

# Daily Pilot

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Photos by OC Japan Fair

**VISITORS TO** the OC Japan Fair April 4-6 in Costa Mesa can enjoy traditional demonstrations and costumes with a spring theme.

## OC Japan Fair returns with J-pop fest, Freedom L.A.

**BY SARA CARDINE**

**L**ocals looking for fun with a Far East flavor should head to the Orange County fairgrounds the first weekend of April as the OC Japan Fair returns with a slate of cultural activities, culinary delights and a nighttime lantern festival.

The three-day event beginning Friday, April 4, will feature all the fan favorites, from tea ceremonies and kimonos for sale in a recreation of Japan's Nakamise shopping street to cultural demonstrations and 55 street food vendors, along with some new features.

This year's fair will be held in conjunction with Freedom L.A., a J-pop music festival

See **Fair**, page A2



**SOME 200 VENDORS** selling Japanese and Asian products, foods and more will be on display at the OC Japan Fair at the county fairgrounds April 4-6.

**THIS YEAR'S** OC Japan Fair at the Orange County fairgrounds includes a lantern ceremony Saturday, April 5, at 8 p.m. with keepsake LED lanterns for participants.



## Protect HB sues city over light show

The lawsuit claims the city didn't fulfill CEQA requirements in approving the show in Central Park.

**BY MATT SZABO**

Local grassroots organization Protect Huntington Beach has sued the city over the approval of an extravagant, months-long multimedia light show in Central Park.

A petition for writ of mandate filed Thursday in Orange County Superior Court alleges the city violated the California Environmental Quality Act when it approved a license for Flowers of the Sky, LLC to operate the Symphony of Flowers.

The show would be on more than six acres of land in the northeastern corner of Central Park East, on Thursdays through Sundays for about six months of the year. It would be expected to draw 900 visitors per show, though up to 2,000 could be accommodated in the bleachers.

Huntington Beach would be guaranteed to receive at least

See **Light**, page A2

## Laguna approves ordinance regulating e-bikes

Police officers can cite both the individual committing an offense and potentially a parent or guardian.

**BY ANDREW TURNER**

In response to an increased presence of e-bikes and other electric transportation devices around town, Laguna Beach has introduced a new ordinance regulating their operation.

The ordinance provides police with an additional tool for enforcement within the municipal code, going beyond the rules written for bicycles.

Bicycles cannot be ridden on the boardwalk at Main Beach, within city parks, or upon sidewalks in the existing code, but law enforcement officials said there

See **E-bikes**, page A5

## H.B. man meets heart valve engineers who saved his life

**BY MATT SZABO**

Ben McCullough was given a gift early in his tour of the Edwards Lifesciences headquarters on Wednesday morning.

The lapel pin meant a lot to McCullough, as it represented the 56-millimeter EVOQUE valve that the Edwards team stitched together to put in his heart.

McCullough, a 76-year-old United States Navy veteran who lives in Huntington Beach, accepted it with pride.

"I was in the Navy for 24 years, and I had a lot of stuff hanging on my uniform," he said. "This is the most important."

McCullough and his wife, Laurie, herself a U.S. Army veteran, took the tour of the Edwards campus in Irvine. Later, they participated in a question-and-answer session for dozens of Edwards employees before doing

**BEN MCCULLOUGH**, right, is greeted on Wednesday by Julianna Heng, one of the team members who constructed the replacement heart valve that saved his life.



a demonstration with the research and development team.

All of those things were scheduled.

What Ben McCullough didn't know was that the two doctors who performed his heart surgery last November at Providence St. Joseph Hospital of Orange, Brian Kolski and Jeffrey Tyler of the

Orange County Heart Institute, would also be there.

He called it a wonderful surprise.

"It completes the journey for me, getting here," he said. "These folks all made it possible. They all collaborated at the same time to

See **Valve**, page A3



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**MATT DWIGHT** of Edwards Lifesciences, left, shows patient Ben McCullough and his wife, Laurie, the EVOQUE replacement heart valve that saved Ben's life.

# Newport officials review progress on housing goals; local coffee brand moving into library

BY ERIC LICAS

The Newport Beach City Council received a progress report on efforts to create more housing in the city, approved plans for a home-brewed coffee brand to expand into the library on Avocado Avenue and signed off on a variety of maintenance projects at their meeting Tuesday.

## STATE HOUSING MANDATE PROGRESS

Permits have been issued to build less than 5% of the 4,845 new units of housing Newport Beach is required to zone for by 2029, according to a progress report presented at the City Council's meeting on Tuesday.

That state-mandated goal was issued by the California Department of Housing and Community Development and based on a nine-year timeline that began in 2021. Projects approved for con-



File photo

**NEWPORT BEACH** City Hall. Permits have been issued the city to build less than 5% of the 4,845 new units of housing Newport Beach is required to zone for by 2029.

struction since then should generate a total of 230 new units, according to reports from city staff. As many as 81 were approved just last year.

At least 2,386 of new residences in Newport Beach must be reserved for households earning low or very low-income. A total of

85 units permitted so far are categorized as such.

Low and very low-income are households are those earning less than 80% and 50% of an area's median wages, respectively. In Newport Beach that roughly equates to less than \$127,000 annually for low income house-

holds and less than \$79,200 for very low-income.

Plans to get significantly more units approved are making their way through the pipeline. City staff identified as many as 11 proposed projects seeking permits. These should generate as many as 2,543

new dwellings. At least 296 would be allocated for low and very low income households.

## KIT COFFEE TO OPEN NEW LOCATION AT LIBRARY

The City Council approved an agreement with a homegrown coffee brand that will take up residence in a concession stand in the Newport Beach Library, at the civic center.

Kit Coffee has its roots in the Newport Mesa area and currently has two locations at 1617 Westcliff Dr. in Newport Beach and 2010 Main St. in Irvine.

It may be at least a month before their new shop opens, owner Eunice Hwang told the Daily Pilot. Once it does, it will be distinct from the other two, with unique menu items catered more towards patrons on the go.

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## LIGHT

Continued from page A1

\$150,000 a year from the operator over a three-year period.

The Protect HB suit notes the project relies on a master environmental impact report for Central Park from 1999. The City Council unanimously approved it on an addendum to that report in February.

However, a letter to the city from the state Department of Fish and Wildlife, sent March 7, raises questions over whether that addendum is sufficient and disputes its findings that the Symphony of Flowers would have either no impact or a less than significant impact in several environmental areas.

For example, the letter states the Department of Fish and Wildlife disagrees that lighting generated from the project will be insignificant, since the addendum doesn't conduct a quantitative lighting analysis to support that determination.

"The addendum states

See **Light**, page A4

## FAIR

Continued from page A1

headlined by singer/songwriter MINMI and taking place on the Hangar concert stage. Admission is included with fair tickets.

Another new feature coming courtesy of Freedom L.A. will be the "release" on April 5 at 8 p.m. of paper lanterns, which will be safely strung with LED lights and kept grounded so people can take them home as keepsakes afterward.

Stephanie Yoshida, a spokeswoman for the event, said such a ceremony is common in many Asian cultures during a special occasion, such as a prayer or send-off intended to honor the dead. But the fair's ceremony will have a slightly different message.

"[Organizers] wanted to have a wish for peace in the world," she said.

Held for the past 15 years, the

## IF YOU GO

OC Japan Fair runs April 4-6 at the Orange County fairgrounds, 88 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa. Hours are from 4 to 11 p.m. Friday, noon to 10 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday. Parking is \$15 and general admission costs from \$15-18. Children 6 and under and seniors over 65 are admitted free. Tickets can be purchased at [oc-japanfair.com/ticket#ticket-info](http://oc-japanfair.com/ticket#ticket-info) or with cash only at the event.

tradition has been gaining in popularity, attracting crowds of more than 40,000 visitors from throughout Orange County and beyond.

Some come to see time-honored traditions, such as taiko drumming, flower arranging and sake (rice wine) tasting, while others are drawn to the occasion's



**VISITORS TO THE** OC Japan Fair, at the county fairgrounds next Friday through Sunday, can enjoy traditional taiko drum performances.

OC Japan Fair

pop cultural elements, like cosplay, anime and street fashion.

"It's about making a connection and being a bridge between Japan and people in America,"

Yoshida said Thursday. "Our main purpose is having people be interested in traveling to Japan. But even if they aren't able to, they can enjoy a piece of it [here]

and feel like they are in a Japanese festival."

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**VALVE**

Continued from page A1

make it possible for me.” McCullough said he'd been having heart issues for more than a decade. A few years ago, he was diagnosed with tricuspid regurgitation. One of his heart valves didn't close tightly enough, allowing blood to flow backward instead of in one direction.

Edwards' EVOQUE transcatheter tricuspid valve replacement system was the first transcatheter therapy to earn U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval in February 2024. However, only three smaller-sized valves — 44, 48 and 52 millimeters — were approved at that time.

For Ben, who liked to live an active lifestyle including running and surfing, this was a race against time. The larger-size device wasn't approved until near the end of October.

“I tried to instill the fact that we're doing everything, and hopefully be patient, because we might be able to get this fixed down the road,” Kolski said. “I think he was patient. As I saw him declining, and the therapy was FDA-approved, he was obviously the first person I thought of. I'd known him for a long time.”

Laurie told the Edwards staff that things had gotten bleak enough to get the family all together for what could be one final time.

“It's tough watching your husband slowly die,” Laurie McCullough said. “It's tough when this vital man who ran the Boston Marathon can't walk from one side of the room to the other. It's really tough when he can't do anything around the house anymore, and it's exhausting taking care of somebody. There would be times I would find this place outside and just sort of cry.”

Ben's minimally invasive surgery was scheduled for Nov. 18, 2024. He said that he had to get his leg to settle down for about five hours immediately after-



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**PATIENT BEN MCCULLOUGH** and his wife Laurie meet and thank the team members at Edwards Lifesciences Corp. who built the EVOQUE replacement heart valve that saved his life, at the offices in Irvine on Wednesday.

ward due to the catheter that was installed, but he otherwise immediately felt better.

“I was still groggy from the anesthesia, but my breathing, I just felt better,” he said. “Dr. Kolski came in the next day and did a scan of me, and he said my overall heart function had already improved.”

“I had a pass on doing chores at home, so I didn't stress my leg. I milked that as long as I could.”

During Wednesday's tour at Edwards, McCullough got to meet the heart valve specialists who actually sewed his EVOQUE valve together. It took a team of 25 people about 20 hours to complete the valve, made of bovine pericardial tissue.

Jennifer Lancaster is director of clinical program management in transcatheter mitral tricuspid therapy (TMTT) at Edwards. Her team did the clinical study that was

approved last year.

Lancaster served as moderator for the McCulloughs' panel discussion.

“It's incredibly powerful for our team to see the human impact of our work, particularly within our own community,” she said. “There are many people out there who have potentially been impacted by our work, and we may pass them in the grocery store and not even know that they've been impacted by our work. But to have Ben here with Laurie, to share their personal story and their experience of how their lives have been changed by something our team did, it makes it easier for us to persist in the face of challenges and to continue the work that we do.”

Laurie McCullough said the gratitude goes both ways. After Christmas, the whole family went on an extended trip to Baja California.

“This was a new man,”



**MCCULLOUGH**, 76, left, meets heart surgeons Brian Kolski and Jeffrey Taylor during a surprise reunion at Edwards Lifesciences Corp. in Irvine on Wednesday.

Laurie McCullough said of the rejuvenated Ben. “This man had color in his face where he was ashen before. This is a man who now had an appetite, where he could barely eat before. He was a joy to be around now. I'll tell you, he wasn't such a joy before.”

Husband and wife look forward to traveling more

this spring, as well as going to Angels baseball games.

It's a big change from the way things were before the procedure, when she had to do things like get smaller bath towels for her husband because it took too much energy for him to use a bigger one.

“He didn't even know I was doing that, but life is

just back to normal stuff now,” Laurie McCullough told the Edwards employees. “That's huge. You don't have to do big stuff. It's just little living things that make a difference. That's what you guys gave us. That is really special.”

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**THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE**

By Stella Zawistowski

**ACROSS**

- 1 Camera supporter
- 7 Mr. \_ (“Sesame Street” grocer)
- 13 Like strenuous exercise
- 15 Say no
- 16 Pandora competitor
- 17 Purposes
- 18 Our star
- 19 Actress Arthur
- 21 Upper undergarment
- 22 Shade trees
- 24 Goatee, for example
- 26 Savagely attack
- 27 Future attorney's exam: Abbr.
- 28 Clarinetist Shaw
- 29 “Anybody \_?”
- 30 Make into law
- 32 Flaky seasoning: 2 wds.
- 34 Calc or algebra, for short
- 36 Some cameras: Abbr.
- 37 Gods and goddesses
- 40 Rational
- 43 Go left or right
- 44 Rain clouds
- 46 Part of an oboe
- 48 Zeus's wife
- 49 Response to a bad pun
- 50 Roof edge
- 51 Journalist \_ B. Wells
- 52 Omelet ingredient
- 53 Tater \_
- 54 Kidnappers' demands
- 58 Diplomatic agreement
- 62 Patron of Paris: 2 wds.
- 63 Scottish girls
- 64 Tried out
- 65 Small sugar

1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11	12
13					14		15					
16							17					
18						19	20				21	
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	30			31		32			33			
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43					44			45		46		47
48					49					50		
51						52					53	
54			55	56	57			58	59	60	61	
62								63				
64										65		

**SUDOKU**

By the Mephram Group

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit [sudoku.org.uk](http://sudoku.org.uk).

					9	2		
	5		3					
6						1		7
7	6		9		1			4
2					7		1	8
5	4						3	6
					3			
		6	7			9		

**For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A3.**

- holder
- 7 Laying bird
- 8 Tenth month: Abbr.
- 9 Spanish cheer
- 10 Mechanical arcade game
- 11 Put faith in
- 12 Secondhand transaction
- 14 \_ Monday (shopping
- occasion)
- 15 Personal journals
- 20 Consumes
- 23 Physical endurance
- 24 Facing the pitcher
- 25 Buys and sells: 2 wds.
- 26 Use a ruler
- 31 Purring pet
- 33 “No seats left”: 2 wds.
- 35 Woman who inherits
- 37 Deadline info: 2 wds.
- 38 Gofer's tasks
- 39 Visible air pollution
- 41 Clean freak
- 42 Big fan
- 43 Craving for water
- 45 Roll with a hole
- 47 Can't stand
- 55 Ready to go
- 56 Three minus two
- 57 \_Atlantic region
- 59 Short rest
- 60 ID-checking agency: Abbr.
- 61 Key used to exit

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**SOFTBALL**

# Newport Harbor routs rival CdM in Battle of the Bay

BY ANDREW TURNER

Newport Harbor seized control against Corona del Mar immediately and continued to add on, the Sailors coming away with a 14-0 win at home on Tuesday to emphatically snap a four-game losing streak.

Ginny Peterson was at the center of it all. The sophomore right-hander recorded eight strikeouts in a five-inning, one-hit shut-out, an abbreviated outing after the mercy rule came into play.

"I think the girls had a lot of fun today," Newport Harbor coach Patrick Murphy said. "I think it started and ended with how Ginny Peterson pitched in the circle today. She was fantastic. We've asked her to kind of up her strike percentage. Today, she threw 64% strikes, threw the first-pitch strike 78% of the time."

Peterson also had two hits and drove in a team-high four runs, as she was the beneficiary of having eight runners on base during her plate appearances.

Newport Harbor (7-6, 1-1) batted around in the first and second innings. The Sailors scored five runs in the first, then had three runners cross the plate in each of the three successive innings.

"It felt pretty good," Peterson said of her outing in the circle. "Honestly, I wasn't expecting the score to be that high. I really made sure to give it my all."

Center fielder Cora Jordan had the lone extra base hit of the contest with a run-scoring double in the third inning, but the Sailors also made their way around the base paths with six stolen bases.

"It was like pumped," Jordan said of the atmosphere in the dugout as the Sailors turned over the lineup again and again. "It's exciting when you're



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**NEWPORT HARBOR** starting pitcher Ginny Peterson throws in the first inning against Corona del Mar during the Battle of the Bay softball game on Tuesday.

**CORONA DEL MAR'S**

Natali Vasquez (8),

left, tries to get to a throw as

Newport Harbor's Kate Shepherd (11)

slides safe into second on Tuesday.



winning and you're doing good."

First baseman Dominique Bettencourt had a perfect day at the plate with three hits, three runs scored, two runs batted in and a walk. Shortstop Sienna Schneider had two hits

and scored twice, and second baseman Lilia Horsley had a pair of singles.

Right fielder Kate Shepherd reached base three times — on a hit by pitch, a walk and an infield single. Catcher Ally Shaw, third baseman Abby George and



**NEWPORT HARBOR'S** Lilia Horsley (28) hits a run-scoring single against Corona del Mar on Tuesday.

left fielder Alexis Vanhorn each had a single, as each starter in the Sailors' lineup

produced at least one hit. Brooklyn Black took over in right field and made a

running catch near the foul line.

"I'm really proud of the girls," Murphy said. "I love being at practice, I love being around them, and I just think we progressively get a little bit better every time out."

The Newport Harbor softball program has had a new playing surface for a little over a year now, and the Sailors have been dominant in home games against their crosstown rivals since the installation of the turf infield.

In the first meeting on the new field last year, Newport Harbor beat the Sea Kings 15-0, which came on the heels of a wild 20-18 win for the Sailors at CdM to kick off the Battle of the Bay series.

First baseman Makenna Smith led off with an opposite-field single to right, but CdM (4-6, 0-2) would not see another batter reach base until Peterson issued back-to-back walks — to center fielder Sierra Zuan and pinch hitter Ashley Jones — with two outs in the fifth.

Right fielder Tatum Reynolds caught a line drive and threw to first to complete a double play at first base in the second inning, the duo jumping for joy after the defensive play.

Corona del Mar coach Dennis Wilbanks called the double play "a bright spot" for his team. Reynolds was making her first career start, he said.

Smith celebrated her teammate's play, and Wilbanks referred to her as a "vocal leader" for the Sea Kings.

"She brings that spark to the girls and [shows] what's expected to play at another level," Wilbanks added. "As a coaching staff, we enjoy that."

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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.