-eight Mille Miglia retrospective rallies. His collection became a living tribute to the golden age of racing.

Jack's many passions included restoring vintage fighter planes, flying gliders, prop planes and at 73, he received his helicopter license. He loved his community and was instrumental in saving the historical Cannery Restaurant in Newport Beach from destruction. He was a man of discretion, elegance and great generosity. Jack endowed the Earth Systems Science building at University of California, Irvine and his generous philanthropy will continue through the Croul Family Foundation, which he founded.

His wife Kingsley survives Jack, as do his two sons – Brad, his wife Judith; Spencer, his wife Susan, and their families. He is also survived by Kingsley's sons Rick, Tim, his wife Jenny, and her daughter Kingsley and their families, as well as his brother Jim, his wife Susie and Richard's wife Jane. Jack is preceded in death by his first wife Janet, and his brothers Ed and Richard. He will be cherished for his stories of valor, his infectious enthusiasm, laughter and his warm, generous nature.

ter, because the Spaghetti Bender is now history. Thousands of memories will have been made there along with the consumption of thousands of good meals, and the good thing about memories is that we can recall and relive them anytime we want.

**Bill Spitalnick**  
Newport Beach

(Daily Pilot, March 2), by Erik Skindrud. I think the events that happened were horrible. I hope the rest of my city reads this story and realizes what happened. This is what local reporting is for.

Thank you for reporting on news like this.

**Abraham Gaglio**  
Huntington Beach

**Pilot's guest commentary made an impact**

I am a 13-year-old who grew up in Huntington Beach. I am an avid beachgoer and have never heard the story told in "Blackened dreams: recalling the Pacific Beach Club a century after the African American resort in O.C. burned"

**H.B. council's MAGA leanings an embarrassment**

An op-ed article in the Wall Street Journal described the Huntington Beach City Council as "the Trumpiest Council in America," a title the council is, no-doubt proud of as its members continue to fail to govern while spending

time pushing a political agenda.

In recent weeks, the council has ignored and apparently attempted to discredit, via surreptitious surveys, petitions regarding the city's library and the council's recently established committee to censor books, if not ban them outright.

In the process of establishing the library committee, council members disparaged our professional librarians, even to the point of suggesting that our librarians had an agenda of making homosexuals or transsexuals of children. Furthermore, the council usurped the authority of parents, suggesting that parents are incapable of guiding our children to make acceptable moral and

ethical decisions. Council went so far as to judge one of their own a pedophile for merely stating that he would allow his child to read a particular book which the council majority deemed unsuitable. Such bullying, sad to say, has become the norm in city politics.

One assumes that former mayor Gracey Van Der Mark would explain her censoring the library as a move to teach children right from wrong. Perhaps, then, she should have thought what she was teaching children by her "gifts" to outgoing council members following the November elections — images of Donald Trump — not a good-natured joke

See *Mailbag*, page A7

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**A WORD, PLEASE**  
**JUNE CASAGRANDE**

## 'Because' and the reason it could wreck a sentence

The reason I'm writing this is because it may be helpful. See anything wrong with that sentence? Some will. The issue here: "the reason is because." Many people say that "because" should be "that": The reason I'm writing this is that it may be helpful.

They have a point. "Reason is because" has, at its heart, a grammar problem, not to mention a logic problem.

The grammar problem here is that "is" calls for a noun. "My car is a Lamborghini." A noun doesn't have to be a single word. A cluster of words can function together as a noun. "My car is the purple Lamborghini parked across three spaces." Everything after "is" in that sentence is part of a larger noun phrase, all serving as the noun introduced by "is."

A clause introduced by "that" can sometimes be a noun. Think about the sentence "That you love me is all I need to know." The subject of the main verb is the entire clause "that you love me." So "that" can create a noun clause.

Clauses introduced with "because" don't usually function as nouns. That's why "because you love me

is all I need to know" is nonsense.

So if "the reason is" needs a noun to come next, that means "the reason is that" works and "the reason is because" doesn't.

Makes sense, but grammar is never so simple. And just because "because" doesn't usually make a noun clause doesn't mean it can never do so.

"Because" may certainly introduce a noun clause that is joined to 'it,' 'this,' or 'that' by some form of the verb 'to be,' as in 'if you are hungry, it is because you didn't eat,'" wrote Bergen Evans in the 1962 book "Comfortable Words." "This has been standard English for centuries and the very grammarians who condemn the use of 'because' in a noun clause do not hesitate to write, 'This is because.'"

It's hard to argue with that example, which leads to just one conclusion: Sometimes "because" can create a noun clause, which means that "the reason is because" is grammatical.

There's another reason to dislike this structure: The word "because" means, basically, "for the reason that."

Theodore M. Bernstein, author of the 1965 "The Careful Writer," was a leading voice for this point of view, writing: "However common this construction may be in everyday speech, it is disapproved for shaped writing. Since the meaning of 'because' is 'for the reason that,' the construction

See *Word*, page A8

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## MAILBAG

Continued from page A6

but blatant “in your face” gloating.

Of course, if the council members really wanted to clean up vulgarity from the library, maybe they should have begun with cleaning up their own language, especially that of current Mayor Pat Burns, who called fellow former council members pieces of s— over a live mike in a public meeting and later classlessly refused, so far as I know, to apologize.

More recently the council-appointed Community & Library Services Commission, not surprisingly, by a 6-0 vote approved placing a MAGA plaque at our Central Library, ostensibly to celebrate the library’s 50 years serving our city. The vote followed a public comments portion of a meeting in which speakers opposing the plaque outnumbered speakers in favor by 40 to six, according to the Daily Pilot of Feb. 13. Did the 6-0 vote to approve the plaque speak the voice of the people?

**Mark Wimbish**  
Huntington Beach

Our library can teach us many things. For example, consider the mythological story of Narcissus, who could only gaze upon his own reflection until he wasted away to nothing. The vanity of the H.B. City Council is so deep that they fail to see the needs of our own community. Our city is wasting away and our council does nothing but congratulate themselves for their failure.

They will stare at their MAGA plaque that does not celebrate our library but their political point of view. The council members cannot see how it divides our community.

Our citizens provided the City Council with two petitions that reflect the will of the people, to leave the library alone. The council could accept these petitions, but it does not.

Instead, the council impugns the reputation of library volunteers with surveys and intimidates them for doing their civic duty. We have lost all our senior librarians to the council’s folly.

The money wasted on an unnecessary election and frivolous lawsuits could purchase many years’ worth of books for kids, fix the library facilities and provide programs. By spending the money to enhance their own self image, the council takes away from our community to give to themselves.

No more is this vanity obvious than when they placed a Trump statue on the dais of the council chambers. Just like that statue the policies of the Seven Zeros are nothing but a bust.

**Larry Hersh**  
Huntington Beach

## Fight over OCC Children’s Center will continue

Orange Coast College student and mother Megan Richards fought back tears as she addressed the district’s Board of Trustees: “I was homeless for seven years of my childhood. I know all about basic needs. Child-care is a basic need.” The board members, seated above the crowd, remained unmoved. (Parents, teachers rally to stop proposed cuts, layoff at OCC Children’s Center, Daily Pilot, March 2).

After the meeting, parents gathered in frustration. Board clerk Lorraine Prinsky approached Megan, offering false reassurance: “At least you’ll still have childcare since you’re a student.” Megan replied, “Actually, that’s the opposite of what I just explained.”

Under new plans announced by OCC Vice President Madjid Niroumand, Megan, an OCC Child Development Education major and mother of four, will lose childcare for her youngest, who falls outside the new age range for the Children’s Center. This decision, made without input from

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the Harry and Grace Steele Children’s Center or OCC’s Office of Instruction, devastates 189 families relying on the center’s high-quality, affordable programs.

Once a thriving infant-to-Pre-K program with over 204 children enrolled, according to an email to me from a faculty member, the center will shrink to just 48 spots, prioritizing OCC students and displacing more than half its families. At least eight longtime educators will lose their jobs.

“The Children’s Center is our village,” said a parent who signed the petition. “It’s where our babies grow into kids and where we’ve grown into parenthood. Without it, our kids lose essential early education, and our jobs are at risk. Waitlists for quality care are years long. This decision could put families out of work and out of their homes. Where is our mon-

ey going? The demand for this center exceeds OCC’s overall demand. Is this not an incredibly shortsighted business decision?”

Families and faculty are left speculating about the financial reasoning behind Niroumand and President Angelica Suarez’s choice. Conflicting deficit figures and time lines have surfaced, leading to demands for investigation. Explicit notice of the deficit was only recently shared with faculty, staff and families, raising concerns about a lack of transparency in the decision-making process.

“We’re asking for time, transparency and a chance to turn this around,” said Courtney Prouty, petition organizer and children’s center parent. “We’re a community of bright students, professionals and caregivers. We want to make this a model program for other — not a contributor to a national

crisis.”

With over 2,400 petition signatures and mounting pressure, the upcoming Board of Trustees meeting on March 10 will determine the fate of the center and the 300-plus people whose lives depend on it.

**Desirée DeLattre**  
Huntington Beach

## Costa Mesa’s feral cats have always had supporters

The Feb. 21 Daily Pilot article, “After 7 years, a plan to legally trap, neuter, return feral cats in Costa Mesa may see the light of day,” and the Sept. 14, 2023, article “Dozens of cats on vacant Costa Mesa property have rescuers, city animal control at odds” both reported my efforts to help save feral cats on West 20th Street in Costa Mesa.

Over the years, I have developed a strong passion for advocating for those who cannot speak for

themselves, particularly animals and children. The situation on West 20th made me realize the city’s failure to address the issue and the urgent need for a proper Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program.

The lack of response from code enforcement, animal control and other city officials was shocking. The city’s easiest solution seemed to be euthanasia, which is not an effective way to manage the feral cat populations. We can and must do better.

At Tuesday night’s City Council meeting, many of us showed up in numbers too large for the council to ignore. I was incredibly impressed and deeply grateful that Councilmen Manuel Chavez and Arlis Reynolds recognized the urgency of this issue and requested this topic be placed on the council’s agenda.

On the other hand, I attended the Animal Services Committee meeting, and to say I was disap-

pointed would be an understatement. The city waited until the last possible moment to research which organizations were legally allowed to release pets. It was baffling that staff didn’t know Priceless Pets was legally allowed to perform TNR. This is unacceptable.

I hope the Daily Pilot will continue to press the city for answers on why, despite overwhelming community support, it continues to drag its feet and make excuses instead of implementing real solutions. However, I also want to commend the council members who spoke out, because now, finally, we feel heard.

The reality is that TNR is already happening in Costa Mesa, whether the city acknowledges it or not. The question now is whether it will be part of the problem or part of the solution.

**Megan Robison**  
Costa Mesa

## CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS

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# Hilbert Museum celebrates its 9th anniversary

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Pete the Panther, Chapman University's official mascot, prowled the halls of the Hilbert Museum of California Art at Chapman University in Orange, making a special appearance for the museum's anniversary. Art lovers posed for pictures with the big cat who sported a jersey in Chapman red and Panther black.

Pete's visit was among the activities that took place at Hilbert Museum's anniversary event on Feb. 22, marking nine years since the museum officially opened and its first year in an expanded 22,000-square-foot, two-building exhibition and educational complex. Guests enjoyed talks and cupcakes with other art lovers and artists at Saturday's all-day event.

Founded by art collectors and philanthropists Mark and Janet Hilbert, the Hilbert Museum opened in 2016 and is home to one of the world's largest collections of California narrative art. The museum was made possible by a major gift the Hilberts gave to Chapman University in 2014. In February 2024, the museum reopened after undergoing a three-year expansion that tripled its size.

"We hope to continue to foster art and artists in this community, and we would



Courtesy of the Hilbert Museum

**HILBERT MUSEUM** founder and benefactor Mark Hilbert talks to visitors about his antique radio collection on Feb. 22.

like to see this area become an arts district," Mark Hilbert told TimesOC in October 2023, when the museum was still under construction for the expansion.

Since opening nine years ago, the Hilbert Museum has hosted 250,000 visitors and shown 70 separate shows.

"We are beyond grateful to our old and new fans in Orange County and beyond who have made us one of the fastest-growing art museums in Southern

California," Hilbert Museum director Mary Platt said in a statement. "But, as impressive as our first nine years have been, 2024's expansion accelerated visits by locals and visitors wanting to experience works by California artists or that capture the essence of the Golden State."

The museum complex houses the Hilbert's collection of more than 5,000 pieces that chronicle California history from the 1900s to today through the work of California scene

artists, Hollywood studio artists and animators.

Besides the Hilbert collection, the space has dedicated galleries to rotating exhibitions that feature local artists, like "Going Places," a solo exhibition of modern master painter Timothy J. Clark. Additionally, the building's facade displays the restored Millard Sheets mosaic, "Pleasures Along the Beach," relocated from a flagship Home Savings & Loan building in Santa Monica.

During the afternoon, the Citrus Labels Society, a California-based club that connects collectors of vintage citrus labels, gathered in the Burra Community Room to discuss "Picturing Paradise: California Orange Box Labels," a current exhibition at the museum curated by orange crate-label expert Gordon McClelland.

The group shared its passion for orange-crate label collecting. The labels were used to illustrate Southern California's bounty and sell oranges,

but they also created an image of California orange groves that persists today. In the evening, renowned Southern California portrait artist Bradford Salmon led a talk on the nuances of portrait painting.

Mark Hilbert, who often refers to the complex as a storytelling museum, was on hand on throughout the day to walk visitors through the museum. Hilbert leading tours is a common sight, and the museum estimates that Hilbert, along with Platt, have led nearly 350 personal tours, some scheduled but many impromptu, since the museum opened.

On Feb. 27, Hilbert will host a talk titled: "My Collecting Life" in the Burra Community Room at 6 p.m. The informal talk will include personal stories on how he began collecting California scene paintings, original movie art and antique radios.

While the museum is proud of what it has accomplished over the past nine years, Platt assures local art lovers the museum has even more surprises in store, as it looks ahead to its 10-year anniversary.

"We expect an even brighter future as we get ready to celebrate our first decade," said Platt.

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## PLANS

Continued from page A1

Community outreach has included a hand-delivered letter to 60 neighbors, a project website, nccproject.org, and more than a dozen meetings with neighbors and community groups. More than 200 people attended a community meeting on Oct. 7 after notice was given to households within 500 feet of the project.

There would be one parking space per unit, plus spots for on-site management, Witte said. An additional 41 spaces on the premises could be sold to

the city for permanently owned public parking.

The target household income levels fall between \$33,000 and \$117,000, depending on family size, while rents will range from \$800 to \$2,500. Priority access to the affordable residential units would be given to people who work in Laguna Beach.

Per the Regional Housing Needs Assessment, Laguna Beach must plan for 394 additional housing units in the current housing cycle that ends in 2029.

"From a planning point of view, it's almost a caricature of a perfect location because it's across the street from a supermarket,

it's two blocks from the ocean, you can walk everywhere in town," Witte said. "The high school is nearby, also in walking distance. ... To compete for these tax credits, you have to pass a threshold test of proximity to amenities."

If an application for tax credits is successful following the city's approval process, Witte said it is "plausible" that construction could begin in April 2026.

"Most of the affordable housing in California, if not all, is funded with the help of low-income housing tax credits, which are administered by the state and for which there are competi-

tive application processes a couple times a year," Witte said. "Tax credits would provide, by far, the biggest source of funds to build the affordable housing. In order to compete as a project eligible for families, at least half the units must have two- and three-bedroom units. Family projects are slightly easier to gain access to funding for than just senior projects."

Pastor Rodrick Echols of the Neighborhood Congregational Church said "declining membership, dwindling financial resources, and aging structures" on the campus drove the institution to think about its future. Echols said church

membership had three goals: to remain a spiritual community in Laguna Beach, to provide a community benefit that meets a need and to be financially stable.

"We've had this dream to create a place ... in Laguna Beach focused on love and justice while also promoting economic equity," Echols said. "That commitment to economic equity placed us at a really interesting space, an ability even, to look at affordable housing with clear eyes, to see the need and to see how we might be able to help fulfill that need right here in our town."

"Laguna Beach needs

more affordable housing, and it needs that housing for seniors, artists and many others who work low-wage jobs here in town."

Echols added that the spiritual center will not only allow for continued meetings of the congregation, but it will also provide greater flexibility for community groups looking to put on events.

Alice Court, a 27-unit senior affordable housing development at 450 Gleneyre Street, was also a Related California project. It was completed in 2004.

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## FESTIVAL

Continued from page A4

found in California.

Some sips and bites are only available for a limited time during the festival, and the chocolate Mickey macaron is among the sweets guests look forward to each year.

"It's a fan favorite because it has a little bit of everything, it has chocolate, it has peanut butter, it has Snickers; it is balanced with sweet and salty," said Yee. "We can't help but bring it back for our guests."

Parkgoers can buy four-coupon or eight-coupon Sip & Savor passes to redeem for select food items or nonalcoholic beverages at festival marketplaces, like Garlic Kissed and Peppers Cali-Ente.

An additional marketplace, Mercado de Antojos ("Market of Cravings" in English), is new this season, offering even more options for hungry visitors, like birria macaroni and cheese. Disneyland Resort



Sarah Mosqueda

**DISNEYLAND RESORT** Chef Daniel Duke Brown leads a cooking demo at Disney California Adventure.

chef Daniel Duke Brown was on hand to demonstrate the new pasta dish topped with the traditional Mexican-braised meat, finished with onion-cilantro sauce and tortilla bits for crunch.

"Some of the consomé gets folded into the cheese sauce, so you are going to have that flavor throughout the whole dish," Brown said as he presented the

finished plate, loaded with red-spiced meat for the audience to see.

Other new dishes include corn chip chili pie, inspired by a popular snack made inside a corn chip bag. Disney's version features Impossible beef with a spicy cheese sauce, tomatoes, sliced jalapeños and sour cream. There are also creative beverages like a pickle whiskey sour cock-

tail, a callback to Disneyland's pickle lemonade that blends sweet and salty flavors for a lip-puckering sip.

The Paradise Beer Garden offers flights of local brews, and Uncork California has cocktail and wine flights. Some dishes take inspiration from other Disney properties like musubi fried rice, an Aulani Resort-inspired steamed rice with egg, glazed spiced ham and furikake.

Besides cooking demonstrations from Disneyland Resort chefs, chef-led culinary demonstrations from Orange County chefs and visiting celebrity chefs are scheduled for weekends throughout the festival. Chef Paul Cao from Irvine's Burnt Crumbs will cook up some fun on March 16 at 6 p.m., and chef Shachi Mehra from Anaheim's ADYA will spice things up on March 22 at 6 p.m.

As part of the Golden State theme, the park also welcomes the return of Soarin' Over California, a hang-gliding ride focused on California landmarks

like the Golden Gate Bridge and Yosemite National Park. The stomp-style musical performance "Cookin' with the Jammin' Chefs," with performers using pots and pans to make music with Disney characters, also returns, and guests can enjoy live music at the Paradise Gardens Bandstand throughout the festival.

Outside of California Adventure there are ways to get a taste of the fun too. At Hearthstone Lounge inside Disney's Grand Californian Hotel & Spa, guests can book "A Walk on the Silverado Trail" experience with specialty wine and cuisine pairings. Or they can try the new Dinner and Scotch event, which features hors d'oeuvres and live music followed by an intimate, four-course dinner experience with scotch pairings.

Great Maple Modern American Eatery located inside Pixar Place Hotel will offer a California wine country inspired special of red wine-braised short ribs, and at Downtown Disney, special limited time food

specials are available at Ballast Point Brewing Co., Kayla's Cake, Parkside Market, Salt & Straw and Splitsville Luxury Lanes.

Brown said the culinary team explores the local dining scene and confers with contemporaries to keep up on food trends and assure the festival offerings are new and exciting each year.

"We go out to eat ourselves, we go out and do the research, but we also talk to the guests and get their feedback. We also have other chefs in Southern California that we talk to and bounce ideas off of," said Brown, although he maintains California's bounty of ingredients is always at the heart of the inspiration.

"One of the best things is just getting into that kitchen with our team of chefs, getting some ingredients in and just seeing what we come up with," said Brown.

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## WORD

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is a redundancy."

The problem with this idea is that it takes into account only the first definition of "because" in the dictionary: "for the reason that." But like most words, "because" has more than one definition. Here's the number two definition in Merriam-Webster's: "the fact that." Merriam's even cites E.B. White, who once used the structure: "The reason I haven't been fired is because my boss hasn't got around to it yet." White's many claims to fame include his contributions to Strunk and White's "The Elements of Style," which has been admired by grammar sticklers for decades.

Clearly, "the reason is

because" is OK.

"The reason why" is also controversial, and for similar reasons. It is, in a way, redundant. And it's usually unnecessary. After all, "The reason why they left" says the same thing as "The reason they left."

But that doesn't mean it's wrong or even that it's a recent corruption of good English. In fact, "the reason why" has been documented in literature as early as the 13th century. Objections to "the reason why" didn't appear until about 600 years later. So there's no reason to say "the reason why" is wrong.

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## MUSEUM

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has famously incorporated elements of Eastern philosophy into his work, particularly Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. The sparkle of morning dew or the colors on a butterfly's wings seem even more breathtaking when reimagined with rare gems. Chen's work has been collected by European royal families and worn by Hollywood celebrities, and although the artist's work has been showcased globally, Bowers has the honor of hosting his debut solo exhibition in the U.S.

"Free-for-All is the perfect chance for visitors to explore 'The Eternal Garden' and experience Chen's breathtaking fusion of art, nature and philoso-



Courtesy of Akachen Jewelry

**"THE ETERNAL GARDEN:** Titanium Art by Aka Chen" at Bowers Museum features titanium sculptures of acclaimed Taiwanese artist Aka Chen.

phy before it closes April 13," said O'Harrow. Free admission at Bowers also includes eight other exhibitions, includ-

ing "Art of the Pacific" and "Ceramics of Western Mexico."

"The Museums Free-for-All has become a

touchstone for our community, a time to try something new or return to an old favorite," said Alexa Nishimoto, SoCal Museums President and Marketing Associate, in a statement.

Museum-goers should keep in mind the free-for-all day applies to general admission, not specially ticketed exhibitions. Regular parking fees apply at each museum, and some may require advance reservations. Participating museums include the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures, the Getty Center and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. A full list of museums can be found at [socalmuseums.org](http://socalmuseums.org).

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