



Photos by Eric Licas

ARTURO MANDUJANO JR., manager of Moongoat Coffee Roasters' at the UCI Research Park, pours a latte during the cafe's grand opening.

'Community first'

A new coffee shop brews instant popularity in Irvine

BY LILLY NGUYEN

When MoonGoat Coffee Roasters started, co-founder Mark Evans had never thought they'd be talking about opening more than one brick-and-mortar location. Never mind their fourth location, which they opened officially Thursday afternoon.

The new storefront, tucked inside of the UC Irvine Research Park, has been operating since February and has served more than 6,500 orders since doors opened on California Avenue.

On Thursday afternoon, it bustled with life as baristas moved swiftly behind the bar and students settled in to study for approaching midterms. The sound of someone grinding coffee beans was in the air and Evans smiled proudly as he watched on, cradling a drink of his own.

MoonGoat Coffee Roasters, which first established its roastery in Santa Ana in 2018, opened a retail location in Costa



PATRONS WORK at a counter at Moongoat Coffee Roasters' newest location at the UCI Research Park in Irvine during its grand opening Thursday.

See *Coffee*, page A3

Tustin incurs hefty hangar fire cleanup costs while waiting on Navy funding

Four months after fire engulfed WWII hangar, residents and officials are looking to federal government for help.

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

Four months after a fire engulfed a cavernous wooden blimp hangar in Tustin, frustrations continue to mount over cleanup costs.

The devastating blaze began in the early morning hours of Nov. 7 and slowly burned out over 24 days before officials declared it "fully extinguished."

By then, the historic World War II-era structure suffered significant damage as Tustin residents aired concerns about toxins spread by the fire after asbestos was detected in debris.



In the wake of the hangar's ashes, Tustin has contracted \$74 million for emergency services, including a soil, air and dust study that is expected to

return results by April.

The city has incurred more than \$90 million in cleanup costs, which would surpass Tustin's general fund budget,

spurring concerns over its fiscal solvency if help doesn't come soon enough.

See *Hangar*, page A2

ON NOV. 7, a stubborn fire burned the historic Navy north hangar in Tustin. City officials have since tried to secure payments from the Navy for cleanup work.

Irfan Khan | Los Angeles Times

High Seas boutique survives a legal storm

After navigating a lawsuit, police raid and protracted settlement agreement, a cannabis shop is ready to open on Harbor Boulevard.

BY SARA CARDINE

After waiting months for a permit to operate in Costa Mesa — and navigating a lawsuit, police raid and protracted settlement agreement — owners of the High Seas cannabis boutique are ready to open their doors in an early April grand opening.

The dispensary has been at the eye of a months-long legal storm between a trio of legal cannabis proprietors, who claim they've upheld the letter of the law, and city police and prosecutors seeking to prove cannabis was illegally sold and delivered to customers before High Seas had obtained a cannabis business permit.

A settlement agreement reached last month details an unannounced inspection and undercover police action that ultimately led to a Sept. 7 raid on three facilities in the city's Measure X "Green Zone" and the seizure of computers, records and about \$1 million of product that has not as yet been returned.

"This is not a settlement I feel good about," said Michael Moussalli, who co-founded cannabis manufacturer, processor and distributor Se7enleaf, one of the raided businesses, alongside partner Matteo Tabib in 2015. The two partners also hold a minority interest in High Seas.

"I feel like I was extorted, but I had no other choice but to do it. Because if I don't, this amazing store that we've built with the amazing staff that I have, I'm going to lose them."

A well-known player in the legal marijuana market who helped inform Costa Mesa's ordinances regulating industrial and retail cannabis businesses, Moussalli claims Se7enleaf employees and owners were harassed by police acting under direction of a city prosecutor known in the industry for taking a brash approach toward perceived "vice" businesses.

"We've been bullied throughout this whole process by [the prosecutor] Gregory Palmer. The guy's a real piece

See *Storm*, page A3

ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



Gabriel San Román

NEW O.C. ASIAN AMERICAN INITIATIVE AIMS TO BOOST CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

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APODACA: A GRANDMA BY ANY OTHER NAME IS STILL AS SWEET

Page A8

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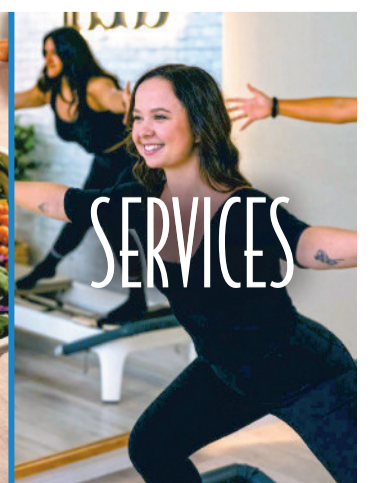
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SHOPS



DINING



SERVICES

Initiative looks to engage Asian Americans in O.C.

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

On the eve of the March primary election, four community leaders gathered in Little Saigon to mark a “pivotal moment” for Orange County’s Asian Americans.

As campaign signs dotted neighborhood homes around St. Anselm’s Episcopal Church in Garden Grove, a press conference held inside the sanctuary sounded a rallying call to boost civic engagement.

Leaders of Korean Community Services, Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance, Southland Integrated Services and South Coast Chinese Cultural Center announced that they are joining forces in an effort to reach more than 100,000 voters ahead of November’s general election.

On Monday, the new collaborative was unveiled as the O.C. Asian American Initiative — and it aims to shake up the county’s political landscape.

“This county is changing rapidly, demographically, as well as politically,” said Ellen Ahn, executive director of Korean Community Services, at the press conference. “The Asian American voice needs to be heard.”

Asian Americans now comprise about a quarter of the county’s 3.2 million residents, making O.C. the third largest Asian county in the United States. It is also home to the largest Vietnamese American and second largest Korean American populations in the nation.

As the fastest growing racial demographic in the county, the Asian American population grew by 31% between 2010 and 2020, according to census data.

“Why not come together to be even stronger?” Mary Anne Foo, founder and executive director of Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance, told TimesOC. “Why not reach a larger number of voters? And why not do it in a way that is language accessible and is culturally appropriate for our communities?”

The initiative, which is comprised of the four largest Asian community-facing organizations in the county, will be working in tandem with APLA Vote, a national nonpartisan nonprofit that engages Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, towards that end.

Ahead of November’s general election, text blasts, phone banking and mailers round out the plan to turn Asian Americans out to the polls.

“This is a time when we have a lot of misinformation, a lot of confusion,” said Tricia Nguyen, CEO of Southland Integrated Services, at the press conference. “We try to educate our community that you need to understand what or who you’re voting for. You can be a Democrat. You can be Republican. You can vote for whatever the issue is. But the most important thing is that you have that right.”

According to a recent AAPI Data/AP-NORC poll, inflation and immigration top issues that Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander voters are most concerned about nationwide.

In the 2022 election, reports of anti-Asian racism during the pandemic encouraged a lot of Asian Americans to vote, Foo said.

“Orange County is an important county in our national landscape,” said Ahn. “It is a county that has traditionally been very Republican. It is now changing. We are a swing county and in this swing county, Asian Americans are a swing vote. There is a lot of power in this election.”

According to Foo, education, elder care, homelessness and affordable housing rounded out key issues at the local level.

She added that the idea for the initiative germinated over several conversations between leaders. They shared a sense of frustration that many policymakers attended parades in the Asian American community but didn’t follow up afterward.

“We didn’t want policymakers just to come to our events,” Foo told TimesOC. “We wanted them to actually listen to the community and do something about our concerns.”

With many journalists from ethnic media outlets present at the press conference, the initiative also made an appeal for them to be partners in the cause of civic education.

For Yulan Chung, chief executive officer of South Coast Chinese Cultural Center, banding together for the initiative is already a resounding statement of wanting to be heard.

“By working together, we believe that we can empower our community to come out to vote,” said Chung at the press conference. “If they don’t know how to vote, we will educate them. If they have difficulty, we will assist them.”

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COMMUNITY LEADERS gather in Garden Grove to announce the formation of the O.C. Asian American Initiative, a civic education and education collaborative.

Gabriel San Román



Coming soon to Irvine

HANGAR

Continued from page A1

What’s left of the massive hangar, which rested on the site of a former Marine Corp Air Station, is owned by the U.S. Department of the Navy, which has paid \$11 million, to date, under a cooperative agreement with the city.

Tustin hoped to approve another \$13 million from the Navy during Tuesday’s City Council meeting.

“We need that money, we need it now,” said Tustin Mayor Austin Lumbard from the dais. “We need a whole bunch more right after that. Things are going to get a little spicy if we don’t get [it].”

Without the payment in hand, council members could only authorize staff to pay contractors once the money is actually received.

The hangar fire impacted 1,500 homes, 29 schools and 14,000 residents.

It spread debris containing asbestos and other toxic chemicals over a 6.5-mile-square-mile area, which led to the closure of Tustin-area schools and parks. Official urged residents to stay home with windows and doors shut in the days following the fire.

The city, which has already pulled \$7.8 million



Irfan Khan | Los Angeles Times

STATE LEGISLATORS are looking to ask President Joe Biden and the U.S. Congress for help with hangar fire cleanup costs.

from its reserves in partnering with the Navy in the recovery effort, expects asbestos debris cleanup and analysis to take several months before work is completed.

City and county officials pursued a state of emergency declaration from

Gov. Gavin Newsom, but the governor declined, citing, in part, the federal government’s responsibility to provide resources for the hangar fire cleanup.

Rep. Lou Correa and Rep. Young Kim sent Newsom a Jan. 25 letter urging him to reconsider his stance.

More recently, Tustin officials unsuccessfully sought a meeting with the governor while he appeared in Tustin on Mar. 2 to rally support for congressional candidate Joe Kerr.

But more immediate help may come by way of

the state legislature.

On Monday, state Sen. Josh Newman (D-Fullerton) introduced a resolution calling on President Joe Biden and the U.S. Congress to approve \$100 million in supplemental federal funds to aid in cleanup and mitigation ef-

forts.

“At a minimum, this is a call to not allow this process to stall,” Newman said. “It urges the federal government to allocate sufficient funds to pay for the total cost of the cleanup.”

State Sen. Tom Umberg (D-Santa Ana) and Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris (D-Irvine) also co-authored the nonbinding resolution, which will require approval from both houses of the state Legislature before asking for the help.

Lumbard acknowledged the effort during Tuesday’s council meeting.

“We’re hopeful that this extra pressure on the federal government will get us the resources that we need from the federal side,” he said.

“The Navy continues to lag and it has become urgent that they speed up,” Lumbard later added.

City officials also voted to extend a local emergency proclamation related to the fire during the council meeting.

The cause of the hangar fire remains under investigation by the Orange County Fire Authority and the Tustin Police Department.

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STORM*Continued from page A1*

of work," he said Thursday, describing a raid by local police that resulted in three arrests and months of fraught negotiations with the city's legal team.

"In another world where High Seas already had its permit, I never would have settled with the city — nothing illegal was done here."

Palmer did not respond to an email request for comment.

CHARTING A COURSE

In 2021, Orange County real estate developer Rachel Xin partnered with

Moussalli and Tabib, already doing legal business in Costa Mesa through Se7enleaf, to open a 7,215-square-foot dispensary at 1921 Harbor Blvd.

A majority owner, Xin claims to have spent more than \$6 million acquiring the building and another \$4 million in tenant improvements, including the installation of two giant saltwater aquariums inside a capacious showroom. A full staff was hired to handle daily operations.

But their plans hit a snag in late September when, after breezing through the city's exhaustive planning and permitting process, they were denied a cannabis business permit with no

official explanation from city officials.

Left high and dry, the proprietors filed an Oct. 18 lawsuit seeking a judicial order to end the closure, which Xin estimates has cost about \$110,000 a month, including a monthly rent of about \$80,000 and paying employees partial wages to keep them on the payroll until the shop could open.

"The loss every month that we are having here without having our doors open is insane," Xin said Thursday.

Speaking to the Daily Pilot in November, Xin maintained the city provided no legal reason for withholding High Seas' cannabis

business license and claimed she was not aware of any legal or criminal issues delaying issuance of the final permit.

But documentation provided in the Feb. 26 settlement agreement— which includes a list of alleged code violations at Se7enleaf and describes the arrest of Tabib and two other employees the day the search warrants were served — tells another tale.

ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS DETAILED

Provided by Costa Mesa City Atty. Kimberly Hall Barlow, the nearly 60-page settlement document details observations made during an August 10, 2023,

routine inspection of a Se7enleaf facility by unnamed "city representatives," who reportedly discovered various unpermitted operations at the site.

In addition to delivery bags with "High Seas" logos on them, inspectors found promotional items and computer software indicating "operations as a dispatch center for a cannabis delivery operation," the document states, although Se7enleaf is not allowed to distribute cannabis directly to consumers.

Weeks later, an undercover police officer placed a cannabis online order through High Seas via a mobile delivery app and received various products from an employee who wore a Se7enleaf badge but was driving a car licensed to Expando Products, a le-

while two employees were detained for obstructing peace officers, after attempting to call their superiors from the scene. After being held for several hours, all parties were released.

Moussalli explained he and others had been researching how High Seas would perform in the local market ahead of its opening by placing the brand online and then distributing some of Se7enleaf's product to Expando for delivery to customers with High Seas marketing material attached to it.

Se7enleaf is a manufacturer authorized to distribute to the dispensary, and Expando obtained permission to deliver High Seas-branded product under the company's name through a signed, paid agreement,



Joe C. Wen & Family Center for Advanced Care

ucihealth.org/wencenter

UCI Health



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

THE HIGH SEAS Cannabis Boutique in Costa Mesa, which was ready to open to the public in September but has been held up by the City.

gally licensed cannabis delivery service in Costa Mesa.

A CMPD detective on Sept. 6 provided testimony to an Orange County Superior Court judge to obtain a search warrant on two Se7enleaf sites as well as the delivery service, Expando Products, all operating in suites at 3505 Cadillac Ave.

The detective noted the observed business operations involved the unlawful use or administering of a controlled substance and the possible commission of a felony.

Judge Katherine Lewis granted the warrant, authorizing police officers to seize cannabis products and paraphernalia, accounting papers, tax documents, personnel files, bank statements, computer devices and any cash found at the properties.

Among the items taken by police were more than 128 pounds of processed marijuana flower, 24 boxes of cannabis oil cartridges and 124 boxes of vaporizers, along with boxes of documents, Se7enleaf's security system, computer towers, various electronic devices and \$8,105.71 in cash.

Tabib was arrested for license violations (at the time Se7enleaf was renewing the documents and had sent payments to the city but not yet received renewal status, Moussalli said)

even as the physical dispensary remained shuttered.

Such practices are common in the industry and do not violate laws, Moussalli maintained, because no product is coming from High Seas' Harbor Boulevard store, nor is it going directly to customers from Se7enleaf.

"Not one piece of product was outside of Metrc, the state's tracking system. Not one piece of product was unaccounted for. Not one piece of product didn't have taxes on it paid to the city, and not one piece of product was delivered to anyone under 21 years of age," he said. "This was done in a fully compliant manner."

Moussalli estimated the wholesale value of the seized product at at least \$800,000, placing its retail value anywhere from \$1 million to \$2 million. He said some of it may no longer be fit for sale, after having been held for six months.

Under the settlement agreement, Se7enleaf and High Seas have agreed to pay up to \$85,000 to cover the city's legal fees. However, that figure may be reduced by a percentage proportionate to the percentage of any seized cannabis product deemed unsalable, up to 50%.

A March 14 court hearing

See Storm, page A4

COFFEE*Continued from page A1*

Mesa the following year, then expanded into Garden Grove and Laguna Beach.

"When we started, we did a lot of events with the Irvine Co. through pop-ups and catering. That kind of got us in the door with the Irvine Co., and we knew that [this] spot was special just through our Costa Mesa location," Evans said. "We had so many people from UCI coming to us and asking, 'When are you going to open a spot in Irvine?' so we knew we were going to do it eventually. We just didn't know when, and the opportunity came up here. It used to be a Starbucks, then it was a Steam [Coffee Bar]. The minute we rolled up, we were like, 'Yes.'"

"I didn't even have to walk in the door." Evans said the rest came together swiftly over two months, and the opening of the Irvine location was the most successful to date.

A former musician, Evans said he used to tour around the country and would see interesting coffee shops all over the world, but when he'd return to his native Orange County he wouldn't see anything close to the coffee scene elsewhere. He liked the community feeling he experienced in other shops and wanted provide the same ambiance in every location MoonGoat would eventually set up.

"There's a couple of mom and



BARISTA MICHELLE CHEN hands an iced latte to a customer at MoonGoat Coffee Roaster's newest location in the UCI Research Park during the cafe's grand opening Thursday. It's one of four total physical storefronts.

pop shops [here], but nothing like I saw on the road. And so, my dream after music was to open a coffee shop. I'd never worked in coffee in my life, which is crazy, but that's when the out-of-the-box thinking comes in. I partnered up with David [Longridge], who was corporate Starbucks and was at the same roadblock," Evans said. "So as the perfect storm, we got together and found a location in

Costa Mesa in an industrial area. "We thought we were crazy for opening there, but it turned out to be a super success."

At least or now, the business is staying in Orange County because there's already an oversaturation of coffee shops in neighboring Los Angeles County, he explained, and because he wanted to bring something special to this region, specifically. Any plans for physical expansion

past the Irvine location, he said, would have to develop organically.

He said he felt what makes MoonGoat unique is the quality of what it serves. The company sources its coffee beans from all over the world, as well as locally. Evans regularly makes purchasing sojourns to Japan because he appreciates the quality of their matcha.

The food served at MoonGoat,

he said, is also made in house.

"It's a place people can go and hang out. It's not like a store. I'm not throwing Starbucks under the bus, but if you go into a Starbucks, there's a couple of places you can set up your laptop. Here, I could have 60 people studying and having work parties," Evans said. "What separates us is community first, then our coffee and matcha and our fun chagaccino drinks — the mushroom drinks, which I didn't think would be a super hit. I think that it's a lot of that, plus the work we put in."

Evans said his team is passionate about their work and that he sometimes feels through MoonGoat that he is still a musician, putting in as much effort to perform in front of a crowd as he is sourcing the ingredients and maintaining the brand. The Irvine location, he said, like the three others that the company operates, is for him about providing a safe space for people to enjoy their experience.

"I've heard this a million times from our customers. They'll come up to me and go, 'Are you the owner? Are you one of the owners?' and I'll be like, 'Yeah.' And they'll go, 'I just want to thank you for opening a spot where I can bring my family and feel comfortable.' I've heard it so many times that I should record it because it always warms my heart to hear," he said. "It means we're doing right by the community."

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Don Leach | Staff Photographer

OWNER RACHEL XIN stands next to one of the marquee saltwater fish tanks inside her High Seas Cannabis Boutique in Costa Mesa, whose opening has been delayed six months due to a legal battle between the city and Xin's business partners.

STORM

Continued from page A3

will determine whether the materials taken on Sept. 7, still in possession of the city, may be returned to the Measure X businesses.

COSTA MESA'S CITY ATTORNEY SPEAKS

Speaking on the city's behalf, Barlow confirmed Thursday Palmer has worked as a prosecutor for Costa Mesa under a contract between the city and Fullerton-based municipal law firm Jones & Mayer since before she came to the city in 2004. A page on the firm's lawsuit indicates Palmer began working there in 1999 and has served several different cities.

While Barlow said inspections on cannabis businesses may be performed by city staff or police acting as city representatives, who may self-initiate visits when criminal activity is suspected, she would not say who authorized the Aug. 10, 2023, inspection of Se7enleaf or the subsequent undercover police activity.

ment, in this particular case, what led to the search warrant other than what's in the agreement," she said.

The attorney described past prosecutorial efforts against illegally operating cannabis businesses in the city, but when asked whether other legal operators in Costa Mesa had been the subject of police raids or had search warrants executed on their facilities, she said she did not know.

"I primarily was involved with this one because they'd filed a lawsuit," Barlow said. "Typically, when there's no litigation and [an incident] only involves criminal stuff, I never become involved."

HIGH SEAS PLANS SOFT OPENING THIS MONTH

Despite the long period of turbulence with the city and its legal representatives, Xin remains hopeful High Seas will be back to smooth sailing soon enough. A soft opening is planned for the week of March 18, four days after the court hearing to retrieve the confiscated product.

"I try to be more positive and to be more optimistic," she said Thursday. "[When] I look back and reflect, I think I've spent a lot of time and I've gained knowledge and education, from products to policy, to regulation to taxation. I think I'm going to stick with it."

"Fortunately, with Mike and Matteo being partners, we made it through," she continued. "We got the permits and we are opening now. I think I will be a good citizen in Costa Mesa and be positive and do good business with the city. Not that I like the way they've treated us, but I want to look forward, not backward."

Although Moussalli said he's extremely disappointed by recent events, he's still looking forward to High Seas' opening.

"If I could pack up the dispensary and move it to another city, I would. But we're here," he said. "[So] I'm going to put aside my distaste for the city situation. I do like the community and I'm excited to serve the community."

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THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

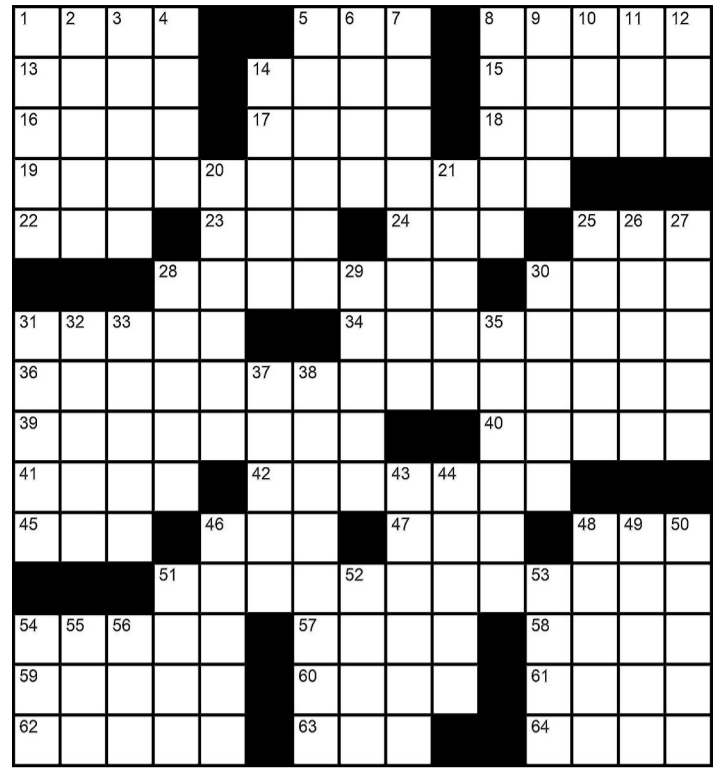
By Jacqueline E. Mathews

ACROSS

- 1 Old Swedish car brand
- 5 Gave food to
- 8 Loudly closes
- 13 As well
- 14 Memorization
- 15 The A in A/V
- 16 Until: 2 wds.
- 17 Circle sectors
- 18 Ruined
- 19 Title for John Philip Sousa: 3 wds.
- 22 Corn serving
- 23 Poor grade
- 24 JFK alternative
- 25 Insult
- 28 Parade honoree
- 30 " _ Las Vegas!"
- 31 Song rights org.
- 34 :-) or :- (
- 36 People who cover games: 2 wds.
- 39 Make airtight, in a way: 2 wds.
- 40 Course that's not hard
- 41 Consumes
- 42 Casino screw-up
- 45 Hit the slopes
- 46 That guy's
- 47 Mafia snitch
- 48 TV network
- 51 Bit of work travel: 2 wds.
- 54 "Get outta here!"
- 57 Church section
- 58 Car or truck
- 59 Fortune-teller's board
- 60 " _ and the Detectives"
- 61 Sneak a look
- 62 Got started
- 63 Business card abbr.
- 64 "Anything _?"

DOWN

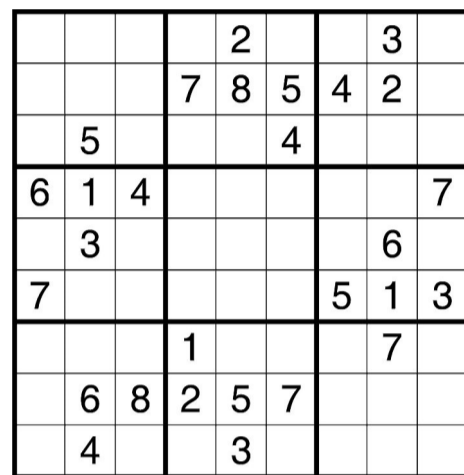
- 1 Cook in a pan



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 A9.

- 2 First Greek letter
- 3 Fall flower
- 4 Supersonic jet sound
- 5 Coerces
- 6 Mark with acid
- 7 Light fixture by a computer: 2 wds.
- 8 Steam room
- 9 Breathing organ
- 10 Contribute
- 11 Nintendo avatar
- 12 Roll of grass
- 14 Harder to find
- 20 Evolves, perhaps
- 21 Home made of snow

- 25 Cuts into cubes
- 26 Off-white shade
- 27 Sophie Turner's "Game of Thrones" role
- 28 Shopping spots
- 29 Bread ends
- 30 Essential
- 31 Campfire remains
- 32 Give a talk
- 33 Raccoon-like animal
- 35 Bribes for pets
- 37 18-wheelers
- 38 Chocolate-coated movie morsel
- 43 Austin Powers nemesis
- 44 Painting stand
- 46 "To err is _"
- 48 Beyond unkind
- 49 Mouthfuls
- 50 Bike wheel part
- 51 _ California
- 52 Identify
- 53 Gift wrap securer
- 54 Cry loudly
- 55 Pool stick
- 56 Fix, as a competition

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Market for all things spooky comes to O.C.

BY JESSICA PERALTA

When Dustie Haun and her daughter began their small business, they mainly sold gnomes and dolls. That soon transformed into their love for all things ghoulish, and they found a perfect place to share their wares with a horror-themed event company that sponsors events throughout Southern California.

"Witches Brew was one of our first-ever events when we started this business in 2020," said Haun, who runs Spooky Ghouls out of her home in Los Angeles. "We heard about the Witches Brew events through some of our other vendor friends who were starting out and after we tried one of the [Anaheim] Packing District events, we were hooked."

Founded in the fall of 2019, Jacqueline Menjivar and her husband, Chris, started Witches Brew with a desire to create a market for like-minded fans of spooky things.

"We kicked off with a Magickal Marketplace and slowly started adding immersive elements," said Jacqueline Menjivar.

It has since expanded to include a variety of regular events — from vendor-driven shopping to immersive experiences — in Southern California, including in Orange County, Los Angeles and San Diego.

"I really wanted to combine all of the things that I loved — the occult, horror films, coffee, brews, music, etc.," Menjivar said. "We split off our immersive productions and themed cocktail experiences to Midnight Souls Productions — this is where you will find things such as Sinister Saloon ... and Macabre Masquerade. Witches Brew features our monthly Night Markets, brewery events and our larger themed markets such as Carnaval de la Lune."

Combined, the two production companies offer a broad mix of events and experiences. Sinister Saloon takes place at Sassafras Saloon in Los Angeles with a larger bar/burlesque/Western theme and rotating sub-themes, including Night of the Krampus for the holidays. It includes actors who walk around interacting with guests while in character as



Photos by Jessica Peralta

SINISTER SALOON takes place at Sassafras Saloon in Los Angeles and is presented by Midnight Souls Productions, a subsidiary of Witches Brew.



CARNIVAL DE LA LUNE is one of Witches Brews' larger themed markets. The Anaheim Packing District and Downtown Santa Ana will host the business' monthly Night Markets this year.

well as regular burlesque performances through the experience. Meanwhile the monthly Night Markets are scheduled to take place this year in Downtown Santa Ana, Anaheim Packing District and San Diego.

"We've since attended almost every kind of event Witches Brew has put on," Haun said. "Although our top favorite event to

vend, and attend, is at the Anaheim Packing District. We have tried many of their events, including one in San Diego that was also fantastic. We love them all and that is due to the great planning and character of the Witches Brew hosts."

Some events like the Carnaval de la Lune, Wicked of Oz and "Little Shop of Horrors"-themed

Immersive Sip & Shop Experience take place at historic locations. Carnaval de la Lune — this year themed "A Haunting Side-show Experience," takes place on May 25 and 26 with immersive entertainment, live music, carnival games, themed photo ops and more than 60 vendors — is at Heritage Square Museum in Los Angeles. The Wicked of Oz

features green beer and cocktails, photo ops, live performances, roaming characters and shopping on March 16 at Heritage Museum of Orange County in Santa Ana and the "Little Shop of Horrors"-themed event will be there on July 6 with cocktails, themed photo ops and shopping.

Menjivar said Wicked of Oz leans more "into the themed immersion while you shop, eat and drink, sip your way around the museum."

Kat Whitaker, of Los Angeles, owns mobile botanica the Sugarwitch Co. and has been attending Witches Brew events for just over a year. At the events, Whitaker sells natural soy intention candles, as well as body and spiritual care items that are free of the top 11 allergens.

"They are fun, well organized and inclusive of all kinds of witchy and horror-themed vendors," Whitaker said. "The best part about the events we vend at with them is that they don't charge an entry fee. Having spent years doing art prior and vending at conventions, horror conventions are pricey to vend at, but also pricey sometimes in terms of tickets for patrons. These events by [Witches Brew] allow more people to come and explore this genre of art and shopping as well as vending without hurting wallets. Recognizing that these are small businesses, the cost makes it easier on small business owners, as well."

Menjivar, who runs her production companies as her full-time work, said Witches Brew has definitely expanded over the last few years.

"We went from having events canceled in the pandemic to hosting COVID-modified haunt experiences," she said. "From immersive markets to now cocktail experiences — always trying to push the boundary and create bigger and better experiences. We did experience a few flops, especially over the last years. Yet, it's been a truly amazing experience to meet and work with so many creative souls, and there are no regrets. We can't wait to see what 2024 has in store for us."

Jessica Peralta is a contributor to TimesOC.

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Stop marinating meat. Instead, season then sauce delicious one-pan Florentine pork

BY CHRISTOPHER KIMBALL

Despite how commonly recipes call for marinating meat, it's rarely worth it.

Marinades do a poor job of flavoring meat because the molecules of any flavorings, except for salt, are too big to penetrate the surface. Besides, you're then left cooking wet meat, which inhibits flavorful browning.

That's why we season meat before cooking, then sauce later, as in this one-pan Florentine pork chop recipe from our book "Tuesday Nights Mediterranean," which features weeknight-friendly meals from the region. The recipe is an adaptation of a recipe for braciuciole nella scamerita from Artusi's "Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well," a landmark Italian cookbook that was first published in 1891 and remains in print today.

We season the chops with oregano, red pepper flakes, salt and black pepper, later searing them in a skillet with a garlic-infused oil. The pork is sliced and served over a bed of lacinato kale that's been cooked with sliced red onion in a red wine reduction. The wine, balsamic vinegar and remaining garlic oil mix with the pork's natural juices and moisture released by the vegetables for a delectable, minimalistic sauce.

The slices of toasted garlic used to flavor the oil add crispy bits of allium that contrast the silky greens, and a tablespoon of balsamic vinegar brightens the dish. A final sprinkle of the pork's seasoning mix adds another layer of flavor.

Whereas Artusi indicates cutlets from where the loin and leg meet, we call for boneless pork loin chops.



Milk Street via AP

SEASONS SEARED IN A SKILLET are part of a Milk Street recipe for pork with kale, red wine and toasted garlic.

Lacinato kale is sometimes sold as Tuscan or dinosaur kale.

And if you prefer to serve the chops whole, that's fine. Either way, the chops will release flavorful juices as they rest — make sure to pour them over the pork and kale before serving.

PORK WITH KALE, RED WINE AND TOASTED GARLIC

Start to finish: 40 minutes

Servings: four

2 teaspoons dried oregano

1 teaspoon red pepper flakes

Kosher salt and ground black pepper

Four 6-ounce boneless pork loin chops, each about 1 inch thick, patted dry

4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided, plus more to serve

6 medium garlic cloves, thinly sliced

1 cup dry red wine

1 medium red onion, halved and thinly sliced

2 bunches lacinato kale, stemmed and sliced crosswise about ½ inch thick

1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

In a small bowl, stir together the oregano, pepper flakes, 2 teaspoons salt and

1 tablespoon black pepper.

Measure 1 tablespoon of the mix into a small bowl; set aside. Sprinkle the remaining seasoning mix onto both sides of the pork chops, then rub it into the meat.

In a 12-inch skillet over medium-high, heat 2 tablespoons of oil until shimmering. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, until golden brown, one to two minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the garlic to a small plate. To the oil remaining in the pan, add the chops and cook until well browned on the bottoms, three to five minutes. Flip and continue to cook until

the centers reach 135°F, another three to four minutes. Transfer to a cutting board and tent with foil.

Add the wine to the skillet and cook over medium-high, scraping up any browned bits, until reduced to about 2 tablespoons, about five minutes. Add the remaining 2 tablespoons oil, the onion and half the kale, then cook, tossing with tongs, until the kale begins to wilt, about 30 seconds. Add the remaining kale and continue to cook, tossing and stirring, until the kale is tender and the onion is softened, about three minutes.

Off heat, add the toasted

garlic and the vinegar, then toss to combine. Taste and season with salt and pepper, then transfer to a serving platter, creating a bed for the pork. Cut the chops into thin slices and arrange over the kale. Pour over any accumulated juices, then sprinkle with the reserved seasoning mix.

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COLUMN | PATRICE APODACA

A grandma by any other name is still as sweet

I am eagerly anticipating the fast-approaching arrival of my first grandchild. Naturally, I am over the moon.

Friends who have traveled this road before me tell me that being a grandparent is “the best.” They gush about the joy they’ve experienced, and assure me that I, too, will find deep fulfillment in this new role. And I believe them wholeheartedly.

But I’ve been a bit flummoxed by one question that inevitably follows the announcement of my impending grandparenthood: What name will I have my grandchild call me? “You can’t just be ‘Grandma,’” one friend insisted.

Accuse me of being slow-witted, out-of-touch or simply lacking imagination, but that is exactly what I had assumed I would be called. It’s the traditional, default moniker for American women in my position, so I hadn’t given it any thought beyond that. Sure, I had heard some cute granny nicknames that my friends had decided upon, but I had somehow missed the more expansive reality that alternative grandparent names are now all the rage.

I suppose it was inevitable that the individualistic, we-do-it-our-way generation, of which I am a member, would want to rewrite grandparent rules, starting with the word itself. A quick survey of some of my friends revealed a wide array of choices for those who would otherwise be known as Grandma: Poppy, Grappy, Omi, DeDe, Gigi, YaYa and few Mimis.

Let’s not leave out the grandfather names, which can be equally whimsical. One friend told me her husband decided to honor



A BOY AND his grandmother shop at a supermarket. A new trend has grandchildren calling their grandparents names other than “Grandma” and “Grandpa.”

his own mother’s Irish heritage with his grandpa name. He went with Seamus, which is adorably pronounced by their toddler grandchild as “Say-Muss.” Another friend’s granddad name is Jaunty, which in tot-speak comes out as “John-Key.” More adorableness.

Granted, some of the attempts at cuteness or uniqueness can seem a bit odd. I try to stay open to new ideas generally, but I will pass on the following: Glamma, a glamorous-Grandma mashup, which is definitely not a good fit for me; Big Mama, which to my ears is more crime boss than loving matriarch; and Maw Maw, largely because my first thought on hearing this one is that it could come out sounding like a crow squawking.

Some of the suggested grandma

names I found on a published list were so wacky I wasn’t entirely sure they were meant to be taken seriously. Here’s a sampling: Peaches; the “hippie names” Hopie, Mumssy, Fairy Mother and Granny Pie; and Yo Grandma. Serious or not, I’m a hard no on all of them.

Perhaps such eccentricities are why some commentators think the grandparent-naming craze has gotten out of hand. One advice columnist fielded a question from a mom who thought her mother-in-law’s preference for her grandmother nickname was “bonkers” and wanted to know what to do about it. (She was counseled to calm down and embrace the bonkers.) Still others have suggested that the trend reflects an egocentric streak

mixed with a strain of self-delusion about a word they associate with old age.

There might be some truth in that last observation. Indeed, many grandparents I’ve spoken with are candid about their desire to avoid a name that calls to mind images of a gray-haired granny tending to her knitting while rocking by a fire.

But now that I’ve had time to think it over, I’d argue that this penchant isn’t mere conceit; rather, it’s an extension of a refreshing, modern vision of grandparenthood.

“Grandma” just sounds too darn old for a generation that is intent on remaining vital, active and involved in their grandkids’ lives. Today’s grandparents — many of them, anyway — play

pickleball, go on hikes and run marathons. Don’t dare suggest that they sit at home waiting for the occasional obligatory family visit — they’re ready to show up and participate in all that life still has to offer, and they’ll continue to do so for as long as they can.

I have also found that many of the alternative names for grandparents have charming origin stories. They might derive from a grandparent’s initials, or from their ancestry or culture. Other names reflect grandparents’ interests or occupations. Some arise organically through meaningful family interactions, while others can fulfill a long-desired wish to be known by a favored name. Why go for the generic when you can have a name that carries a special meaning?

Whatever the reason or the process for selecting a name that fits, I say go for it. Becoming a grandparent is a wondrous event, and for the current batch of grannies and granddads who want to be active participants in the lives of the newest generation, using names that speak to their individual personalities and their unique bonds with their grandchildren actually makes a lot of sense.

That being said, I have no idea what I will be called by my grandchild. I prefer to wait and just see what feels right. I still have no objection to going with the old standard, but if some other idea pops up and sticks, then I too will go for it.

Not Fairy Mother though. I have to draw the line somewhere.

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.

A WORD, PLEASE | JUNE CASAGRANDE

A ‘cherished superstition’ you might not want to read about

Can you end a sentence with a preposition? Yes. Can you say so online and not send angry social media users into attack mode? Apparently not.

That’s the lesson of a recent Instagram post by Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary that stated

plainly and accurately: “It is permissible in English for a preposition to be what you end a sentence with. The idea that it should be avoided came from writers who were trying to align the language with Latin, but there’s no reason to suggest ending a sentence with a preposition is wrong.”

The denizens of Instagram weren’t having it.

“This represents something ugly,” one replied.

“I don’t like it,” said another.

The outcries came in spite of Merriam’s perfectly illustrating their point: “This is what we’re talking about.”

Not familiar with the issue? That’s OK. It gets less relevant with each passing year. Telling students not to end sentences with prepositions was a fad among teachers in decades past, especially in the 1950s and ’60s. The echoes of those lessons grow fainter every year. And because they were never based in fact anyway, you don’t need to worry where you’re putting your prepositions. But if you’re interested, here’s the lowdown.

Prepositions are words like “with,” “at,” “from,” “to” and “about” that team up with an object to add



Associated Press

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER Winston Churchill in December 1941. The WWII Allied leader may have never spoken a phrase often attributed to him regarding prepositions: “This is the type of arrant pedantry up with which I shall not put!”

information to a sentence: You’re going with Sam. I gave at the office. He’s from Chicago. They talked about the weather.

What happens when you move the object of the preposition to an earlier spot in the sentence but leave the preposition sitting there at the end? Often, you get a bad sentence: Sam is who you’re going with. The office is the place I gave at. Chicago is where he’s from. The weather is what they talked about.

Bad sentences aren’t necessarily ungrammatical sentences. Yet some centuries ago, certain ob-

servers decided they must be and declared that it’s an error to end a sentence with a preposition. Researchers traced the origin of this fake rule back to the English poet, playwright and essayist John Dryden, who in 1672 wrote a piece attacking writers of previous generations in general and their use of sentence-ending prepositions in particular. His idea caught on, and centuries later it had become what the venerable H.W. Fowler called a “cherished superstition” — not true, yet beloved.

See **Word**, page A9

MAILBAG



File Photo

A HOMELESS MAN sleeps with his belongings at the Newport Pier.

Social issues are rooted in homelessness

I had an experience recently that has weighed on my mind. I was at a drugstore waiting to pick up a prescription when a man, somewhat disheveled, with a black shoulder satchel and pants that hung lower than low passed behind me and disappeared down an aisle. Something didn’t sit right, and I peaked around the corner to see him taking items off the shelf and placing them into the satchel. I walked down another aisle to the front of the store to see if he would pay for the items. When he didn’t appear, I peaked down another aisle and saw him placing other items in the satchel. As he walked out the store I followed and called 911. Fifteen minutes later he was apprehended by Costa Mesa police.

What struck me is that this individual thought he could get away with this crime with total impunity. I am confident that this

isn’t his first “shopping” visit to Walgreens and likely other shops. And I am sure he is not the only one. It is quite likely he is homeless or at least indigent, economically disadvantaged, possibly mentally impaired and impaired by drug use. I didn’t get the sense he was a veteran.

I think so much, but not all of this, is rooted in the homeless problem that plagues us. I can think of no issue that adversely impacts our society as much as the scourge of homelessness. We must demand of our elected officials a city, county and state solution — that a public private partnership. I’m not saying this will be easy.

Seeing it firsthand, and the indifference the store employees take (because they are instructed not to do anything) has made an impact on me in a profound way. I will be looking for ways to be part of,

and press for a solution to, the problem of homelessness.

Mark Hershthal
Costa Mesa

He’d make a good speaker, but alas

The article in the March 3 Daily Pilot & TimesOC, “Tackling Sports a passion for monthly O.C. group” was more than interesting. It told of a group of sports folks who meet once a month in Corona Del Mar at the OASIS Senior Center. The group is open to the public and only has three rules: no dues, no politics, and anyone wanting to be heard will be heard. The meetings feature guest speakers covering various aspects of sports. Future guest speakers include Anaheim Ducks general manager Bob Murray and former Dallas Cowboys

See **Mailbag**, page A9

WORD

Continued from page A8

Fowler is no outlier. Almost every credible language authority agrees there's no rule against ending a sentence with a preposition.

Strunk and White's "The Elements of Style" states clearly: "Not only is the preposition acceptable at the end, sometimes it is more effective in that spot than anywhere else. 'A law hammer, not an ax, was the tool he murdered her with.'"

Here's Garner's Modern American Usage: "The spurious rule about not ending sentences with prepositions is a remnant of Latin grammar, in which a preposition was the one word that a writer could not end a sentence with."

And one more: "The preposition at the end has always been an idiomatic feature of English," writes Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage. This reference book (not to be confused with the dictionary bearing the Merriam-Webster name that inspired this recent fracas) gives some examples of what can happen if you try too hard to avoid a preposition at the end, like this published example cited in 1979: "I never stop worrying as to with whom she's kicking up her heels now." That's a clumsy alternative to just putting the preposition "with" at the end: "I never stop worrying as to whom she's kicking up her heels with."

If all this has you fretting over your own usage, take your cue from this famous quote, which is often incorrectly attributed to Winston Churchill: "This is the type of arrant pedantry up with which I shall not put!"

JUNE CASAGRANDE is the author of "The Joy of Syntax: A Simple Guide to All the Grammar You Know You Should Know. She can be reached at JuneTCN@aol.com.

MAILBAG

Continued from page A8

cheerleader Julie Jacobs.

Two statements in the article caught my eye: "I'd also love to get a race car driver in here. I know some people who know some people." Those two lines in a very subtle manner kind of pertain to me. I went to high school and graduated in 1959 with a guy by the name of "Joe" who was very into sports and played on the football team as the quarterback, the baseball team and the basketball team, all on the varsity team, naturally. This guy Joe was also known for his souped-up fast cars, which he drove all through our high school years. Anyway, we all graduated and went our separate ways, with Joe staying in sports and winding up as the head coach of the then-Washington Redskins, winning three out of four Superbowl appearances, each with a different quarterback. And yes, his name is Joe Gibbs, and after spending about 12 years as coach of the Washington team Joe went into a different profession, that being a NASCAR owner with four cars racing each weekend.

The lines again, "I'd love to get a race car driver in here. I know some people who know some people," would be fantastic if I was

close to Joe. I could ask him if he could be a future guest speaker. But alas, I saw him once after graduation in 1991 when the team now called the Washington Commanders came out to play the Rams when the Rams were still in O.C. He did however remember me, which made my day because my 14-year-old son, Ryan, got to meet him. But to ask him to be a guest speaker at the Tackling Sports meeting just because we went to the same high school in Santa Fe Springs, just wouldn't do it after all these years. He did however sign two of my high school annuals, which I still have.

Bill Spitalnick
Newport Beach

Hope after local voter turnout

I was initially disappointed by the low turnout of the primary election, believing in it to be the reason for the passage of the charter changes. However by Wednesday afternoon, when the no votes on A and B only trailed by 273 votes with thousands of mail-in ballots yet to count, I felt much better about the election in general and the community as a whole. After all why would we need voter ID, when we showed our ID at registration and why would we discriminate

against minority groups by refusing to fly their flags?

We know that votes by mail take longer to tabulate because verification is a long process, but overall the difference in the passage or failure will be much closer, which restores my belief in the city's progress. The Daily Pilot's reporting is what locals can rely on to understand what is taking place in our city and is very much appreciated.

Richard C. Armendariz
Huntington Beach

H.B. election a cynical ploy

It is unfortunate, but the cold-blooded attempt by the conservative Huntington Beach City Council majority to use the low voter turnout in the recent primary, on Wednesday at 23.5%, to jam its noxious charter amendments down the throats of Surf City residents was largely successful. The ploy of using hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars to strangle the will of the community instead of waiting until November paid off at our expense. Big money went into the yes on A, B and C campaign, most of it partisan and pandering. It was a power grab of epic proportions. Now we'll see what our despotic leaders will do with it. If they are true

to form, they will not exercise it to better serve and represent the Huntington Beach citizenry but rather exclusively cater to their MAGA base. They will seek further restrictions and indignities to our social, cultural, and civic norms. Their handpicked candidates for the City Council election in November are not only cut from the same cloth but possibly more extreme and unhinged. It is an existential crisis the voters of our city will now be forced to grapple with. Further negative impacts and fallout from the elec-

tion may befall us down the road. We'll see what the county and state have in mind. The bottom line is that Huntington Beach is moving backward and not forward. It is moving further into darkness. It is important for our population to see this, the turning from democracy into autocracy. Only when this becomes clear will we be able to correct our vision and pursue a positive and productive course for the future.

Tim Geddes
Huntington Beach

Daily Pilot

A Times Community News publication.

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12:59

Los Angeles Times
TimesOC

California State Parks seasonal lifeguard Sierra Fockler discovered a 14-inch Pacific football fish around 2:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 13, near the lifeguard station located at Crystal Cove State Park in Orange County. It's the second such case of the fish washing ashore over the last three years. (Courtesy of California State Parks)

Good morning. It's Wednesday, Oct. 25. I'm Carol Cormaci, bringing you this week's **TimesOC newsletter** with a look at the latest local news and events.

Watch where you're stepping on O.C.'s famed sands, because you may encounter a rare specimen of marine life. One, in fact, that has very sharp teeth.

That's what happened on a recent afternoon to lifeguard Sierra Fockler, who found a spooky-looking black angler fish, specifically a Pacific football fish, while she was walking near the lifeguard headquarters building on Moro Beach, located within Crystal Cove State Park.



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General Announcements

This shall serve as public notice. Announcing the birth of David Antonio Egbai. Born on October 29, 2020 at six pounds, six ounces. Mother, De'Ann Spriggs Egbai, is overjoyed by the blessing of his arrival.

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Legal Notices

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Pursuant to the California Self Service Storage Facility Act (B&P Code 21700 ET seq.) The undersigned will sell at public auction on Tuesday March 26, 2024 at 1:00 pm. Personal property including but not limited to furniture, clothing, tools and/or other household items located at: The sale will take place online at www.selfstorageauction.com. Theresa Ramirez Paul A Paulsen All sales are subject to prior cancellation. All terms, rules and regulations are available online at www.selfstorageauction.com. Dated this March 10, 2024 by Costa Mesa Self Storage, 3180 Red Hill Ave, Costa Mesa, CA, 92626 (714) 966-9901 3/10/24 **CNS-3791726#** **DAILY PILOT**

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Pursuant to the California Self Service Storage Facility Act (B&P Code 21700 ET seq.) The undersigned will sell at public auction on Tuesday March 26, 2024 at 3:00 pm. Personal property including but not limited to furniture, clothing, tools and/or other household items located at: The sale will take place online at www.selfstorageauction.com. Robert Bertrand Seguin St. Jude Medical Adame Lazaro Jr II Robert Bertrand Seguin ABBOTT/ST JUDE MEDICAL All sales are subject to prior cancellation. All terms, rules and regulations are available online at www.selfstorageauction.com. Dated this March 10, 2024 by Irvine Self Storage, 2960 Main St, Irvine, CA, 92614 (949) 851-7900 3/10/24 **CNS-3791724#** **DAILY PILOT**

Notice of Public Sale

Pursuant to the California Self Service Storage Facility Act (B&P Code 21700 ET seq.) The undersigned will sell at public auction on Tuesday March 26, 2024 at 1:30 pm. Personal property including but not limited to furniture, clothing, tools and/or other household items located at: The sale will take place online at www.selfstorageauction.com. Melissa D Harms Jifford B Tasic Collette Parker Sara Pedersen Suk Won Kim Rekha Aggarwal Rekha Aggarwal Rekha Aggarwal All sales are subject to prior cancellation. All terms, rules and regulations are available online at www.selfstorageauction.com. Dated this March 10, 2024 by Woodbridge Self Storage, 5020 Barranca Pkwy., Irvine, CA, 92604 (949) 857-4900 3/10/24 **CNS-3791721#** **DAILY PILOT**

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