

Daily Pilot

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2020 /// Now including Coastline Pilot and Huntington Beach Independent /// dailypilot.com

County reports 63 new COVID-19 deaths

O.C. is nearing 2 million coronavirus tests administered since the onset of the pandemic.

BY ANDREW TURNER

The Orange County Health Care Agency reported 63 coronavirus deaths and 5,953 new infections on Saturday.

Data provided to begin the weekend accounted for a two-day total, as the healthcare agency last issued a report on the county's virus transmission on Thursday.

Orange County's death toll due to COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, climbed to 1,845 and the cumulative number of cases is 144,263.

Among the new fatalities, 45 were residents that did not live in a facility, while 12 were assisted living facility residents and six were skilled nursing facility residents.

There are currently 1,957 cases requiring hospitalization in the county, with 432 of those patients being treated in intensive care

See **COVID-19**, page A4

12-year-old is a 360 Clinic COVID-19 graphic designer

BY VERA CASTANEDA

It's been all hands on deck on multiple levels when it comes to responding to the coronavirus pandemic, including the marketing behind some of Orange County's testing sites.

Linda Nguyen is a healthcare and food business consultant. Although she works in the food industry, healthcare organizations are her main project.

When she was hired on as 360 Clinic's consultant earlier in the summer and had to launch their first testing site within two weeks, she also hired Lana, her 12-year-old daughter, as a graphic designer.

"The reason why Lana came on board so quickly was because

See **360 Clinic**, page A4

ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



Raul Roa | Staff Photographer

FORMER LAGUNA BEACH QB GETS SHOT TO PLAY DIVISION 1 FOOTBALL PAGE A5



Photos by Raul Roa | Staff Photographer

AN OSPREY holds a fish it was eating at the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve in Huntington Beach on Saturday. Although the Orange County Christmas Bird Count was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic, Sea and Sage Audubon officials are promoting bird counting to be done from people's backyards.

Backyard bird count begins

Sea and Sage Audubon officials are looking for participants in the Backyard Christmas Bird Count on Sunday and Jan. 3.

Around this time of year the organization usually holds the Orange County Christmas Bird Count, but that was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic, according to Bettina Eastman, Coastal CBC compiler

for Sea and Sage Audubon.

Bigger birds like these may not be seen from a backyard, but there are plenty of smaller birds that can be observed from a home. People are asked to do a stationary bird count from their backyard and submit their individual lists to E-bird instead.

"We hope to get people to use those dates to count from their backyards and participate that



A CASPIAN TERN is seen patrolling the waters at Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve in Huntington Beach on Saturday.

way," Eastman said. By sharing observations on E-bird "we are still participating and generating data," Eastman added.

For more information, go to SeaAndSageAudubon.org or contact Bettina Eastman at BettinaE24@gmail.com.
— From staff reports

CHALSEA MENG of Long Beach observes social distancing rules and uses a face mask while taking pictures of the birds.



Window decorating contest spreads holiday cheer

BY ANDREW TURNER

With the coronavirus pandemic, people have had little to celebrate like they will the end of 2020.

The result is a holiday season in which gathering is discouraged, and yet there are visuals that show how holiday cheer cannot be stifled.

The Laguna Beach Chamber of Commerce held a window decorating contest, challenging participants to get creative with their designs and compete for the chance to have their business promoted.

KRISTALLE (875 N. Pacific Coast Hwy), a local business that specializes in selling minerals and various natural history specimens, won the contest with a humorous take on the year at hand.

The window decorations included a tower of bath tissue with ribbon and ornaments. The words 'Lets Flush 2020' are



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

KRISTALLE WAS the grand prize winner in the Laguna Beach Chamber of Commerce's holiday window decorating contest.

prominently displayed, and a T-Rex dinosaur also has a roll held in its teeth.

Wayne and Dona Leicht opened the shop in Laguna Beach in 1971, so the turn of the

calendar is cause for celebration as it will mark the 50th anniversary for the local business, which has clients around the world.

Dona was not immediately sure what kind of reaction the

decorations would draw when they were being put together.

"We've got to find some humor in this somewhere along the way," Dona said. "I thought, as soon as I had this brilliant idea and I executed it with the help of my assistant, I said, 'Oh God, we're going to get a blowback from this. People are going to think that's insane.'"

To her surprise, Dona said people began showing up to the shop to take selfies in front of the window, something that might have been expected if there were more walking traffic, as there was at the shop's prior location as part of the Forest Avenue mall.

Dona laughs when thinking about how people from Laguna Beach might travel abroad and come across a mineral store, only to be asked by the staff there if they know **KRISTALLE** and the Leicht's back home.

"We don't sell anything that

See **Window**, page A6

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THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

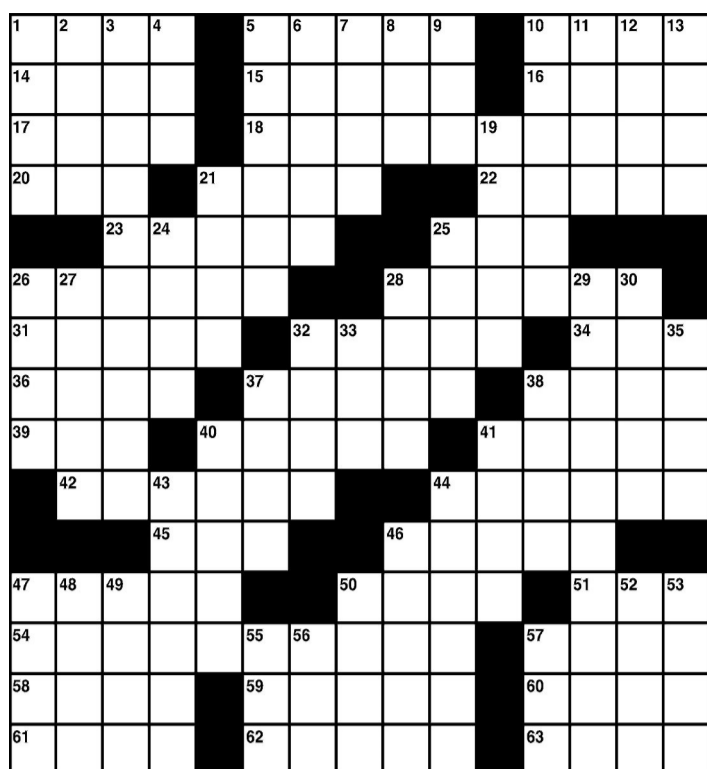
By Jacqueline E. Mathews

ACROSS

- 1 Part of a tooth
- 5 Scatter
- 10 "I've got _ in Kalamazoo"
- 14 1 of 7 deadly sins
- 15 Give shelter to
- 16 Store event
- 17 Large spades
- 18 Analysis; examination
- 20 Word attached to chance or cent
- 21 Encourage
- 22 Ladder steps
- 23 Persists
- 25 Flying mammal
- 26 Makes points
- 28 Small garden pavilion
- 31 Comes into sight
- 32 Shindig
- 34 Massage
- 36 Unpleasant
- 37 TV personality
- Shore
- 38 Location
- 39 Part of a sock
- 40 Travis or Quaid
- 41 Praise
- 42 Fesses up
- 44 _ of; lacking
- 45 As cool _ cucumber
- 46 Congressional runners
- 47 Clear the slate
- 50 Berry & Griffey Jr.
- 51 "Gone with the Wind" production co.
- 54 Held back
- 57 Healthy
- 58 Cartoon pooch
- 59 Motored
- 60 Unfair slant
- 61 Fly high
- 62 Sutured
- 63 At _ with; not speaking to

DOWN

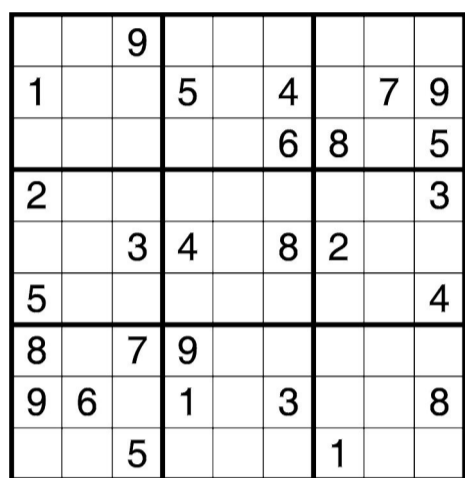
- 1 Gather crops
- 2 All at _; suddenly
- 3 Failed to notice



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 A4.

- 4 Burrell & others
- 5 Jerseys & tunics
- 6 BBQ utensil
- 7 Trick
- 8 Sixth sense, for short
- 9 Tiny
- 10 Mentally sharp
- 11 Put on pounds
- 12 Like a bump on _
- 13 Part of the eye
- 19 Bonkers
- 21 Does drugs
- 24 Military force
- 25 Rubber ducky's place
- 26 Narrow cut

- 27 Soothing drink
- 28 Hair color
- 29 Member of the wedding party
- 30 _ practice; rusty
- 32 Bowler's targets
- 33 "I'm a little teapot, short _ stout"
- 35 Finest
- 37 Facts & figures
- 38 Certain
- 40 Staircase piece
- 41 Beer barrels
- 43 Become proficient in
- 44 _ together; united for a purpose
- 46 Irritate
- 47 Greek god of love
- 48 Change the decor of
- 49 Large continent
- 50 In the _; aware
- 52 Happy
- 53 Clutter
- 55 Word with want or classified
- 56 Wrath
- 57 "Game of Thrones" network

Tribune Media Services



Courtesy of Steve Zylius | UCI

BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING postdoctoral scholar Alon Wellner works in a UCI lab.

UC Irvine researchers develop rapid antibody generation technology that could aid COVID-19 studies

BY VERA CASTANEDA

When the coronavirus pandemic hit, a team led by UC Irvine and Harvard Medical School researchers started discussing how to apply their ongoing work to the current climate.

The team of 17 people, which also includes researchers from the Ragon Institute and Duke University Medical Center, were already collaborating on a way to develop rapidly optimized antibodies for about two years.

"We decided to apply it to some coronavirus targets, the S-protein," said Chang Liu, UCI assistant professor of biomedical engineering. "As we were furthering our development of the technology, it's started working very well on these COVID targets."

The result was developing in vitro technology that can rapidly hypermutate antibodies using a strain of yeast — the same strain that ferments wine and makes dough rise. The researchers nicknamed the system AHEAD or autonomous hypermutation yeast surface display in their preprint on *BioRxiv.org*.

"There are a lot of drugs on the market, which are

basically antibodies ... These are used for treating inflammatory diseases, autoimmune diseases and cancer. It's an extremely large industry with sales every year of about \$100 billion," Liu said.

But generating effective antibodies isn't easy.

Typically, researchers prefer animal immune systems because of its evolutionary process that allows animals to produce effective antibodies over time. The process involves injecting animals with antigens (meaning viruses, bacteria, chemical or pollen) and analyzing how their immune systems respond with antibodies.

The AHEAD system mimics the same process as animal immune systems.

Liu said there are a lot of reasons why people don't want to rely on animals to generate antibodies — animal welfare concerns, the costs associated working with animals like llamas and the inability to target specific antigens.

"The significance with this system is we have the best of both worlds — a non-animal antibody generation system that can also contain the same evolutionary power as

immune systems naturally do," Liu said. "We can throw [any antigen] against it and we should be able to evolve good antibodies."

The team is currently working on encoding the AHEAD technology into libraries in the OrthoRep system which would allow researchers to have access and test antigens.

They are also taking a preemptive approach to the possible evolution of the coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, that causes COVID-19.

"Once an outbreak turns into a pandemic, you also run the risk that the virus itself is going to evolve," Liu said. "As you throw treatments against it and as humans develop immunity against the virus, it might also be able to learn how to mutate so that it doesn't respond to those treatments or existing immunity."

Although that hasn't come to pass yet, the AHEAD technology could accelerate the response in research.

"We're interested in the long game for this as well," Liu added.

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forum

MAILBAG

Exploring the freedoms and costs of the boat parade

Hoag President Braithwaite asked us to please do our part. Use masks, stay at home, no parties this year. It's the sharp rise in cases today that we fear. Please practice compassion and kindness, a much-needed art. But parading for freedom is what Newport will do. With Mayor Muldoon enjoying the fare. They want their fun Christmas, they don't seem to care. Does this sound like neighborly kindness to you?

Annika Logart
Corona del Mar

Hopefully the organizers of Newport Beach's privately organized, unauthorized, boat parade are paying for the harbor department, water safety and police expenses related to their event?

Dean Laws
Corona del Mar

With the hospitals begging people to stay home, I was initially appalled when some Newport Beach residents decided to put on a substitute boat parade after the official one was canceled. Such an event would bring lots of people to town and put them in close proximity, a sure way to increase coronavirus infections and COVID-19 deaths — and then I realized that was the point.

Our region is overcrowded — too many people, too many cars, too much congestion. People are leaving, but not at a fast enough rate. Holding such an event is a way to speed things along, particularly when it's augmented by local restaurants staying open and helping boost rates. I have one criticism of the effort, however, and that is its efficiency. It's a relatively youthful crowd that is attracted, while the highest rate of mortality is among people of an older demographic. Since most of them are hunkered down the numbers will not be as high as they might, but the organizers should still be commended for a



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

VESSELS MAKE a turn at the Balboa Bridge during the unofficial "Let Freedom Ring" Newport Harbor Christmas Parade on Dec. 17 in Newport Beach. Readers write to offer their thoughts about the parade.

good effort.

Nancy Gardner
Newport Beach

Alvarado's Poseidon pitch falls short

Orange County labor leader Gloria Alvarado makes an unconvincing case for Poseidon's proposed desalination plant in Huntington Beach (Dec. 20 Daily Pilot).

Alvarado appeals to the need for a reliable supply of the water in the face of diminishing rainfall and snowfall. She seems unaware of the scale of the current supply structure. The Orange County Water District's enormous groundwater basin currently contains 13 times the amount of water in Lake Shasta at top levels. Even in a worst-case long-term drought emergency scenario the supply for everyone in Orange County would last for decades, at a fraction of what Poseidon's water will cost.

Alvarado appeals to science but cites none. She could have consulted the 2019 UCLA study analyzing the impact upon water-accessibility brought by the proposed Huntington Beach Poseidon desalination plant. Like Alvarado, the study focuses on the need to make sure economically disadvantaged households have access to water as a basic human right. But unlike Alvarado, UCLA's careful study concludes that the Poseidon desalination

plant would make drinking water less affordable for those O.C. households.

Because Poseidon is a private venture, the need for profits ends up raising rates that people pay for water wherever they build a plant. Poseidon's Carlsbad plant, which Alvarado cites as a model, proves this again: according to a Voice of OC report, 62% of low-income people in San Diego live in neighborhoods where Poseidon's desalinated water is becoming unaffordable for them. The sort of benefits that Alvarado sees in desalination for working Californians just does not apply in the case of Poseidon in Huntington Beach.

So water supply and affordability cannot be what Alvarado is talking about when she sings the praises of Poseidon desal. Maybe she means the benefits of job creation. Once again, basic science is not with her on this. Economists have several times demonstrated that, for every million-dollar investment, water conservation and water recycling infrastructures create far more long-term local jobs than desalination. Alvarado is certainly right when she points out that we are all in this together.

That's why a boondoggle like the H.B. Poseidon plant — which in the end benefits no one but investors — does not fit the economically challenging times working Californians are facing.

William Yarchin
Huntington Beach

I write concerning Gloria Alvarado's commentary in the Daily Pilot regarding Poseidon Water's proposal to build a desalination plant in Huntington Beach. Poseidon seeks a deal that would lock our county water utility into buying unnecessary water for decades. This water would be far more expensive than the groundwater from our well-managed aquifer here in Orange County. The proposed plant would damage sea life in our precious coastal waters and use a tremendous amount of power, creating significantly more carbon emissions.

The warming climate is stressing our water system, but there is another, less visible threat that is also jeopardizing water access: rising water rates that are making this basic necessity (water) unaffordable for some families and driving an increase in water shutoffs and utility debt for people who are struggling to survive COVID-19 and loss of income. This plant might be good for the labor federation that Ms. Alvarado directs, but it is unneeded and unwanted by lower income residents of Orange County.

Trygve Stetteland and Sonia Madeira de Ley
Laguna Beach

Steel in Georgia during O.C. crisis

Coronavirus cases and COVID-19 deaths in Orange County have soared to record levels. And what is the 48th District's new Representative-Elect, Michelle Steel, doing about it?

She's in Gwinnett County, Ga., campaigning for Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue, of course.

During Steel's tenure on the Orange County Board of Supervisors, she helped shape the policies (or non-policies) that have encouraged the disastrous upward trajectory of coronavirus infections we're seeing today. Now, instead of staying home and helping her constituents, she's 2,200 miles away, trying to ensure that Mitch McConnell and Senate Republicans can remain in power and continue to do too little, too

slowly, to help Americans suffering from the effects of the pandemic.

Steel was a disaster on the Board of Supervisors, and she's already making it clear where her priorities and loyalties as a member of Congress will lie. Let's begin righting this wrong by electing Katrina Foley to Steel's vacant seat on the board, and let's keep a close eye on Steel during her two years in Washington. Is she working for Mitch McConnell, or is she working for us?

Eliza Rubenstein
Costa Mesa

On board with Cruise

I have always spurned the advice and influence of Hollywood on cultural norms. But one actor in Hollywood famously known for his independent behavior, seems to have found the perfect solution for communicating with COVID-19 rules' scofflaws. Tom Cruise recently had a "full-blown meltdown about crew members who were caught violating social distancing protocols" on the set of one of his movies. I have never been a fan of Tom Cruise or action movies, but after learning of his reaction, I am a "believer" if only in the context of this one outburst.

Efforts to get some people to follow these rules by repeating the same mantra over and over have so far not been effective. And some of our local leaders on the county Board of Supervisors as well as from the city councils of Newport Beach and Huntington Beach are not only not trying to enforce these rules, but are instead flaunting their resistance to them to gain political capital.

Tom Cruise got his workers to follow the rules by shouting at them. So because we are at a critical point in the pandemic, with each day's contagion and mortality rates continuing to break barriers, shouldn't we do as Tom Cruise did and yell at those who are not following the rules — if not physically then metaphorically?

Lynn Lorenz
Newport Beach





Susan Samuelli
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forum

COLUMN | **PATRICE APODACA**

2020 was the year that everything broke

It started in the laundry room, with floodwaters surging from the washing machine as reliably as the tide.

Then the sounds emanating from the dryer escalated from a mildly annoying squeak to a banshee-like screech. Not long after, the refrigerator went kaput, the hot water heater needed a new burner and the vacuum cleaner began signaling its imminent demise.

Our appliances were telling us something.

The turning of a new year is meant to be a time of reflection and renewal, a moment we have designated to try to make sense of what we recently experienced, clean the slate and move forward with conviction and promise.

Historians will no doubt look back upon 2020 as one of the most consequential years in modern times. They will dissect the causes and effects of the global pandemic — as well as this year's political upheaval,

economic strife, environmental degradation and social justice protests — for decades or even centuries to come.

Somehow they will try to explain what it all meant and, with the perspective of hindsight, attempt to put a name on a year that feels so raw and unrelentingly wearisome as we come to its end.

But for all the scholarly papers that will be written to explain what happened to us this year, I offer a clear and succinct summation inspired by my household machinery.

The year 2020 was the year that everything broke.

Make no mistake, the fault lines had been there for a very long time. This year merely exposed the fragility of our existence, how delicate are the bonds that hold us together.

In service of my personal New Year's inventory, I decided to refresh my memory by reviewing the journal I began keeping at the beginning of the pandemic.

For a while, I had been obsessed with animals.

I wrote about the snake I nearly stepped on while out

walking my dog, the birds that occasionally flew into our house, the coyotes howling at night, and the multitude of lizards with freakishly long tails that looked like escapees from a top-secret lab.

For a few days I fixated on a couple of ducks that took up temporary residence in front of my house, hanging out under our cars, drinking the radioactive gutter juice and pooping on the sidewalk. Whenever a human approached, they bolted. OK, maybe "bolt" is stretch; their top waddling speed was somewhere between a snail and sloth.

Then there was the time that my husband went all Mr. McGregor. But instead of chasing Peter Rabbit he wielded a golf club with a head the size of a pit bull skull to try to shoo away the fattest squirrel I'd ever seen, whose corpulence no doubt stemmed in part from the many garden plants it had ravaged.

Apparently my lockdown brain drew some connection between our broken appliances and all these creatures, as if they were part of a supernatural conspiracy warning of some

So what can we expect from 2021? Even many so-called "thought leaders," who are usually never short on opinions and prognostications, appear a bit stumped by that question.

lurking danger. Never mind Beatrix Potter and her beloved children's tales — spending too much time at home during a global pandemic had me fantasizing that my life had turned into the plot of a Stephen King novel.

So what can we expect from 2021?

Even many so-called "thought leaders," who are usually never short on opinions and prognostications, appear a bit stumped by that question.

Certainly it will be different. No, we can't expect that when the clock strikes midnight on New Year's Eve everything will suddenly appear rosier, or at least less broken. Indeed, the darkest days of the pandemic could linger far beyond that mythical magic moment.

Yet with vaccine distribution beginning, we can

expect that at some point in the year we'll be able to crawl out of our caves and resume activities that have largely been off limits in 2020. What remains to be seen is which, and how deeply, parts of our lives will be forever altered.

I imagine that some habits might be hard to shake even after the crisis fades. Pants without zippers? Check. Bike rides in pajama bottoms? Check. Binge-watching Netflix without guilt? Double check.

More crucially, many observers are voicing suspicions that the pandemic will result in significant, long-term changes in a broad spectrum of industries and institutions, including air travel, education, healthcare, retail, urban design and ground transportation. I'll certainly

have no shortage of topics to write about next year.

As the virus begins to fade, which will hopefully happen soon, perhaps we can look at 2021 as a year of repair, a healing time when we can turn to mending not just the nation's public health, but also the strained finances, frayed relationships and wounded psyches that have dominated our lives so cruelly this year.

Doing so will require will, ingenuity and patience. It will take putting aside our differences and working together to rebuild and restore. We'll have to start trusting each other a little more.

Can we manage all that?

We don't really have a choice. After all, we know that broken things can be fixed. But as we turn the clock forward and welcome a new year, we must recognize that it's up to each of us to do the fixing.

PATRICE APODACA is a former Los Angeles Times staff writer and is coauthor of "A Boy Named Courage: A Surgeon's Memoir of Apartheid." She lives in Newport Beach.

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COVID-19
Continued from page A1

units.

The county has just 5.7% of its ICU beds available. Regions that had their ICU capacity availability fall below 15% were placed under the latest stay-at-home order, a measure that went into effect for Southern California on Dec. 7.

An additional 37,585 tests for the virus were reported by the county over the last two days.

The total number of tests administered in the county is 1,964,297.

The healthcare agency estimates that 79,794 people countywide have recovered after contracting the virus.

Orange County currently has seven-day averages of 51.8 daily new cases per

100,000 residents and a testing positivity rate of 15.2%. Those statistics come with a seven-day lag.

Here are the latest cumulative coronavirus case counts and COVID-19 deaths for select cities in Orange County:

- Santa Ana: 27,848 cases; 369 deaths
- Anaheim: 24,401 cases; 395 deaths
- Huntington Beach: 5,764 cases; 99 deaths
- Costa Mesa: 4,698 cases; 52 deaths
- Irvine: 5,291 cases; 22 deaths
- Newport Beach: 2,147 cases; 28 deaths
- Fountain Valley: 1,813 cases; 30 deaths
- Laguna Beach: 475 cases; fewer than five deaths

Here are the case counts by age group, followed by deaths:

- 0 to 17: 13,440 cases; one death
- 18 to 24: 20,405 cases; five deaths
- 25 to 34: 29,988 cases; 26 deaths
- 35 to 44: 22,792 cases; 43 deaths
- 45 to 54: 23,320 cases; 139 deaths
- 55 to 64: 17,773 cases; 250 deaths
- 65 to 74: 8,884 cases; 362 deaths
- 75 to 84: 4,459 cases; 408 deaths
- 85 and older: 3,122 cases; 611 deaths

Updated figures are posted daily at ochealthinfo.com/coronavirus-in-oc.

For information on getting tested, visit ochealthinfo.com/covid-19-testing.

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360 CLINIC
Continued from page A1

we didn't have time to hire a graphic artist. We had to put on an overnight website," Linda said.

Lana was used to helping her mother run a now-defunct brick-and-mortar business, the Renewed Co., in the past. Since many school campuses have also shut down, Lana tends to finish her online schoolwork early and has had more time on her hands.

"She just had that natural talent, and I continue to try to foster that," Linda said.

"I would give her projects, not knowing whether she can complete it or not. But I gave her the freedom to be creative and see if she can execute it. There are days where she lands it really well, and there are days where I have to give her a little bit of guidance."

Lana said she started learning graphic design by playing around with apps for fun and later on took an online class.

"It got me more into graphic designing and gave me the idea to actually use my ability to make money

out of it," Lana said.

Linda pointed out business owners can hire and pay their children up to \$12,000 per year tax-free. Although it took an attorney and certified public accountant to set it up, Lana has been earning her own spending money for a couple of years.

Lana handles the marketing portion of the work while Lana works with visuals. She designed 360 Clinic's fliers, banners, social media posts, a website, kiosks and mobile van visuals.

"We work in partnership with the county and Or-

ange County Health Care Agency ... The marketing behind it has to ensure that the at-risk population knows that these testing sites are available to them at no cost," Linda said.

Linda added that part of the marketing strategy was to run a lot of Facebook ads promoting their free drive-through clinic sites located in Anaheim, Costa Mesa, Fountain Valley, Orange and Westminster, as well as the clinic's mobile testing vans which go to smaller at-risk neighborhoods.

"What we often hear is COVID testing is very hard to come by," Linda said. "In our super sites, we test over 4,000 a day."

The two have a knack for volunteering too, particularly for Operation Be Kind and OC Drive.

Keeping in line with that tradition, Linda and Lana volunteered in the Anaheim Convention Center to assemble COVID-19 testing kits for the clinic on Wednesday.

For more information about 360 Clinic testing, visit 360clinic.md.

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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS

R	O	O	T	S	T	R	E	W	A	G	A	L	
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FOOTBALL

Laguna grad Andrew Johnson signs with Morehead State

BY ANDREW TURNER

Andrew Johnson, a recent graduate and former quarterback of Laguna Beach High School, never seems short on things to say.

When it comes to the recruiting process, Johnson continually used the word “weird” to characterize his most unusual path to earning an opportunity to compete at the next level.

Nearly six months removed from his high school graduation, Johnson signed a commitment letter to join the football program at Morehead State.

The chance to play Division I football for the Kentucky-based FCS school, which competes in the Pioneer League, came along even though Johnson had not taken a single snap after high school.

“It was everything that I wanted, and I was definitely surprised,” Johnson said. “I told the coach that when I first talked to him.”

Without a college commitment in tow at the time of his graduation, Johnson was set to attend a post-graduate school called Bridgton Academy in Maine.

Doing so would have allowed Johnson to gain experience against college-level competition without sacrificing a year of eligibility, but the coronavirus pandemic persisted through the summer. Johnson and his family made the decision that it would be better for him to stay home and take a gap year.

He remained active during that time, working out



Raul Roa | Staff Photographer

ANDREW JOHNSON, a former Laguna Beach quarterback who has committed to Morehead State to play football, is shown at his home in Aliso Viejo on Thursday.

with private quarterbacks coach Steve Calhoun, whom he had been introduced to by Mission Viejo head football coach Chad Johnson, who headed the Orange County North vs. South All-Star Classic.

Johnson recollected being told that recruiting slowed down precipitously after his junior year and after the completion of his senior season, it would likely take competing at a junior college to have recruiting pick back up again.

On the verge of beginning practice with the Orange Coast College football program, the unexpected opportunity presented itself.

“I kind of started to think, ‘Well, I’ve got to start from square one and I’ve got to fight my way through a ranking system and earn a spot to play at a junior college,’” Johnson said. “I got a call out of nowhere, and it almost felt like divine intervention.”

Johnson appreciated the fact that Morehead State was willing to take a chance on him. He had heard it all during the recruiting process as he held out hope for a Division I offer.

There were questions raised about his experience as a football player and his size and strength to handle the position.

The primary sport for Johnson growing up had

been tennis, which he continued to play at Laguna Beach. He helped the boys’ tennis team win the CIF Southern Section Division 4 title against Redlands East Valley as a sophomore.

His freshman year was the first time he had played football. He worked his way up the ladder and burst onto the scene as the starting quarterback for the varsity team his junior year, leading the Breakers to the Division 12 semifinals.

As a senior, Johnson threw for a school-record seven touchdowns in one game against then defending Division 11 champion Western in a 56-49 overtime loss on Oct. 25, 2019.

“I’m just thrilled for him,”

Laguna Beach quarterbacks coach John Selbe said of Johnson’s commitment.

“He’s a quality kid. He’s a hard-working athlete, and he’s a leader. He’s a great competitor. I just think that people that didn’t look at him closer, I think he’s going to show a lot of people that they may have made a mistake because I think he’s that talented. He’s got a great arm, and I think the sky’s the limit for him.”

Among Morehead State’s current group of quarterbacks is former Whittier Christian standout Quinn Commans, whose nine

touchdowns against Bell in 2017 are tied with two others for the Southern Section record for the most in a single game.

Addressing the conversations with coaches who told him he was undersized for the quarterback position, Johnson has been working hard to add muscle. He is now 6-foot-3 and 200 pounds.

“Schools that I had very good communication with and was talking to a lot when I was a junior [included] two or three

See **Johnson**, page A6

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What to eat to reduce your risk of Alzheimer's disease

BY ANDREW E. BUDSON

Would you like reduce your risk of cognitive impairment, Alzheimer's disease and dementia?

Researchers from around the world having been studying a variety of different factors that might reduce these risks and keep the brain healthy.

Old news: The Mediterranean diet is beneficial

One factor that a number of studies have converged on is a Mediterranean-style diet. This diet includes:

- fish
- olive oil
- avocados
- fruits
- vegetables
- nuts
- beans
- whole grains
- red wine *in moderation*.

Now, if you're like me and you happen to like all these foods, then you have all the information you need to eat a brain-healthy diet.

On the other hand, if you're not crazy about everything on the list, perhaps you would rather eat just the most important components.

Researchers have, in fact, been trying to determine the key parts of this diet for a number of years.

For example, one study published in 2015 and updated in 2018 compared healthy older adults who followed a Mediterranean diet with extra olive oil or extra nuts versus a control reduced-fat diet. The enhanced Mediterranean diet groups fared equally well, and both had better cognitive performance outcomes



File Photo

A FRESH BATCH of fried Pacific cod prepared during Newport Harbor Lions Club's annual Fish Fry and Carnival in 2012. Eating fish, according to researchers, may slow cognitive impairment.

than the reduced-fat diet group.

No study, however, has been able to determine the critical components of the Mediterranean diet that makes it so good for your brain — until now.

THE NEW STUDY

Researchers at the National Institutes of Health published a study that evaluated the lifestyles of over 7,750 participants followed for five to 10 years.

Participants filled out questionnaires to determine their eating

habits, and had cognitive tests of memory, language and attention administered over the phone. They used these data to determine the dietary factors most important in lowering your risk of cognitive impairment, as well as the dietary factors most important in lowering your risk of cognitive decline.

COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT VERSUS COGNITIVE DECLINE

Let's take a moment to unpack these terms. Let's say you want to

know what your risk is 10 years from now.

• Cognition is a shorthand way of saying thinking, memory, language, attention, visuospatial and other mental abilities.

• Your risk of cognitive impairment is the risk that 10 years from now, your cognition will be worse than your peers.

• Your risk of cognitive decline is the risk that 10 years from now, your cognition will be worse than it is now.

Fish helps you think — and

keeps your thinking strong

What did the researchers find? Fish was the single-most important dietary factor in lowering the risk of cognitive impairment. Vegetables were second best, and all other foods showed smaller, insignificant effects.

Moreover, of all the foods evaluated, only fish was associated with a lower risk of cognitive decline. Eating fish lowered the risk of both cognitive impairment and cognitive decline.

THE TAKE-HOME LESSON

To reduce your risk of cognitive impairment and decline, eat a Mediterranean-style diet including fish several times per week. There are lots of good fish to eat, including Atlantic mackerel, black sea bass, catfish, clams, cod, crab, crawfish, flounder, haddock, lobster, salmon, sardines, scallops, shrimp, skate, sole, squid, tilapia, trout and canned light tuna.

Just be careful about fish that may have high levels of mercury, such as swordfish and bigeye tuna; these fish should only be eaten occasionally. The FDA has a good guide to help you know the best fish to eat.

YOUR MOTHER WAS RIGHT

Did your mother ever tell you that fish was good for you? Mine did. In fact, she always used to say, "Fish helps you think." She knew it all along; it just took the scientific community 50 years to catch up to her and prove it.

ANDREW E. BUDSON, M.D., is a contributor to Harvard Health Publications.



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

MERCHANDISER ANIKA YEAGER arranges items in the store front of AREO, which won people's choice in the Laguna Beach Chamber of Commerce's holiday window decorating contest.

WINDOW

Continued from page A1

anybody needs," Dona said. "Our reputation around the world, well, it's world famous, but we're like the best-kept secret in Laguna."

For winning the contest, KRISTALLE will get an advertising package valued at \$1,400. Sandy Morales, the new president of the Laguna Beach Chamber of Commerce, said that the idea for the first-time contest was brought forth by Paula Hornbuckle-Arnold, who stepped down as CEO of the chamber on Dec. 14.

The Laguna Beach Historical Society (278 Ocean Ave.) and AREO (207 Ocean Ave.) were also selected from the group of 17 contest entries as people's choice winners and will receive one month of free advertising from KX FM 104.7, a Laguna Beach-based radio station.

"I felt like it brought the Christmas spirit back during this difficult year, which is really so needed at this time," Morales said. "Just walking downtown and seeing the decorations, you kind of forget all of the doom and

gloom."

For the Laguna Beach Historical Society, which has had its doors shut since the initial coronavirus shutdowns in March, the free advertising can provide a boost. Johanna Ellis, a board member, believes that it can help get the historical society's name out and secure memberships. A long-term goal for the group is to establish a permanent archive, Ellis added.

Ellis envisioned a gingerbread house when she heard the Laguna Beach Historical Society was entering the holiday window decorating contest. The building was decorated with Christmas lights, candy canes and peppermints.

"I think it's adorable," Ellis said. "That brought our board together because we haven't been able to do any programs, and we were getting a little bit sad about the fact that we couldn't continue with some of the programs that we wanted. That did actually bring up the morale of the board members."

AREO draped icicle-like lights over the front of its store.

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JOHNSON

Continued from page A5

schools in [the Pioneer League] that said, "You're just not going to be big enough to play at the Division 1 level. You have the height, but you just don't have the weight, and we don't see you putting that on."

"I took that personally, and so when I got the call, it made me excited that I'm going to get the chance to go play against those schools and show them that they were wrong."

Laguna Beach head football coach John Shanahan would not bet against the progression of

Johnson, citing the offense's big-play capability and the Breakers' 15-8 record with him as the starter.

"You're getting a kid that still has a tremendous amount of upside," Shanahan said of Johnson. "He can make every throw. He's extremely intelligent. He's more athletic than people give him credit for when they just take a quick glance at him."

Johnson holds several Laguna Beach records, including single-season passing touchdowns (42 in 2018) and passing yards (3,246 in 2018).

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LAGUNA BEACH quarterback Andrew Johnson completes a pass in the quarterfinals of the CIF Southern Section Division 12 playoffs against Northwood at Irvine High on Nov. 9, 2018.

Don Leach
Staff Photographer

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new year.



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