

Daily Pilot

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2021 /// Now including Coastline Pilot and Huntington Beach Independent /// dailypilot.com



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

FEATURED ARTIST Rebeca Mendez, left, chats with designer and studio assistant Jason Lee in front of her mural-sized installation "Any-Instant-Whatever" during the Laguna Art Museum's Art and Nature opening on Nov. 4. It will be on display through April 25.

Laguna Art Museum's display indulges a stargazer's curiosity

BY ANDREW TURNER

One of the more anticipated events on the Laguna Art Museum's calendar returned this month with the ninth installment of the Art and Nature showcase.

For nearly a decade, the museum has brought its patrons closer to the intersection between art and the natural world. Featured projects have often involved outdoor exhibits, but it was not unprecedented for the themed work to be placed indoors.

Friends, family, students and art enthusiasts made their way to the museum on Nov. 4 to take in multimedia artist Rebeca



AN UNTITLED mural of exotic birds in a lush tropical setting is just one of the pieces in "A Fanciful World" by Jessie Arms Botke at the Laguna Art Museum's Art and Nature show.

See **Display**, page A4

Q&A: South Coast Plaza GM reflects on the place he helped build

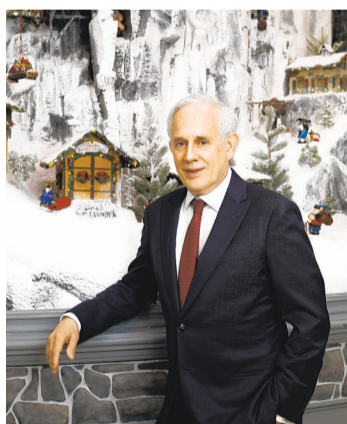
BY SARA CARDINE

David Grant — South Coast Plaza's general manager and longest tenured employee in the company's history — will retire after 44 years of overseeing the day-to-day operations of the luxury shopping center he helped modernize and once helmed with father-in-law Henry Segerstrom.

Officials announced last week Grant, invited by Segerstrom to join the family business in 1977 after working for Los Angeles-based CL Peck Construction, would retire from his position Dec. 31.

Under his leadership, South Coast Plaza deftly navigated a constantly changing retail climate, integrating technology into the business' daily operations and responding to the pandemic by developing the Pavilion, an open-air shopping experience that allowed major brands, including Louis Vuitton, Gucci and Cartier, to operate during the shutdown.

Recently, Grant took a few moments to reflect on his storied



Ryan Miller | Capture Imaging

SOUTH COAST PLAZA General Manager David Grant announced last week he will retire Dec. 31.

career and share his hopes for the future of South Coast Plaza with the Daily Pilot.

Q What exactly is the GM of South Coast Plaza responsible for?

A Being a general manager of South Coast Plaza is like running a small city as its city

See **Plaza**, page A8



THE FRAGER family from Cerritos enjoyed the floating LED lit Christmas trees on Friday night during the annual Lighting of the Bay at the Newport Dunes Waterfront Resort.

Photo by Susan Hoffman

Dusk falls and 57 LED holiday trees light up the Newport Dunes lagoon

BY SUSAN HOFFMAN

The 57 LED holiday trees lit up the lagoon at the Newport Dunes Waterfront Resort in a magical way Friday night. The 25th annual Lighting of the Bay delighted visitors, even though its usual pre-pandemic opening night festivities had to be foregone this year.

"Coming into 2021 with the timing, we were not able to produce the event along with [the traditional tree lighting], but we still wanted people to enjoy

lights," General Manager Phil Ravenna said.

"People can walk around the promenade, grab a snack or hot drink at Moe B's Munchies, pick up a package of s'mores at the market and enjoy the fire pits."

Ravenna explained that the Lighting of the Bay began 25 years ago with 12 trees. There were two barges each with one 15-foot tree, and 10 with 10-foot tall free-floating trees.

Today there are 57 trees, ranging in size from 10 feet to 55 feet

tall. They are constructed out of metal tubing and cable to string the lights on. Each is atop a wood base float device and all are connected to controls that create a little dance-like movement.

"It's a large build for us, which we do each year beginning in mid September," Ravenna said. "Everything is individually anchored to look like free floating holiday living LED scenes."

The floating light displays in

See **Dunes**, page A6

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A CONCEPTUAL drawing for the exterior of the proposed Newport Beach Library Lecture Hall project.



Courtesy of the Newport Beach Public Library Foundation

Newport council to weigh in on conceptual drawings for library's Lecture Hall

BY LILLY NGUYEN

The Central Library Lecture Hall project is coming back to the Newport Beach City Council Tuesday, this time for approvals of the conceptual drawings and a memorandum of understanding with the Newport Beach Public Library Assn.

The project dates to 2019, but the Public Works, Library Lecture Hall Design Committee and Library Foundation gave a presentation of the conceptual designs for council members during a September study session.

The library was built in 1994 and was later expanded in 2013.

Most events are held in the library's Friends Room, which is an estimated 2,646 square feet.

Library staff estimate annual participation in programming has increased from about 28,000 participants in 2009-10 to more than 72,000 by 2018-19.

Supporters of the plan for a new lecture hall say that the city has long outgrown that space, thus necessitating the need for a library lecture hall with better sight lines and audiovisual equipment.

The proposed lecture hall will encompass about 9,500

square feet and be located near the Central Library building.

A staff report prepared for Tuesday's meeting notes the hall, if approved as planned, will be able to host up to 299 people and include a green room, storage and audiovisual control room.

Current estimates place the project at a cost of \$12.8 million with the price to be split evenly — \$6.4 million each — between the city and the Newport Beach Public Library Foundation. Original estimates carried an \$8-million price tag.

The Newport Beach City Council will be reviewing the memorandum of understanding between the city and the foundation, the project and its costs, and, if approved, directing staff to prepare and complete the construction documents for the lecture hall before putting it out to bid.

CODE AMENDMENTS TO BE CONSIDERED

Additionally, council members will be looking at two code amendments related to tattoo establishments and short-term lodging, both citywide and on Newport Island.

The code amendments

for tattoo parlors are intended to bring current city development standards to be consistent with state and case law.

Meanwhile, the code amendments for short-term lodging deal with establishing a maximum cap of 1,550 permits and a minimum stay of two consecutive nights.

Newport Island would see a maximum of 20 permits with the requirement that those short-term lodgings be owner-occupied and managed.

Approvals would also establish a maximum daytime and overnight occupancy limit, restrict rentals to one renter per week and establishing minimum parking requirements.

The short-term lodging amendments were approved by the City Council in October and were then submitted to the California Coastal Commission.

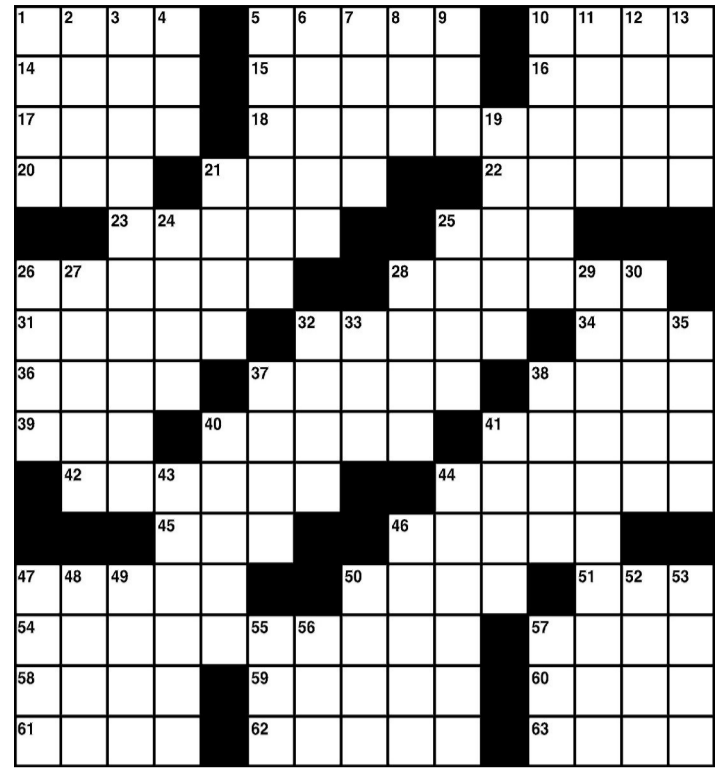
A staff report prepared for the item said the commission accepted the proposals as written with minor modifications that council members will either need to fully accept or reject at Tuesday night's public hearing.

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THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Jacqueline E. Mathews

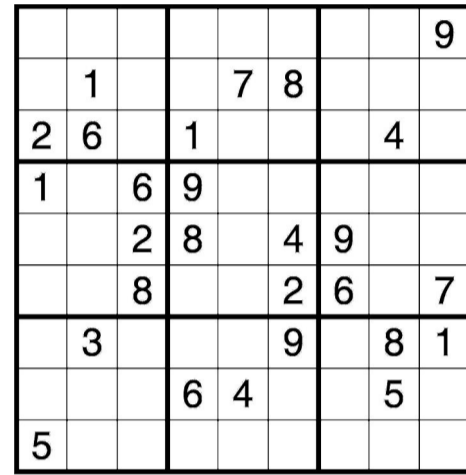
ACROSS
1 Mr. Kristofferson
5 Church table
10 Tiny cut
14 _ of the above; test answer choice
15 Arlo's dad
16 Funny entertainer
17 Killer whale
18 Seniors' game
20 Cheyenne's place: abbr.
21 Twain's Huck
22 Gives, but expects back
23 Sends
25 Sunday entrée, perhaps
26 Diamond official
28 Friendliest
31 Meds, often
32 Blackboard "pen"
34 Tit for _
36 Singles
37 Spin around
38 Beverage in a porcelain cup
39 Hair bonnet
40 Sulking
41 Schleppe
42 Turn over a new leaf
44 Confrontations
45 _ of; no longer burdened by
46 Cattle catcher
47 Illegal burning
50 In a _; depressed
51 Org. for Wizards & Warriors
54 Walking leisurely
57 Sandwich shop
58 Rarin' to go
59 Sharp increase
60 Percussion instrument
61 Trawling needs
62 Look of contempt
63 Facial features



SUDOKU

By The Mepham 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.



For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A6.

4 _ of Galilee
5 For _; temporarily
6 Diving birds
7 Having mixed feelings
8 Billboards
9 Bread variety
10 Wily plot

11 "High _"; Gary Cooper classic
12 Like yummy cinnamon rolls
13 Go by
19 Not taut
21 Forest trees
24 Isn't well
25 TV's "_ Street

Blues"
26 Read _; study about
27 Clementine's dad, by trade
28 _ a soul; no one
29 Gift for a letter writer
30 Stolen
32 Buddy
33 Smack
35 Kennedy & others
37 "Mum's the _!"
38 George & Louis, to Prince William
40 West _; prestigious academy
41 Elephant's tooth
43 Palm leaves
44 Texas lawman
46 Forward thrust
47 As dumb _ ox
48 _ about; praise highly
49 Formal attire
50 Give the heave-ho to
52 Cornflower's color
53 Intentions
55 Nineteenth letter
56 Trot
57 Ike's initials

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AAA Travel Alert: Many travel destinations have implemented COVID-19 related restrictions. Before making travel plans, check to see if hotels, attractions, cruise lines, tour operators, restaurants and local authorities have issued health and safety-related restrictions or entry requirements. The local tourism board is a good resource for updated information. **Unless otherwise indicated:** Rates quoted are accurate at time of publication & are per person, based on double occupancy. Airfare, taxes, fees, surcharges, gratuities, transfers & excursions are additional. Advertised rates do not include any applicable daily resort or facility fees payable directly to the hotel at check-out; such fee amounts will be advised at the time of booking. Rates, terms, conditions, availability, itinerary, taxes, fees, surcharges, deposit, payment, cancellation terms/conditions & policies subject to change without notice at any time. Cruise rates capacity-controlled. Advance reservations through AAA Travel required to obtain Member Benefits & savings which may vary based on departure date. Rates may be subject to increase after full payment for increases in government-imposed taxes or fees & supplier-imposed fees. Blackout dates & other restrictions may apply. Not responsible for errors or omissions. The Automobile Club of Southern California acts as an agent for Pleasant Holidays®. CST 1016202-80.

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THE CROWD | B.W. COOK

Gratitude and giving spirits abound this time of year

Gratitude took center stage this Thanksgiving weekend on the Orange Coast.

The Harvesters, always front and center in shining a spotlight on the scourge of food insecurity in one of America's most prosperous regions, this fall held their 29th fashion show and luncheon in support of the Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County.

The sold-out fashion show and luncheon unfolded at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts in Costa Mesa and raised a significant \$1.7 million to fight hunger in this region.

The much-anticipated fashion event produced in association with South Coast Plaza welcomed attendees gathering for a pre-show champagne reception prior to a presentation of the latest lines from designers including Lanvin, Oscar de la Renta, Versace and Stella McCartney, to name a few.

Harvesters chair **Veronica Slavik** greeted the full house with great poise, reminding guests that the fashion was the fun while the fundamental purpose of the day was to focus on providing families in need with a serious basic necessity: nutritious food.

The ever-gracious **Debra Gunn Downing** of South Coast Plaza said, "Together with our retailers, we support the effort of Harvesters and Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County in addressing hunger."

Joining the shopping center in sponsoring the event were City National Bank, Coldwell Banker's **Casey Leshner**, and many more. Since its inception, the Harvesters event has raised in excess of \$12.8 million, providing an approximate 38.4 million meals over 29 years.

Seen in the fashionable and supportive crowd were **Eunice Sun, Randa Kim, Susan Etchandy, Jennifer Van Bergh, Irene Martino, Jennifer Segerstrom, Laura Constantiner, Kate Carlton** and **Stephanie Rogers**, to name only a few.

SCR THEATRE'S FALL SEASON OPENING PARTY

Newport Beach Country Club opened its handsome ballroom doors for patrons of South Coast Repertory Theatre who attended

its annual fall season opening party.

Gala chairs **Tammy and Sam Tang**, and **Michael Ray**, greeted the some 165 guests arriving for dinner, dancing and an evening of performance entertainment in SCR style.

Actor/singer **Rustin Cole Sailors**, who has performed with SCR productions previously, entertained the crowd, joining vocalist **Sara Stiles**, a two-time Tony Award nominee whose stage credits include "Tootsie" and "Hand To God" as well as musical credits including "On A Clear Day You Can See Forever," "Avenue Q" and others.

The pair sang new material from a work in progress accompanied by pianist **Alby Potts**. The non-stop excitement included a 10-piece band performing with more entertainers and filling the dance floor with patrons après dinner.

The SCR crowd dined on a poached pear and gorgonzola salad, followed by a filet mignon paired with Chilean sea bass.

Donors dining and table-hopping were **Sally Anderson** and **Tom Rogers**, **Leona Aronoff Sadacca**, **Laurie and Steve Duncan**, **Valerie and Geoff Fearnas** and **Susan Shieldkret** and **David Dull**. Also front and center for SCR were **Sarah McElroy**, **Lee and Harmon Kong** and **Giulia and Schalou Newton**.

By evening's end more than \$340,000 was raised in support of SCR's on-stage artistry along with outreach educational programs.

Opening this weekend and running through Dec. 26 is the long-standing SCR tradition, "A Christmas Carol."

Surely one of the most important reasons for expressing gratitude at any time of the year, is for the blessing of good health.

In the O.C., doctors, hospitals, and all people providing health research, the charities and individuals assisting the suffering directly are essential to the core of life in this region.

KURE IT CANCER EVENT

This month Kure It Cancer Research hosted its "Let's Save Lives" event, billed as "Legends & Legacy" that was fronted by the nonprofit's board chairman **Todd**



Courtesy of Ryan Miller

SOME OF THE attendees at the 2021 Harvesters Fashion Show and Luncheon held on Oct. 6 at the Renee and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall in Costa Mesa. The event raised \$1.7 million to fight hunger.



Courtesy of Doug Gifford

JENNIFER VAN BERGH and David Hasenbalg helped raise \$1.7 million at the Harvesters fashion show and luncheon in support of Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County.

Perry.

Two former community legends, both now deceased, UCLA's hallowed football coach **Terry Donahue** and USC's **Barry Ho-**

even, founder of Kure It, were honored by friends and advocates of cancer research.

Among the crowd raising some \$165,000 with the evening "Fund-

A-Kure" campaign were **Diana and Mike Rapport**, **Brittany Barkley**, **Keith Strohl**, retired NFL quarterback **Paul McDonald** and **Andrea Donahue**, widow of Terry Donahue, sharing in the announcement establishing the Terry Donahue Memorial Cancer Research Grant."

The premiere grant went to **Dr. Mustafa Raoof** at City of Hope, who is focusing on appendiceal cancer.

Additional recent grants included a \$75,000 gift awarded to USC's Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Dr. Martin Kast from USC Norris was on hand sharing news of research being performed concentrating on cervical and throat cancer.

Todd Perry announced that Kure It currently funds 47 projects at 16 cancer centers in the U.S. and abroad.

Since the late Barry Hoenen founded it in 2007, \$12 million has funded programs the mostly study rare forms of cancer less in

See *The Crowd*, page A4

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SARAH'S STORY



An ER Doctor Fights — and Defeats — Breast Cancer During Pandemic

Sarah worked on the front lines as an emergency room physician in the height of the COVID pandemic. Her world came to a halt when the mother of three found out she had an aggressive form of breast cancer. At Hoag, Sarah never felt like a number. Hoag saw her as a person, a mother and a fellow physician. Daily, she felt the support of a team fighting hard to get her back to being healthy for her family. Today, cancer-free, Sarah credits the care and support she received at Hoag for helping her defeat breast cancer once and for all.



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SPILL

Continued from page A1

suits filed by businesses, residents, property owners and others affected by the spill. The plaintiffs include Laguna Beach coastal property owners, a Huntington Beach surf school, a Seal Beach bait and tackle store, and several groups of fishing and seafood sales companies.

Several of the 22 law firms involved in the litigation have already pressed U.S. District Judge David O. Carter to consolidate their lawsuits into a class-action case. He signaled in a Nov. 9 court filing that he will eventually consolidate the cases, but is still weighing when to do so.

Carter has ordered a mid-December hearing at the Santa Ana federal courthouse, where lawyers could lobby to head up the litigation. He said he would lean toward selecting one or more firms with "long-standing" connections to Orange County and Los Angeles, experience with class-action litigation, and knowledge of bankruptcy and environmental law.

Amy Conway, a spokeswoman for Amplify, did not respond to emailed questions Monday, and instead



Allen J. Schaben | Los Angeles Times

A PERSON walks along the beach in Huntington Beach as container ships and an offshore oil rig loom in the background.

provided a link to a two-day old-statement by the unified command that was established in response to the spill.

In court filings last month, an Amplify attorney identified a long list of insurers, including a Houston-based underwriter and 10 syndicates of Lloyd's, that could also shoulder some legal bills or eventual settlement costs.

Federal investigators believe the major October spill was triggered by a ship's anchor striking the pipeline during a storm in January, complicating the question of civil liability for the incident.

Last week, federal authorities identified and

boarded a second cargo ship, the container vessel Beijing, at the port in Long Beach. The Coast Guard said in a statement that the ship was involved in the Jan. 25 anchor-dragging incident during heavy weather at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, and has designated the ship's owners, Capetanissa of Liberia and the operator V-Ships Greece Ltd., as parties of interest in the investigation.

The October spill had a significant negative impact on the natural environment, despite the fact that the estimated amount of oil released was about one-fifth of what was initially reported. The UC Davis Oiled

Wildlife Care Network said earlier this month that it had recovered 82 dead birds, six dead mammals, and dozens of living mammals in the aftermath of the spill. The dead animals included a bottlenose dolphin, three California sea lions and a wide array of birds: cormorants, coots, pigeons, grebes and more.

The USC Sea Grant Program reported that 5,544 gallons of oil, 13.6 barrels of tar balls and 546,782 pounds of "oil sand and debris" had been collected from the Southern California coast as of Nov. 8. Area fisheries remain closed, but the beaches have reopened and the USC program reported that an analysis

found that "San Diego and Orange County air, water, and sediment do not pose a public health concern for short-term exposures from the use of the water and beaches in the counties."

Last week, Amplify withdrew its full-year report, citing the spill as a factor in the decision. In a filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, the company said that it "paid approximately \$17.3 million in costs related to remediation efforts regarding the Incident," most of which has been or is expected to be reimbursed by insurance carriers.

Stephen Schork, a longtime energy markets analyst and advisor, said he worries

that rapid divestment from fossil fuel infrastructure like Southern California's aging platforms has increased the likelihood of oil spills by smaller operators like Amplify, which don't have the resources international energy conglomerates have to prevent such incidents and compensate affected communities once they occur.

"I'm fearful you can expect more of these instances in the years ahead with greater frequency with the way we're going with our investments," he said.

Eric Smith, a business professor at Tulane University in New Orleans and associate director of the Tulane Energy Institute, said he believes the government has little remaining recourse with Amplify.

"I don't think there is much more that the authorities can do to Amplify," he said. "Given the financial overhang, they are a zombie at this point."

But Schork said it's still imperative for the company to do everything it can to prevent future incidents, and for regulators to oversee those efforts.

"It's absolutely in the best interest of every producer out there to be as meticulous as possible, and it's incumbent on the regulators to ensure that that is happening," he said. "They're making sure this issue is being addressed and a remedy is being implemented."

MATTHEW ORMSETH and RICHARD WINTON contributed to this report.

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PLAZA

Continued from page A1

manager. I oversee everything from public safety, guest services, tenant relations, mechanical engineering, safety and security and more.

Q What was the Plaza like 44 years ago? Was it a different landscape? How would you say it has changed over the years?

A The change in technology was tremendous — what we considered science fiction in the '60s is now in everyday business practice.

Our tenant mix has evolved from mostly small, independently owned retailers to large corporate-owned retailers. Luxury, in particular, has gone from multigenerational family ownerships to large conglomerates.

I've witnessed the phenomenal growth of cultural diversity in Southern California and development of international retail tourism at South Coast Plaza. We are known to attract visitors from more than 50 countries around the world.

Q What do you think the next 44 years might hold in store for South Coast Plaza?

A I believe South Coast Plaza will continue to be a leading and vibrant international destination because it has built such a strong brand. It's clear to us a lot of people in the U.S. and around the world will always seek and love brick-and-mortar shopping, even though online shopping is available to them.

Through the years, we've strategically positioned

South Coast Plaza as a one-of-a-kind global shopping and dining attraction with a unique and diverse collection of boutiques and restaurants. In recent years, we've added two restaurants helmed by a Top Chef finalist and one of our restaurants just earned a Michelin star. We have the largest collection of luxury tenants under one roof in the U.S., especially fine jewelry and timepiece brands, and this segment will continue to grow in the years ahead.

There's no doubt South Coast Plaza will continue to evolve, with its international luxury retail collection, guest experiences, amenities and a welcoming, pristine environment as the foundation.

Q Many people believe shopping centers are declining in popularity, but that doesn't seem to be the case at South Coast Plaza. Can you say why?

A South Coast Plaza is a one-of-a-kind — that's really at the core of our continuing success. We have all the elements that have enabled us to thrive through economic changes.

We were early adopters of luxury retailing. As Southern California's population got bigger and more urbanized, and as the demand for luxury grew, we became an attraction — as a part of the Southern California lifestyle — to tourists from all over the world and locals alike. We were, and still are, at the right place at the right time with the right offering. To have that many top luxury and contemporary retailers under one roof remains unprecedented in the U.S.



DAVID GRANT, right, plays table tennis with Zhang Ping, Chinese Consul General.

Courtesy of South Coast Plaza

Q Can you share maybe one or two highlights or special memories from your time in the position?

A The visits from presidents Reagan and Clinton, members of royal families and diplomats from around the world, movie and music celebrities such as Michael Jackson and Sylvester Stallone are certainly memorable. One memory that stands out is when Arnold Schwarzenegger visited us at the peak of his "Terminator" movies. I welcomed him and took him on a tour of the center. Years later, Arnold returned to South Coast Plaza in a different capacity — as governor of California.

Another unforgettable experience was when we hosted a group of children who were blind through CM900, a civic organization that was part of the city's chamber of commerce. Each of us who participated partnered with a child and we spent time with them as they dined at Piret's, one of our restaurants at the time, and rode the horses on our carousel.

Q Why did now seem like a good time to retire?

A My original plan was to transition from the

day-to-day operations at South Coast Plaza when I turned 70. Having spent 42 years of my career and life here, I had been planning to focus on personal pursuits and interests for which I had not had enough time, such as traveling with my wife, Andrea, and our agricultural businesses in Ventura County. When the pandemic struck, I postponed my retirement to help South Coast Plaza navigate a very challenging and critical time.

Q Even though you will continue to remain involved, in some way, in the operations of the site, what will you miss most about leaving the day-to-day goings on?

A I will miss the day-to-day contact with inspiring tenants and meeting customers from all walks of life and from all over the world. I will also miss the regular interactions with friends and partners at government and diplomatic agencies, community and civic organizations and, of course, the management teams that have helped make South Coast Plaza the success it is today.

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