



Photos by Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

STARLA ACOSTA, 65, has lunch at Mary's Kitchen on July 13. The nonprofit provides three meals, six days a week, to anyone who seeks them out.

Closing Mary's Kitchen in Orange would be a 'tragedy'

For many of the homeless in the area, it's a sanctuary, but the city is trying to shut the nonprofit down.

BY BEN BRAZIL

For Derek King and many like him, Mary's Kitchen is a sanctuary.

King, who has been homeless for nearly a decade, found Mary's Kitchen in Orange at a time when he had reached his limit. Physically and spiritually malnourished, he was ready to give up.

Mary's Kitchen provided him with food, a shower and clothing. It helped restore something that many homeless people have had to relinquish while living on the street — dignity.

He found meaning again, in the relationships he made and the spirituality fostered by the nonprofit's leadership.

"There's times when the fear of living for nothing will strangle you," King said during an interview this week at Mary's Kitchen.

King's story isn't uncommon.

See *Kitchen*, page R6



MIKE HARRISON, a volunteer at Mary's Kitchen, prepares meals for the homeless.

NATALIE WOLF, center, and other volunteers prepare meals for the homeless.



PATRICK HOGAN takes a drink of water at Mary's Kitchen.



Study reveals obstacles to fight climate change

UCI researchers say decline in carbon-eating vegetation will make it harder for the state to reach carbon-neutrality.

BY BEN BRAZIL

To reach its goal of carbon neutrality by 2045, California will need to partly depend on vegetation, which helps clear greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

Reaching that milestone will become increasingly difficult if greenery continues to disappear at the hands of higher temperatures, wildfires and other climate-related threats, UC Irvine researchers say.

Losses in vegetation could cause up to a 16% decrease in the state's natural carbon storage capacity, according to a recent paper by UC Irvine researchers.

Last month, the university also released a study that found that vegetation decreased by 35% in the region's deserts from 1984 to 2017 — and 13% in the mountains.

Plants absorb and store carbon dioxide as part of photosynthesis, which is how vegetation produces sugars and starches from CO₂ and water.

Shane Coffield, lead author and UCI doctoral candidate in Earth system science, said the state is relying on models that don't take into account the high vegetation losses, and assume that land management is all that is needed.

"So part of the state's carbon goals to achieve the neutrality by 2045 involves putting more carbon into the land," Coffield said. "Currently, the land is a source of carbon, and we've had lots of droughts and wildfires that have killed trees and led to carbon being emitted to the atmosphere on average."

"But the state's goal is to reverse that through better management practices to put more carbon into the vegetation and into the soil. And so what we're finding is that the climate is going to continue kind of pushing in the wrong direction for that. By the end of the century, we're finding losses on the order of 10 or 15%, whereas the state's goals are to increase the land's carbon stocks by about 4%."

The researchers predict that the coastal areas of Central and Northern California, as well as the low- and mid-elevation mountains, are the most vulnerable to losing vegetation and the accompanying natural carbon storage capacity.

See *Climate*, page R5

Christ Cathedral unveiling \$12.6-million shrine in honor of Vietnamese Catholic community

BY BEN BRAZIL

Fearing for their lives, persecuted Catholics fled into the La Vang rainforest in Vietnam seeking refuge from a tyrannical emperor in 1798.

They gathered each night at the base of a tree to pray the Rosary while hiding in the jungle.

Then one night at the tree, they believed they saw an apparition — Mary holding Baby Jesus. The vision has become a powerful symbol.

While the reported event took place more than 200 years ago, the tradition of Our Lady of La Vang is deeply entrenched in the Vietnamese Catholic community to this day.

"Our Lady of La Vang continues to journey with her people, through the war, and then through the boat people leaving

Vietnam," said Father Thanh Nguyen, an auxiliary bishop for the Diocese of Orange and the only Vietnamese bishop in the U.S. "A lot of them settled here in Orange County, and they desire to have a place to honor Mary, and to thank her, and also [ask] her to join with them in the days ahead."

Christ Cathedral in Garden Grove is unveiling a \$12.6-million shrine this weekend in honor of Our Lady of La Vang, which was made possible through more than 5,000 donors.

An additional \$1 million was raised that will be earmarked for the maintenance of the installation. The shrine honors the traditions of the Vietnamese community, an important part of the church and surrounding community.

See *Shrine*, page R2



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

MEMBERS OF the media capture images of a shrine depicting the Virgin Mary holding baby Jesus during a preview on Wednesday at Christ Cathedral in Garden Grove. The shrine honors the traditions of the Vietnamese community.

Orange County pays \$195,000 to teenager threatened at gunpoint by off-duty deputy

BY MELISSA HERNANDEZ

The Orange County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday approved a \$195,000 settlement in a lawsuit filed by the son of a retired Orange County sheriff's sergeant who said that an off-duty deputy pulled a gun on him in a skate park two years ago.

In the lawsuit, Max Chance III — the son of former Orange County sheriff's Sgt. Max Chance Jr. — said he was listening to a band perform in October 2019 at Ralphs Skate Court in San Clemente with a friend when Deputy Michael Thalken confronted the gathering about the noise.

Thalken — described as "angry and possibly intoxicated" in court documents — had been at a nearby Little League field before accosting the group, according to the lawsuit.

When one teen in the crowd began mocking Thalken, the off-duty deputy confronted him, but

Chance intervened, telling the other boy to take a step back, the lawsuit says.

At that point, Chance — then 16 — held up his skateboard "to defend against a potential assault," court records state. Thalken tried to grab Chance's wrist and while pointing a gun at the teen, said: "Get on your knees or I will shoot you in the f— face."

Thalken told deputies who were called to the scene that the teens were the "aggressors" in the confrontation and said that Chance had swung his skateboard at him, court documents show.

Both claims were later refuted by videos taken by bystanders, which show Chance kneeling before Thalken while the crowd yells at him to stop.

The lawsuit states that the elder Chance — who was Thalken's supervisor before he retired from the Sheriff's Department — called the off-duty deputy after the incident, and Thalken said the teen and

his friends were "douchebags with a mob mentality."

Thalken also said he pulled his gun because the crowd was surrounding him and threatened him with a skateboard.

At the time, sheriff's officials said they were taking the incident "seriously" and would "fully investigate."

"Orange County Sheriff's Department employees are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism on and off-duty," officials said in a statement.

Thalken, who was not identified at the time, was placed on administrative leave during an investigation that spokesperson Carrie Braun said culminated with the Sheriff's Department submitting a potential criminal case to the Orange County district attorney's office.

Prosecutors ultimately declined to file charges against the deputy, who was disciplined, although Braun would not say how. Braun could not confirm

anything further about the incident or its aftermath because of a state law that prevents the release of details regarding discipline.

Chance's lawsuit, filed in March, cited negligence, assault, battery, emotional distress and civil rights violations.

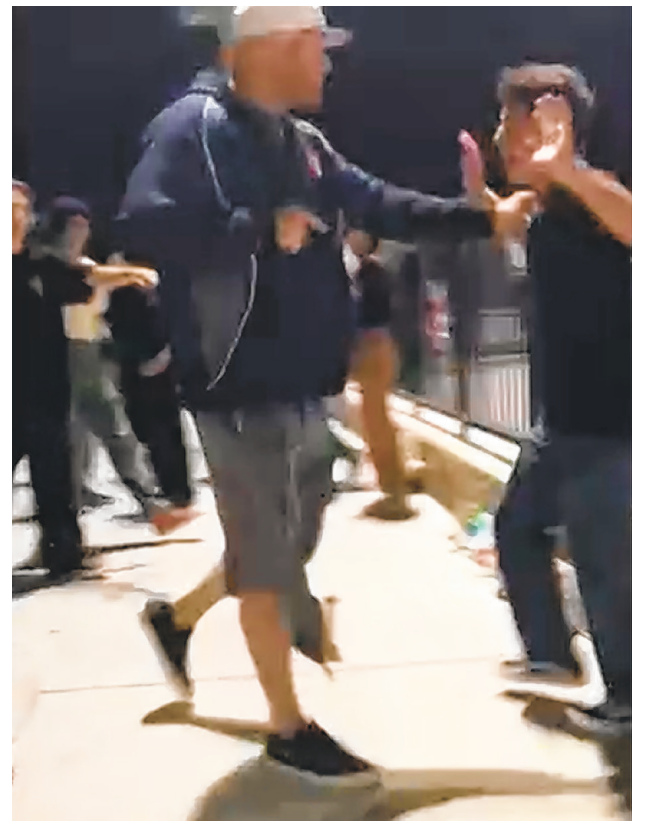
Attempts to reach Chance on Wednesday were unsuccessful.

The settlement was approved with a 4-0 vote by the board, with Supervisor Katrina Foley abstaining because of a potential conflict of interest (her firm has accepted a referral from the plaintiff's attorneys).

Eric Traut, who represents the teen, said the Chance family was happy to put the incident behind them.

"The family is pleased that this chapter in their son's life has come to an end and that some justice was served," he said.

MELISSA HERNANDEZ is a Metro reporting intern for the Los Angeles Times.



Screenshot by Greg Diaz

MICHAEL THALKEN is seen grabbing then-16-year-old Max Chance III in this screen capture from a bystander's video.

Judge grants motion in rape case to pare down charges

Prosecutors have said they wanted to cut down charges to one alleged victim in the case against Newport surgeon Dr. Grant Robicheaux and Cerissa Laura Riley.

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 "under-

stands 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."

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 re-

turned, 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 determine 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.

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NAME
Jorge

TITLE
SkyCo Team Member

CASE NO. **23**

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Photos by Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

A REPORTER views the martyr wall at the new shrine at Christ Cathedral in Garden Grove.

SHRINE

Continued from page R1

An estimated 100,000 Vietnamese Catholics live in Orange County.

The complex shrine has been in the works for about six years. Its centerpiece is a 12-foot-tall statue of Virgin Mary holding Baby Jesus, representing the apparition that the persecuted Catholics said they saw in the rainforest.

The statue was sculpted out of white marble from Carrara, Italy. It took about 1½ years to complete.

Above the statue is a canopy-like structure that looks like an "alpha" symbol. The "alpha" and "omega" are important symbols in Catholicism conveying that God is in everything. The three poles that hold up the structure are meant to look like banyan trees, which stood behind the apparition of Mary.

The shrine also includes a wall with the names of 117 martyred saints. The cause of death is listed under each name.

St. Melchor García Sampedro Huxey had his limbs hacked off before being decapitated. St. Clemente Ignacio Delgado Y was tortured and starved to death in prison.

"They believe that the blessing that they have received comes from God, but through Mary's intercession," Nguyen said of



CHRIST CATHEDRAL will be unveiling a shrine that serves as a testament to the journey of the Vietnamese American people.

the Vietnamese Catholic community, mentioning that he was one of the "boat people" who fled Vietnam after the war.

Nguyen said Christ Cathedral holds services for the Vietnamese and Hispanic communities of Orange County.

He said about 2,000 attend the four weekend masses held for each community.

Nguyen said the statue is particularly unique in Orange County, though Our Lady of La Vang church in Santa Ana has a smaller shrine, Nguyen said.

Anna Zhang, senior project manager with Gray Construction, the contractor of the shrine, said that the biggest challenge in building the shrine was the months-long delay forced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Zhang said construction

took almost two years. The complex geometry and heft of the shrine demanded about three months of planning. "I know the shrine is an homage to the Vietnamese community ... so that has significant meaning to us, as well as being on this beautiful campus surrounded by world-renowned architecture," Zhang said.

Zhang said the shrine isn't finished yet. There's currently a temporary wooden floor underneath the statue that will be replaced with stone to be imported from an area in Vietnam near where the apparition occurred. They will also add trees and a water feature in front of the martyr wall and a prayer garden at the back of the shrine.

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IRVINE RANCH LANDMARKS ARE OPEN AGAIN FOR WILDERNESS ACCESS DAYS

Nature lovers can now return to the natural landmarks of Irvine Ranch with Wilderness Access Days, which had been closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Irvine Ranch Conservancy, along with OC Parks and the city of Irvine, reopened the free public events last weekend with a public hike in Black Star Canyon.

“Irvine Ranch Conservancy staff, volunteers and partners are excited to welcome visitors back to experience the beauty of the Landmarks,” Dave Raetz, the conservancy’s vice president and chief operating officer, said in a news release.

“Throughout the pandemic, IRC staff and land owners worked diligently to restore and preserve local trails and natural habitats, so they would be ready for nature lovers to enjoy once again.”

The natural landmarks of the Irvine Ranch include the 5,500-acre Limestone Canyon — home of the “mini Grand Canyon” called the Sinks, the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary — one of the region’s largest freshwater marshes and the tide pools of Crystal Cove, among many others.

“The magnificent open space, parks and recreational opportunities on the Irvine Ranch provide natural beauty, relief from development and secure

our unique Southern California outdoor lifestyle,” Donald Bren, founder of the Irvine Ranch Conservancy, said on the nonprofit’s website. “Residents of the communities on the historic Irvine Ranch have a better sense of their urban limits and the security of knowing these large green buffers around them will exist forever.”

The Irvine Ranch Conservancy, initially funded by Bren, has managed open space in Orange County — primarily in Irvine and Newport Beach — through its 15-year history.

The conservancy has restored about 250 acres of land so far and manages about 30,000 acres in Orange County. The conservancy also plays a role in preventing fires around the county.

As experts predict another historically bad fire season in California, Orange County Fire Watch is preparing to prevent fires before they grow into massive blazes that can threaten homes and wildlife. O.C. Fire Watch is managed by Irvine Ranch Conservancy for O.C. Parks and the cities of Irvine and Newport Beach.

For more information about Irvine Ranch Natural Landmarks, or to register for a Wilderness Access Day, visit LetsGoOutside.org.

— From staff reports



Photos by Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

A HIKER WALKS her dog at Black Star Canyon in Silverado. Irvine Ranch’s natural landmarks reopened on July 10.



FAR LEFT: Hikers stroll along a trail at Black Star Canyon in Silverado.

LEFT: A couple walks their dog as they enter Black Star Canyon from the trailhead in Silverado.



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Muzeo reopens its Carnegie Galleries with two new exhibits

Although Muzeo Museum and Cultural Center's Main Gallery opened in June, its Carnegie Galleries opened last week with the two new exhibits — "CSUF MFA @Muzeo" and "Passing Through Life with Brushes, Chisels & Clays."

The Cal State Fullerton exhibit showcases a mix of paintings, illustrations, sculptures and installations of graduating students in the master's visual arts programs.

When the university announced classes would remain virtual throughout the 2020-21 academic year, it meant the students would not have a chance to exhibit their thesis projects on campus at the Begovich Gallery in the spring. However, nine out of 15 students responded to a call for their work to be exhibited at Muzeo during the summer.

"The works in the show interrogate the idea of the hero. Some address concern and optimism and escape while demonstrating resilience and the desire to create during the most challenging time of their college career," said Katie Farrell Adams, Muzeo's executive director.

The students' educational experiences changed without access to resources or studio space to create their capstone project, but the common thread in their artwork addresses the human condition.

Jennifer Frias, director and curator of the Begovich Gallery, noted a few examples — Yara Almouradi captures refugee lives through her drawings while aiding them; Negin Heyadat's paintings recall her parents' separation and her migration to the United States; Matt Key looks at the way we prioritize language and images; Amanda Carrigan's shows her visual diary during the pandemic; Hadley Mattwig explores masculinity as depicted in Western films and its correlation to women; and Allison Holland's woven sculptures that materialized as part of a performance address isolation and anxiety.

"Passing Through Life with Brushes, Chisels & Clays" serves as a retrospective of artist Sung Tark's practice spanning over 35 years.

Tark, who was born to Korean parents in Andong, Manchuria in Northeastern China but grew up in South Korea, was never formally educated as an artist. He studied polymer science at University of Akron and



Photos courtesy of Jennifer Frias

DURING THE gallery reception, visitors view a sculpture and installation by Allison Holland in the foreground, sculpture by Matt Key at the left and a painting by Negin Heyadat at the center in "CSUF MFA @Muzeo." Muzeo Museum and Cultural Center reopened its free-entry Carnegie Galleries last week.



ABOVE: Calligraphy, including abstract works, and ceramics by Sung Yong Tark, Wonho featured in the Carnegie Galleries at Muzeo.

RIGHT: At the center, drawings by Yara Almouradi capture refugees and in the background paintings by Matt Key looks at the way we prioritize language and images in the "CSUF MFA @Muzeo" exhibit at Carnegie Galleries.



went into a research and development career.

When he moved to California around 1976, he joined Mook Hyang Calligraphy Society and became a member of the Korean Calligraphy Assn. in Los Angeles. He studied with

Master Hanong and was featured in his first group show in 1986. Since then his works have been featured in 26 exhibitions.

The Muzeo exhibit includes his traditional calligraphy scrolls written in both Chinese characters

and Korean language as well as his modern calligraphy, which is an abstract take that appears to be illegible to most viewers. Some of his ceramic pieces, shaped by hand, are also on view.

— From staff reports

IF YOU GO

What/When: "CSUF MFA @Muzeo" through Aug. 29 and "Passing Through Life with Brushes, Chisels & Clays" through Sept. 5

Where: Muzeo Museum and Cultural Center, 241 S.

Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim

Cost: Free

Info: muzeo.org

Chance Theater opens its doors again with 'Edges'

Since shutting its doors in March last year, Chance Theater returns with its first live and in-person musical "Edges," written by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul.

Pasek and Paul, the duo who wrote "Dear Evan Hansen," "La La Land," "The Greatest Showman" and "Dogfight," began their musical collaboration with a couple of songs when they were undergraduates at the University of Michigan. At the time, they were dissatisfied with the roles they were being cast in for college shows and decided to make a creation of their own to star in — "Edges."

In the musical, four

adults move through early adulthood in search of meaning, asking questions about love, commitment and identity. The show became popular, traveling through 30 productions at colleges across the United States and had its professional premiere in 2007 at the Capital Repertory Theater in New York.

"All of the songs in this show feature characters that are on the figurative edge of an important moment in their lives," James Michael McHale, director at Chance Theater, said in a statement.

"Many of them are facing an important decision or reeling from a decision that



Photos courtesy Doug Catiller, True Image Studio

TYLER MARSHALL, Elizabeth Curtin, Jewell Holloway and Sarah Pierce in the O.C. premiere of Benj Pasek and Justin Paul's musical, "Edges" at Chance Theater directed by James Michael McHale and music directed by Robyn Manion.

was just made for them," he continued. "Edges" is a show that reminds us that there are always many of real, complicated humans coming from different places, different backgrounds and circumstances, that I think are all ultimately filled with hope for connection and meaning."

Through self-attestation,

theater staff will require unvaccinated audience members to wear face masks and recommend those who are vaccinated to do so as well. The venue will be operating at full capacity with no social distancing.

The theater is also offering a select number of showtimes with exclusively fully vaccinated patrons, who will also be required to

wear face masks. For these shows, theatergoers must show proof of vaccination and a photo ID.

Over the past year, staff created virtual programming that is still available online, from theater show streaming with Zoom discussions, educational programming and online series like "Some Good News OC" and "Chance Encounters."

— From staff reports

IF YOU GO

What: "Edges"

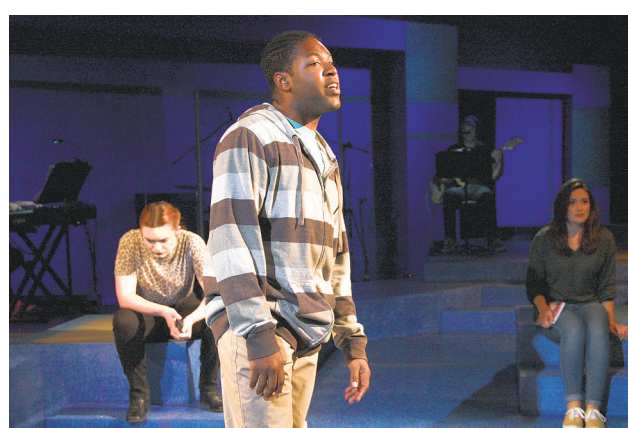
When: Through Aug. 8, various showtimes

Where: Bette Aitken Theater Arts Center, 5522 E.

La Palma Ave., Anaheim

Cost: \$39 to \$49

Info: chancetheater.com



PIERCE, Holloway and Curtin in Chance Theater's "Edges."

Return of Art-A-Fair brings lots of smiles

BY ANDREW TURNER

The months leading up to the summer festival season last year were frustrating and worrisome for art festival organizers in Laguna Beach.

Michael Cahill, the president of the board of directors for Art-A-Fair, could attest to that. Cahill has served in that role for more than a decade.

No year challenged him like the last one, when three variations — each successively more scaled down — were created in the hopes that the show could go on.

The coronavirus pandemic only got worse as the festival season drew nearer, ultimately preventing Art-A-Fair from happening in its entirety.

"This is my 11th year as president now, which is insane, especially after last year," Cahill said. "It almost makes it worth it right now just to see this thing come together this year the way it has after the fiasco that was last year."

Beginning Fourth of July weekend, Art-A-Fair reopened to the public to take in and shop for the work of its roughly 110 fine artists.

Eren Alptekin's booth was near the front entrance. Displayed on her wall were an array of abstract paintings, some of which included colorful representations of iconic downtown Los Angeles buildings such as the Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Broad Museum.

"I feel very fortunate about coming again this

year," said Alptekin, a Newport Beach artist. "This is my sixth year in this show, and every year, I feel very fortunate to be a part of this show. So far, I think this is the best year for everybody."

"The quality of art became so well since the year 2019, and all the variety of different mediums and different artists with different subject matter is excellent this year."

Art-A-Fair has no residency requirements, but it is a juried show. Cahill said the jury looks for excellence in conception, execution and presentation, with an expectation of a high level of performance in creativity and technical competence.

Lynleigh Love was juried into the show for the first time. Her creations were made from sheet glass. She said she burst into tears when she was told that she got into the show.

"It's an honor," Love said. "I mean, I grew up in Irvine, so I was coming down here every year to the Festival of Arts, to this show, to the Sawdust, and this is where the artists were, so when I got into this, it was magical."

At Marie Lavallee's station, she used mixed media like Scrabble letters, coinage and stamps. The coins were incorporated into the creation of artwork featuring birds.

"I go to the bank to get my coins, and they see me coming because I come with a ... bag, and I'll say, 'I want 30 rolls of pennies and 30 rolls of dimes,' and they go, 'Her again,'" Lavallee said.



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

SCULPTOR KEN JONES stands next to his signature pieces, musician men made of old clarinets, at the Laguna Art-A-Fair show.



OIL PAINTER Aurelia Thompson works on a small painting at Laguna Beach's Art-A-Fair festival on July 9.

"Actually, I was asked once, 'What do you do with all these pennies,' and I said, 'If you really want to know, you can't snitch because I want to be able to come back,' and I said, 'I make art with them,' and they went, 'What?'"

Jeff Nadler, a wildlife photographer from Ocean-side, brought a number of images that largely gave the viewer the opportunity to peer into the eyes of animals. He said he has traveled to several continents to capture his shots.

"I really try to ... show the personalities, really the souls of the animals," Nadler said. "My whole purpose of my photography is to try to create a connection for people, so that with wildlife, they see that animal, they connect with it, and they feel that it's worth preserving. My whole purpose really is conservation."

One image that did not incorporate the eyes of the creature saw a spirit bear dive into a river in British Columbia in an attempt to



LONGTIME EXHIBITOR Scott Sutton stands with his popular children's books about whimsical dragons.

catch itself a meal. Nadler gave the shot a humorous title.

"I called it, 'Swan Dive,' even though it was really a belly flop," he recalled.

Across the aisle, Saeid Gholibeik also included animals in his acrylic paintings, often pairing them with children. He said he aimed to show the special connection that a child could make with animals through the power of imagination.

Some of his work also paid homage to various

cultures, and he stressed the importance of respecting each other.

"The cultures in this world that we share, every culture is just like a little, beautiful flower in a garden, and we should never, ever ignore or neglect one of those," Gholibeik said.

"We don't want everything to be roses. We don't want everything to be orchids. We love all the combinations of the cultures."

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Photo courtesy Sicco Rood

CLIMATE CHANGE is causing plant die-offs in Southern California, like at the Steele/Burnand Anza-Borrego Desert Research Center, according to researchers.

CLIMATE

Continued from page R1

Coastal redwoods and conifer trees will likely be hardest hit, the researchers found.

The state's redwood forests rely on a fairly mild climate, so even temperature increases of a few degrees could drastically affect their survival.

Conifers at lower elevations are being replaced by oak woodlands, which are generally less dense, Coffield said.

This could mean less carbon will be absorbed.

"We suggest that management should be targeted at just trying to protect those existing carbon

stocks, as opposed to maybe increasing them, which is kind of the goal," Coffield said.

As part of the state's effort to reach carbon neutrality, it aims to rely solely on clean energy by 2045.

UC Irvine professor James Randerson said there is more pressure to decarbonize transportation, like converting to electric cars, because of diminished vegetation and other natural methods.

Randerson, who co-authored the paper, said Orange County can play a role in saving vegetation through making investments in fire management.

Experts are predicting another historically bad fire season.

Last year's was the worst in California history, with six of the state's largest-ever fires. Orange County had its share — the Blue Ridge, Silverado and Bond fires.

In June alone, there were several brush fires near Newport Coast that required more than 100 firefighters to extinguish.

Coffield said any local action to reduce emissions will help.

"Maybe the take-home message is it's going to be especially challenging to put carbon into the land ... it might make more sense to focus on ways that we can actually reduce our real emissions," Coffield said.

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John Beasley's MONK'estra

National Geographic Live

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Alicia Odewale: Greenwood
A Century of Resilience
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KITCHEN

Continued from page R1

Charles Cousert hadn't eaten in days before he found Mary's Kitchen, where he was given food and clothes.

He said he would've died if it weren't for the nonprofit.

"This place is literally a blessing," Cousert said. "It's a sanctuary."

The homeless who rely on Mary's Kitchen said it's the only place they can find everything they need. Led by Gloria Suess, the nonprofit provides three meals, six days a week, to anyone who seeks them out. There are also showers and laundry facilities available and the nonprofit receives mail for hundreds of clients.

After speaking with more than half a dozen homeless people this week, it's clear that anybody can approach Suess with a problem they are having and she will try to fix it.

During a visit to the nonprofit this week, Michael Lohse, accompanied by his dog Mildred walked up to Suess and thanked her for helping him pay the overdue registration for his car. Like other visitors to the site, Lohse, who has suffered three strokes, has fallen on hard times. He said the nonprofit gave him \$440 toward the \$1,300 he needed so he could drive again.

"Whatever you need, you will get it from Gloria," said Patrick Hogan, who volunteers at Mary's Kitchen.

But after the city sent a demand letter last month terminating the nonprofit's lease, the homeless who rely on Mary's Kitchen are now wondering what they will do if it is closed.

On June 18, the city sent Mary's Kitchen a demand letter terminating its lease three years early. The city is giving the nonprofit until Sept. 18 to move out of the property and it asked Mary's Kitchen to provide the city with a move-out plan within two weeks.

The city's letter, signed by City Manager Rick Otto, states the city has been a leader in Orange County in



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

PANCHO SAMBRANO shares lunch with his cat Ice Cream at Mary's Kitchen on July 13.

supporting homeless efforts. However, Mary's Kitchen is the only homeless service provider listed in the city's housing element.

Mary's Kitchen has been operating in Orange since the mid-1980s, and its been at its current location, at 517 W. Struck Ave., since 1994. Mary's Kitchen is a humble nonprofit driven by donations and volunteers, some of whom are themselves homeless.

While Otto's letter commends Mary's Kitchen, it goes on to state that the nonprofit's actions only serve "to enable homelessness and can no longer be supported by the city."

The letter says there has been an increase in crime and calls for police stemming from Mary's Kitchen. The city says this has created an "unreasonable demand on city services."

The letter also says that the city recently approved an affordable housing project nearby, which is "incompatible" with Mary's Kitchen, which is located at the end of an industrial cul de sac. An Orange Police Department headquarters is on the street. There aren't any homes on the street.

Suess, the president and chief executive of the nonprofit, said in a phone

interview that Mary's Kitchen has complied with requests from the city in the past to install security cameras and a security guard.

"Anything they asked us to do, we did," Suess said.

Suess said that the city doesn't want Mary's Kitchen to be serving people who aren't from Orange, but that's not compatible with the nonprofit's mission to serve anyone who's hungry.

"We don't judge who deserves food or not," Suess said. "We're taking care of those that truly need the help."

"...I don't think Orange understands, all these people who have considered Mary's their home all these years, where are they going to go? Where are they going to get their mail? Where are they going to get the showers? Where are they going to eat?"

Mary's Kitchen and some in the community are pushing back.

The nonprofit has hired attorney Brooke Weitzman, who sent the city a letter on July 9 contending that the city's demand letter doesn't include a substantive reason for prematurely ending a lease agreement. It asks the city to rescind its letter.

"The notice fails to meet

both substantive and procedural standards for early termination of agreement," the letter says. "The only reference to the lease in the notice states that the City may terminate the agreement however, it fails to detail any reason supported by the terms of the agreement."

"Despite acknowledgment of the critical support Mary's has over the years, the letter draws baseless conclusions that are simply not supported by facts, effectively blaming Mary's Kitchen for the City's failure to address the housing crisis, healthcare needs of its most impoverished residents, and any and all other issues in the public space outside of Mary's Kitchen property. Surely no term in the lease puts the burden on Mary's Kitchen to redress the City's failures to meet the needs of low-income and unhoused individuals."

Weitzman's letter also calls for the city to determine the environmental impact of closing Mary's Kitchen to keep in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act.

The letter says that water and soil can be contaminated from the loss of Mary's Kitchen's hygiene facilities, and other public

areas could be impacted as homeless people are forced to relocate.

"The immediate closure of a service provider leaving an estimated 150-200 people per day without this safe place to sit, receive meals to eat and clothes to wear, access mail, access hygiene facilities, use laundry facilities and more will inevitably have an impact on the environment," the letter says.

Weitzman also argues that the lease termination violates the city's housing element, which requires the city to consider homeless people, low-income people, seniors and disabled people — all of whom frequent Mary's Kitchen. Weitzman notes in the letter that Mary's Kitchen is the only homeless services provider in the city listed in its housing element.

The letter notes that the city must "make adequate provision in its housing element for the existing and projected needs of all economic segments of its community, including its homeless population."

Orange city spokesman Paul Sitkoff said in an email that he couldn't comment on the closure of Mary's Kitchen due to potential pending litigation.

Weitzman said over the phone that she wonders who in the city is leading the effort to close Mary's Kitchen after decades of its existence.

"There hasn't been a public meeting, so I know the letter came from the city manager, but this is being driven by whom?" Weitzman said. "This type of thing would normally be a decision by the City Council, especially given the long history of service to the community. It's very unclear because there has been no public involvement."

Mary's Kitchen is currently collecting signatures from supporters to show the city how crucial it is to the community. Suess said she wants a few thousand signatures before sending them to the city.

The community is also backing the nonprofit. Several members of the public showed up to a City

Council meeting on Tuesday night to criticize the city and voice their support for Mary's Kitchen.

"This city has lost its soul," resident Heidi Zimmermann said at the meeting.

The city declined to provide crime stats on Mary's Kitchen, despite its claims of increased crime in the area. The city called the nonprofit a "nuisance" in its letter, but there were no signs of that during a visit to Mary's Kitchen this week.

Dozens of people ate their lunches and chatted with one another. Some slept in the shade.

All became quiet as Suess recited a prayer through a bullhorn. Many stood and some removed their hats.

"Send blessings on Mary's Kitchen," Suess said. "Amen," they said.

For those who regularly gather at the sanctuary, to lose Mary's Kitchen is more than just to lose access to food and goods. The camaraderie and support from Suess, the volunteers and each other gives them hope and meaning.

"I come here more for the community than the food, even though the food is pretty good," said Starla Acosta, who has been living in her car for about five years, the same amount of time she's been coming to Mary's Kitchen.

Acosta met her close friend Ron at Mary's Kitchen. She calls him her baby brother.

Ron, who declined to give his last name, said Mary's Kitchen helps all kinds of people. For many, it helps sustain them as they get through a rough spot in life.

Since Ron was injured on the job two years ago, he's been coming to Mary's Kitchen off and on. He has a job now, but he continues to come and see his friends.

Ron said he couldn't sleep the night he heard about the potential closure of Mary's Kitchen.

"It would be a tragedy," he said.

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