

Daily Pilot

THURSDAY, JULY 15, 2021 /// Now including Coastline Pilot and Huntington Beach Independent /// dailypilot.com

Motion in rape case pares down charges

A prosecutor can dismiss charges related to two alleged victims in the case against a Newport Beach hand surgeon and his girlfriend, who are accused of drugging and sexually assaulting several women.

BY CITY NEWS SERVICE

An Orange County Superior Court judge on Wednesday granted a motion by prosecutors to dismiss charges related to two alleged rape victims in the case against a Newport Beach hand surgeon and his girlfriend, who are accused of drugging and sexually assaulting several women.

Prosecutors from the attorney general's office have said previously they wanted to chip down charges to one alleged victim in the case against Dr. Grant Robicheaux, 40, and Cerissa Laura Riley, 34. Robicheaux was charged initially with seven alleged victims and Riley with five.

The attorney general's office took over prosecution of the case last year when another Orange County Superior Court judge removed Orange County Dist. Atty. Todd Spitzer's office from the case.

Three of the alleged victims want to be removed from the case, according to prosecutors, and Judge Steven Bromberg said in his ruling that he "understands why they are asking to be removed from this case as alleged victims."

Bromberg noted that a declaration from investigator Jennifer Doss on why two of the women wanted out of the case was "sparse, nevertheless, it is adequate and to the point. After 2½ years, these ladies are entitled to leave this case if they so wish."

See **Charges**, page A2

ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

SEVERAL LOCALS HAVE NAMES CALLED IN MLB DRAFT PAGE A4

MEN'S WATER POLO



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

ATTACKER LUCA CUPIDO shoots during a recent practice for the U.S. Olympic men's water polo team at Sage Hill School in Newport Beach.

He's banking on success in Tokyo

Newport Harbor High graduate Luca Cupido is a versatile player for the U.S. Olympic squad.

BY MATT SZABO

Many water polo teams have banked on Luca Cupido's talent over the years, from Newport Harbor High School to Cal to the United States men's national team.

Now, at the age of 25, Cupido has become a banker himself.

Cupido said he began working for Bank of America about a year ago, as an investment banker.

Keep in mind, that was supposed to be just when he was gearing up for his second straight Olympic Games in Tokyo, before they were postponed.

"I was practicing two or three times a week, just to try to stay in shape and see what happens," Cupido said. "I didn't know if I was going to play again. I didn't know what was going to happen."

Cupido said the company gave him five

months off for the Olympics. This March, he went back to his native Italy for a couple of months, playing for the RN Camogli club he grew up with.

The investment that Team USA has made in Cupido is clear. He was selected to play in Tokyo and is a talented weapon for Coach Dejan Udovicic's club, which begins play in the rescheduled Olympics against host Japan on July 25.

Cupido, who scored two goals in helping

See **Cupido**, page A3

Leaders of Costa Mesa charter flagged for possible violations gets one more extension

BY SARA CARDINE

A Costa Mesa charter school under scrutiny for possible violations, including overreporting enrollment, unpermitted facility use and charging pupils fees for instruction has been granted more time by the Orange County Board of Education to resolve its issues.

Trustees in a July 7 meeting heard an update on the International School for Science and Culture, whose leaders are tentatively planning to begin a new school year as soon as Aug. 23. The school was flagged by the Orange County Department of Education's Charter School Unit for sev-

eral improprieties.

Aracely Chastain, director of the unit, claimed school officials misreported enrollment to the state, offered classes in a city-owned building not zoned for K-12 education and charged fees to families who partook in "childcare" services during the pandemic that included instruction.

Staff requested in June that the board issue a notice of violation to begin the formal process of documenting the problems so they might be resolved, but trustees instead opted to give ISSAC officials until the July 7 meeting to respond informally.

Chastain told board members at last week's meeting officials had

submitted conflicting budgets with inaccuracies and discrepancies in expenditures and fund balances.

"It is troubling that ISSAC administrators and the school's governing board continue to make decisions that disregard education code, the school's approved charter and the agreement with this board as their authorizer," she said.

In a series of public comments, a handful of parents painted a very different picture of the charter school, describing how teachers and administrators went above and beyond to provide a quality education, especially during the pandemic.

"We were amazed at how flexible they were," said Jay Claus, father of a rising first-grader. "Our daughter enjoyed learning, she was challenged and thrived. ISSAC charter schools is, in my opinion, essential for the community and especially for the well-being of our kids."

A team comprising founder and executive director Padmini Srinivasan and a handful of experts on legal and financial matters — including California Charter School Assn. manager Michelle Anderson, who was brought in to assist ISSAC through a contract approved by the board — detailed

See **Charter**, page A2

THE NEWPORT Beach City Council looked again at the housing element draft on Tuesday. The draft document will be submitted to the state in 30 days.



Scott Smeltzer
Staff Photographer

Newport Beach's housing element update nearly set to be submitted for state's review

BY LILLY NGUYEN

At a study session Tuesday, the Newport Beach City Council got another look at the draft for the housing element, a comprehensive document that details housing plans and policies within city borders, before it's submitted to the state in a month.

Local jurisdictions are required to update the housing element every

five to eight years. The update is supposed to be adopted by mid-October, but the state provides a grace period of 120 days.

Current scheduling suggests that the housing element update will be adopted some time in January, according to the presentation.

The initial draft was introduced to City Council members in April and has since undergone several revisions.

Tuesday's presentation was the third time it was presented to the City Council.

The draft plan now assumes 1,000 accessory dwelling units, also colloquially known as granny flats or secondary units, and an increase in the number of units at Banning Ranch and Coyote Canyon.

See **Update**, page A4

Harbor Justice Center in Newport requires all people to wear masks

BY LILLY NGUYEN

For at least the next two weeks, people entering the Harbor Justice Center in Newport Beach will be required to wear a mask or facial covering regardless of their vaccination status.

Court officials issued a statement Tuesday that said the decision was made out of an "abundance of caution" after two COVID-19 tests at the facility returned positive.

Kostas Kalaitzidis, a spokesman for Orange County Superior Court, said in an interview Wednesday that the court received notice within the last few days of the positive test results.

Kalaitzidis did not confirm when or who — whether it was an employee, judge, inmate or member of the public — tested positive.

"One case is not a huge problem. But when we had the second, we had to do something about it," Kalaitzidis said.

"It doesn't matter to the court whether it was an employee or a judge or inmate or member of the public. To us, we need to protect everybody. We had two cases. Two cases are two cases too many."

The mandate will remain in place for two weeks as of Wednesday or until superseded by a different update. It only affects the Harbor Justice Center, Kalaitzidis said, and all other courthouses remain open to the public and do not require masks for those vaccinated.

Court officials initially modified their COVID-19 precautions in July.

lillynguyen@latimes.com
Twitter: @lilibirds

THE COACH HOUSE

www.thecoachhouse.com



TICKETS & DINNER RES: 949-496-8930



THU, JUL 15
HENRY KAPONO



SAT, JUL 31
MISSING PERSONS



FRI, AUG 6
THE MOTELS



SAT, AUG 7
THE BABYS

- 7/15 HENRY KAPONO
- 7/16 KILLER & THE KING (ELVIS & JERRY LEE LEWIS TRIBUTE)
- 7/17 THE HIGHWAYMAN SHOW
- 7/23 BEATLES VS STONES
- 7/24 YOUNG DUBLINERS
- 7/25 KEB MO w/SPECIAL GUEST THE BROTHER BROTHERS
- 7/29 THE MARSHALL TUCKER BAND
- 7/30 BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN TRIBUTE-THE RISING
- 7/31 MISSING PERSONS
- 8/1 SUBURBAN SKIES
- 8/6 THE MOTELS
- 8/7 THE BABYS
- 8/13 HONK
- 8/14 BERLIN
- 8/20 THE TUBES
- 8/21 THE SMITHEREENS WITH VOCALIST MARSHALL CRENSHAW
- 8/26 BRIAN REGAN
- 8/27 YACHTLEY CREW
- 8/28 YACHTLEY CREW
- 8/29 THE 5TH DIMENSION
- 9/1 TONY ORLANDO
- 9/3 LED ZEPAGAIN (LED ZEPPELIN TRIBUTE)
- 9/5 THOMPSON SQUARE ACOUSTIC
- 9/8 BUDDY GUY
- 9/10 CHRISTONE "KINGFISH" INGRAM
- 9/11 TOMMY CASTRO
- 9/12 THE FUNNIEST HOUSEWIVES
- 9/17 SAVOY BROWN
- 9/18 WILD CHILD (DOORS TRIBUTE)
- 9/19 BENISE
- 9/23 BILLY BOB THORNTON & THE BOXMASTERS
- 9/25 THE FENIANS (HALFWAY TO ST PATRICKS DAY CELEBRATION)
- 10/1 VENICE
- 10/3 WAILERS
- 10/8 JD SOUTHER
- 10/9 DESPERADO (EAGLES TRIBUTE)
- 10/10 GEOFF TATE
- 10/14 JOHN HIATT & JERRY DOUGLAS BAND
- 10/16 TAPE FACE
- 10/17 ROBERT EARL KEEN
- 10/22 THE PETTY BREAKERS (TOM PETTY TRIBUTE)
- 10/23 OINGO BOINGO FORMER MEMBERS
- 10/24 HEIDI NEWFIELD
- 11/3 THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY



FRI, AUG 13
HONK



SAT, AUG 14
BERLIN



SUN, SEP 5
THOMPSON SQUARE



WED, SEP 8
BUDDY GUY

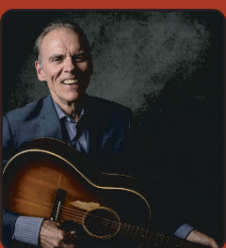
- 11/4 FIREFALL
- 11/5 RONSTADT REVIVAL
- 11/7 ATLANTA RHYTHM SECTION
- 11/11 JD SIMO / GA-20
- 11/12 FIVE FOR FIGHTING w/STRING QUARTET
- 11/13 SUPER DIAMOND (NEIL DIAMOND TRIBUTE)
- 11/20 WHICH ONE'S PINK?
- 11/26 LA GUNS
- 11/27 METALACHI
- 12/2 THE PLATTERS
- 12/4 DSB (JOURNEY TRIBUTE)
- 12/8 MARC BROUSSARD
- 12/9 LEONID & FRIENDS (CHICAGO TRIBUTE)
- 12/10 JOHN MAYALL / WALTER TROUT
- 12/12 ROBERT CRAY
- 12/17 AMBROSIA
- 12/18 BERLIN
- 12/19 GARY "HO HO" HOEY
- 12/23 DAVID BENOIT CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS
- 12/26 BUCKCHERRY / JETBOY
- 1/7 QUEEN NATION (QUEEN TRIBUTE)
- 1/8 QUEEN NATION (QUEEN TRIBUTE)
- 1/13 GINGER BILLY
- 1/15 THE BLASTERS
- 1/22 JOAN OSBORNE / THE WEEPIES
- 2/3 THE GILGOUR PROJECT
- 2/6 AN EVENING WITH DAMIEN ESCOBAR
- 2/12 OTTMAR LIEBERT & LUNA NEGRA
- 2/13 KINGSTON TRIO
- 3/10 KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD
- 3/13 GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA
- 3/21 TINSLEY ELLIS
- 4/2 Y&T
- 4/16 MARC COHN
- 4/17 MARC COHN



SAT, SEP 11
TOMMY CASTRO



FRI, SEP 17
SAVOY BROWN



THU, OCT 14
JOHN HIATT



SAT, OCT 16
TAPE FACE

Fountain Valley man killed in freeway crash on the 57

A 30-year-old Fountain Valley man died in a crash with a big rig on the Orange (57) Freeway in Anaheim Wednesday.

The man, whose name was not immediately released, was driving a 2015 Toyota Corolla, which slammed into the rear of a big-rig tractor trailer truck

on the freeway near Ball Road, according to the California Highway Patrol.

The driver of the truck told officers he was entering the freeway from Ball when he saw the Corolla in the far right lane going at a high rate of speed narrowing in on him, the CHP reported.

The truck driver veered to the right to avoid the car, which clipped the truck's trailer and "impaled the Toyota under the trailer," according to the CHP.

The Toyota driver was pronounced dead at the scene and the truck driver avoided injury.

— City News Service

CHARTER

Continued from page A1

steps that had been taken to resolve the issues.

They explained how the pandemic created new and confusing attendance reporting requirements that caused the school to submit the incorrect budget to the state and assured no funds would have to be returned.

Arturo Garcia with San Diego-based ICON School Management said ISSAC would need a cash flow loan while the state funding issue was corrected but anticipated it would be quickly

repaid as new, higher levels of funding followed a robust enrollment of more than 200 students in the months ahead.

"We see a very stable year for ISSAC in 2021-22," he said, projecting an operating surplus of around \$600,000 in the year ahead.

School representatives said leaders were in the process of obtaining a city permit to hold classes in the Boys and Girls Club of Costa Mesa in the coming school year and expected approval by Aug. 9 at the latest.

As for the fees, they assured board members everything paid by parents

for childcare last year was being refunded, except in three instances, where families donated the refunds back to the school.

"All of these [fees] had been reported in our monthly financials — we really had not an inkling that there was something that was incorrect," Srinivasan said. "(Now), we are at a point of reorganizing, of strengthening our structure so that we can meet every issue with the care and thoroughness it deserves."

Board trustee Beckie Gomez said she was con-

See Charter, page A3

CHARGES

Continued from page A1

Bromberg granted the prosecutors' motion to dismiss charges related to two of the women, but "defers" on ruling on the other woman at this time.

Doss said in court papers that after March 24, that woman — referred to as Jane Doe 2 — stated "she wanted to think about it," and that Doss left her a voicemail, but it wasn't returned, so prosecutors assumed she wanted out of the case, according to Bromberg's ruling.

The judge said there were "too many unanswered questions" about why Jane Doe 2 did not respond to prosecutors.

Bromberg told prosecutors they must "use due diligence at the highest level and attempt to contact Jane Doe 2 once again to deter-

mine if Jane Doe 2 truly wishes to no longer participate in the present case."

He also ordered prosecutors to file a declaration under seal explaining why she no longer wants to be in the case.

The judge said he would rule on the prosecutors' motion "to amend the complaint and to dismiss all counts as to Jane Doe 2, 1 and 7" at the next court hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

At the last hearing, in June, attorney Matt Murphy told Bromberg that he was representing a new client in the case, a potential eighth victim, however.

The case has gone through multiple unusual gyrations since it was filed in 2018.

It became a flashpoint in the election between Spitzer and former Orange County Dist. Atty. Tony Rackauckas, who Spitzer unseated.

Spitzer ordered an extensive review of the case and assigned two new prosecutors to it before deciding he would dump all of the charges against the pair.

Murphy, who represents several of the victims, and attorney Michael Fell, who represents one of the alleged victims, objected and Orange County Superior Court Judge Gregory W. Jones denied the motion to dismiss the case and handed off the prosecution to the attorney general's office in August, citing the politics involved between Spitzer and Rackauckas as one of the main reasons.

District attorney's office investigator Jennifer Kearns, who was removed from the case, has filed a whistleblower lawsuit against the county, alleging she was retaliated against.

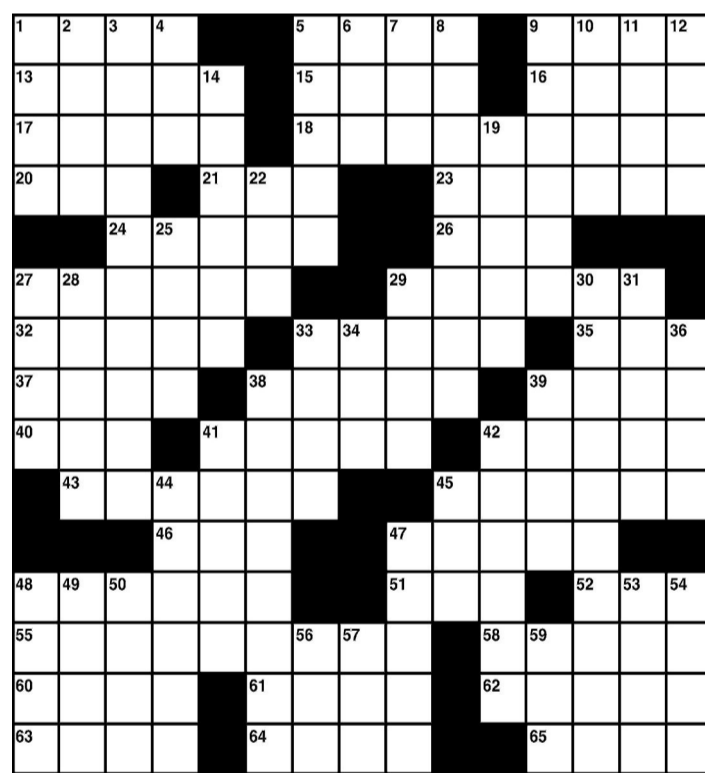
dailypilot@latimes.com
Twitter: @TheDailyPilot

THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Jacqueline E. Mathews

ACROSS

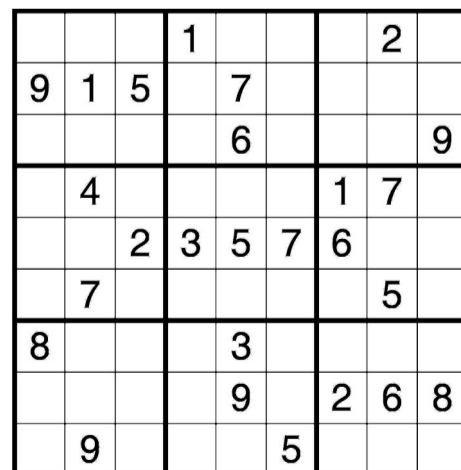
- 1 Ignore rudely
- 5 Fanny
- 9 Snatch
- 13 Singing voice
- 15 Lion's den
- 16 Shade of pink
- 17 "Stayin' _"; Bee Gees hit
- 18 Sporadic
- 20 Record speed letters
- 21 Despicable fellow
- 23 Zealous
- 24 "The _ Is Right"
- 26 Kids' running game
- 27 1 of 13 on a U.S. flag
- 29 Tendons
- 32 "_ by any other name"
- 33 Mark cattle
- 35 Word attached to house or peck
- 37 Donate
- 38 Departing
- 39 Bee colony
- 40 Dined
- 41 Ensnares
- 42 Religious solemnities
- 43 Murphy & Cibrián
- 45 Natural skill
- 46 "You Lonesome Tonight?"
- 47 Waistline measurement
- 48 Having antlers
- 51 Actor _ J. Cobb
- 52 Cake ingredient
- 55 Too faint to be heard
- 58 Spaghetti topper
- 60 Insincerely smooth
- 61 Ponce de _
- 62 Elephant teeth
- 63 Jekyll's alter ego
- 64 Sign of sleepiness
- 65 Francis Scott & others



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.



For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A4.

- 2 Cry for assistance
- 3 Just as bad as before
- 4 30-day mo.
- 5 Playground apparatus
- 6 Golfer's pencil holder
- 7 Breather's need
- 8 Giving first aid to
- 9 Hold a _; remain bitter
- 10 Movie part
- 11 As strong _ ox
- 12 Ernie's pal
- 14 Cookbook entry

- 19 \$1,000
- 22 Part of a blackjack
- 25 Shine's partner, in phrase
- 27 Heroic narrative
- 28 Like a cliché
- 29 Without
- 30 Home for Joe & Jill
- 31 Early bedtime
- 33 Large snakes
- 34 Tear
- 36 TV's "Empty _"
- 38 In a hoggish way
- 39 To the _; completely
- 41 Beat
- 42 Most unusual
- 44 River through Vienna
- 45 Neckwear
- 47 Astronaut John
- 48 Lofty
- 49 Exclusively
- 50 Bug's downfall
- 53 Gross
- 54 Not as much
- 56 Actress Arthur
- 57 Down in the dumps
- 59 Black-and- white seabird

Tribune Media Services

CUPIDO

Continued from page A1

the U.S. achieve a silver medal at the FINA World League Super Final last month in Tbilisi, Georgia, admits it has been an exercise in patience getting back into form.

"I was practicing, but doing a lot of work too," said Cupido, who now lives in Los Angeles. "So I didn't have consistent practices for a full year. It was a little bit of a challenge the first month and a half to get back. Still now, I'm trying to get the rhythm, but I'm happy with where I'm at given all of the circumstances."

Cupido has been known for having a flair for the dramatic in his playing career. He moved from Italy to Newport Beach as a senior in high school and earned 2013 Daily Pilot Dream Team Boys' Water Polo Player of the Year honors.

Perhaps his signature play that season was a penalty shot, where he lobbed the ball over 6-foot-7 Mater Dei High goalie McQuin Baron for the score. Baron later joined Cupido on the 2016 Olympic team.

Cupido went on to star at Cal. He was the 2017 Cutino Award winner as the nation's top collegiate player, a year after helping the Golden Bears win the NCAA title.

Cupido, an attacker, also has scored multiple buzzer-beaters for Team USA over the years.

"It's been true," Cupido said of his big-moment performances. "On this team, I maybe have a little bit different role. Maybe in that situation at the end, when it's going to be clutch time, I still think I'll be taking the shot. But overall, during the game, I see myself more as a facilitator, especially after being off for a long time. My mindset now is that I'll do whatever it takes. If I have to give up some of my shots for us to win, I'm happy with it. But of



Photos by Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

THE U.S. OLYMPIC men's water polo team pose for a group photo after practice at Sage Hill School in Newport Beach.



NEWPORT BEACH resident Lori Verdegaaal is the team manager for the U.S. Olympic men's water polo team.

course, I'd love to take that shot at the end when it matters, for sure."

Cupido has the Olympic rings tattooed on the inside of his right bicep, so it's clear how much going back means to him. The return offers a chance for improvement after Team USA finished in a disappointing 10th place in 2016.

Udovicic sees Cupido, one of five returning Olympians, as a key player

if the U.S. is going to challenge for the medal stand for the first time since 2008.

"I trust Luca," Udovicic said. "He's one of our leaders, for sure ... He's our strength, because he's one of the guys that can play several positions, and not just as a backup. It doesn't matter which position he's going to play; he can play that position at a high level as his main position. We are using

him at several positions to free more players, and I think that's a strength of this team."

The pandemic continues to impact things. It was announced last week that there would be no fans at Olympic events. On Wednesday, International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach said that athletes will hang medals around their own necks to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Of course, Cupido would be more than happy to do so.

"I just want to compete," he said. "It's been a long wait. Let's just go in there and do our best. There's not going to be the outside distraction that will normally be there, but at the end of the day, we're there to compete in our sport. If there's not all the nightlife that comes with it, so be it."

"I'm there to win a medal."

matthewszabo@latimes.com
Twitter: @mjszabo

CHARTER

Continued from page A2

cerned OCDE staff had to request information and documents multiple times before school leaders complied, saying it showed a lack of oversight.

But board President Ken Williams came to the school's defense.

"We've taken a lot of flak from the community, from differing (and) political opinions on how your school would be successful. I think it was successful, but we have to admit something happened," he said. "I hope that you can work things out."

Trustees voted 4-1 (with Gomez opposed) to hold off on issuing a notice of violation, giving Srinivasan until the board's Aug. 4 meeting to clear up outstanding issues.

"We're going to put you in the hot seat — we're going to make you uncomfortable," Williams cautioned.

sara.cardine@latimes.com
Twitter: @SaraCardine

Daily Pilot

A Times Community News publication incorporating the Huntington Beach Independent, Coastline Pilot, Orange Coast Daily Pilot and the Newport Harbor News Press combined with Daily Pilot

CONTACT US

Carol Cormaci
Managing Editor
carol.cormaci@latimes.com

Raymond Arroyo
Advertising Director
(714) 966-4608

Address
10540 Talbert Ave.,
Suite 300 West,
Fountain Valley, CA 92708

Business Office
(714) 966-4600
Newsroom
(714) 966-4699
Sports
(714) 966-4612
TCN Classifieds
800-234-4444

TCN Legal Phone
888-881-6181
TCN Legal Email
LALegal@latimes.com

COMPANY INFO

The Daily Pilot, established in 1907, is published Wednesday through Sunday by Times Community News, a division of the Los Angeles Times. Subscriptions are available only by subscribing to The Times, Orange County.

© 2021 Times Community News. All rights reserved.

SOUTH COAST PLAZA PROUDLY WELCOMES



Founded in 1860 as a small workshop in the Swiss Jura Mountains, TAG Heuer today is a leader in the luxury watch market. Since its inception, TAG Heuer has demonstrated a passion for accurately measuring even the smallest increment of time. Through a constant pursuit of excellence and innovation, TAG Heuer creates timepieces that are a defining symbol of state-of-the-art originality.

NOW OPEN
WEST COAST EXCLUSIVE

Level 2, Carousel Court
657.655.2144

Quality is



International Destination

San Diego Fwy (405) At Bristol St. Costa Mesa, CA 800.782.8888 southcoastplaza.com @SouthCoastPlaza #SCPSStyle

