

Daily Pilot

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2022 /// dailypilot.com

H.B. murder trial winds down

Defendant claims he acted in self-defense, but prosecutors say he planned the killing to escape a \$60,000 debt.

BY ERIC LICAS

Attorneys for a man accused of shooting and killing a bookie he worked for as a middleman three years ago in Huntington Beach told jurors during closing statements Wednesday that he acted in self-defense, but prosecutors alleged he planned the homicide to escape a \$60,000 debt.

The defendant, Dennis Tri Gia Dang, 32, of Westminster, was recorded by multiple surveillance cameras as he entered a silver Escalade belonging to the victim, 48-year-old Linh Ho of Fountain Valley, in the parking lot of a strip mall near Warner Avenue and Magnolia Street on Oct. 20, 2019. Dang was seen running from the SUV moments later, shortly before Ho stumbled out of the passenger side, then collapsed on a patch of grass.

Dang told investigators he worked as a middleman in a sports betting operation managed by Ho, and referred to the victim as an "O.G.," short for "original gangster," in a recorded statement following his arrest. The gamblers the defendant vouched for had racked up a debt of roughly \$60,000, and the victim made it Dang's responsibility to come up with the money.

The defendant was receiving threats from the victim in the weeks leading up to the shooting, leaving him visibly distraught, his best friend, Casey Ngo, 34, of Midway City, said during testimony.

See **Trial**, page A5

C.M. to hire 11 full-time custody officers

The city jail was down to two officers after a contractor failed to pay its workers, prompting mass resignation.

BY SARA CARDINE

Rather than close the city jail due to a lack of staffing, Costa Mesa officials have agreed to fund 11 full-time custody officer positions, a move that will incur initial and long-term costs but ensure an essential city service continues.

City Council members Tuesday unanimously voted to approve the hiring of new personnel, after a long-standing contract with a third-party company to provide basic jail services was terminated in May due to a "mass resignation" that left only two officers on the job.

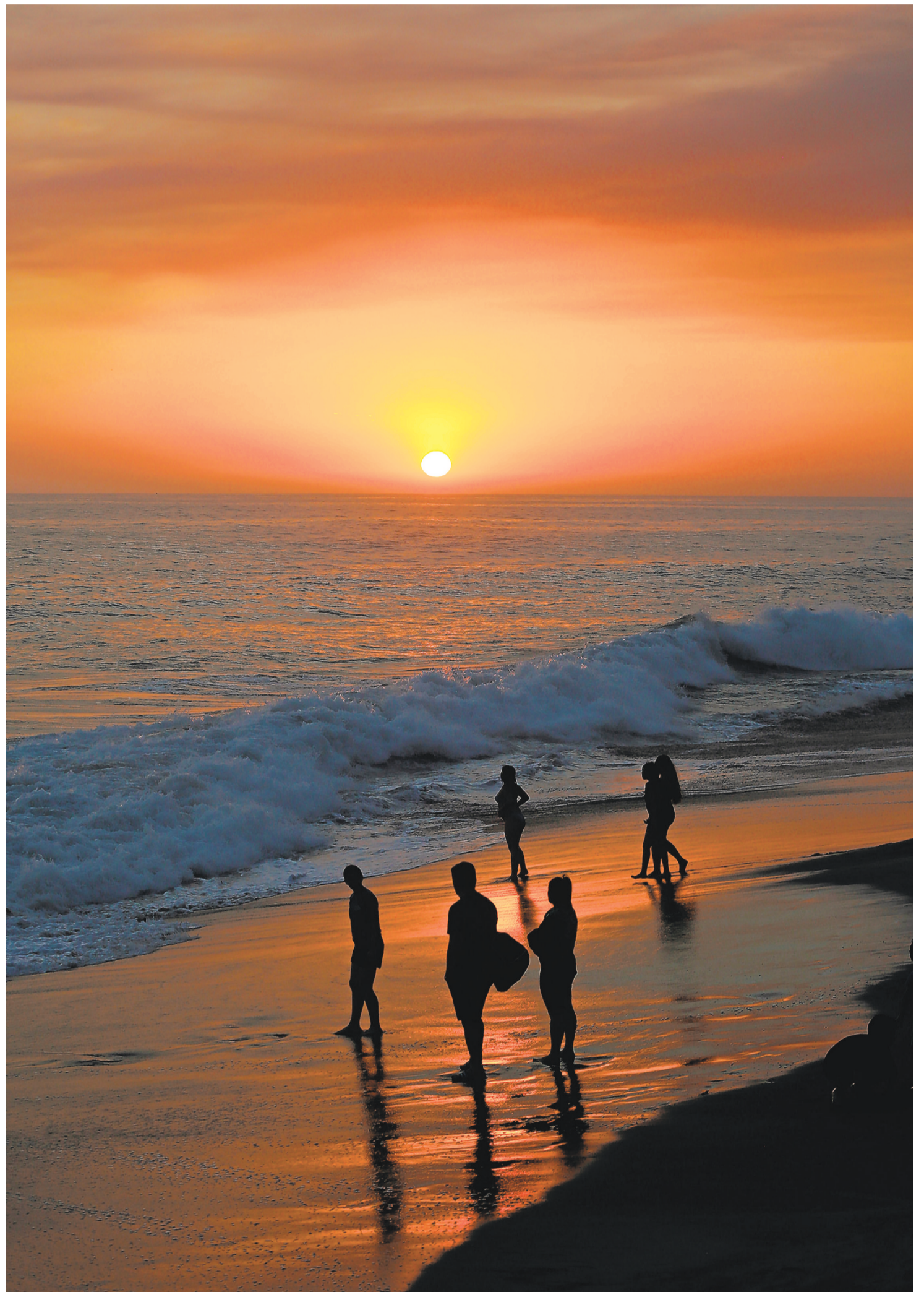
The annual cost for the new hires is estimated at \$1.12 million — or \$175,215 beyond what the city had already agreed to pay contractor Allied Universal in the current budget cycle. The difference will be allocated from the city's general fund.

"This really is an issue less about a contract versus non-contract," Costa Mesa Police Chief Ron Lawrence told the City Council Tuesday. "It's more of an issue of do we have a jail, or do we not have a jail?"

Between January and July, the

See **Jail**, page A2

The sun sets on a hot day



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

BEACHGOERS ENJOY the cool shore break at Mountain Street in Laguna Beach as light from a golden sunset reflects off the sand, and smoke from the Fairview fire lingers in the sky. Temperatures are expected to begin to cool as early as Friday, with rain forecast over the weekend.

F.V. ends local emergency declaration for COVID-19

BY ANDREW TURNER

The Fountain Valley City Council this week terminated the declaration of a local emergency that was put into effect during the early days of the pandemic.

A staff report acknowledged COVID-19 as an ongoing threat to the public, but it cited medical advances in stating the city no longer needs to exercise emergency authority to address the issue.

The council declared a local emergency concerning the pandemic on March 17, 2020, giving the city increased ability to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 through a variety of actions, including authorization for outdoor dining and activities for local businesses and to provide testing and vaccination sites to combat the virus.

Orange County residents have experienced a cumulative 661,016 reported coronavirus infections so far, according to data provided by the Orange County Health Care Agency Tuesday. The agency reported 202 patients hospitalized earlier this week with COVID-19, with 30 being treated in intensive care units.

Fountain Valley, which in 2021 had an estimated population of 56,495, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, has experienced 10,930 confirmed COVID-19 cases since the pandemic began.

GUIDELINES UPDATE FOR F.V. DAY-CARE FACILITIES

Also at its meeting Tuesday, the City Council approved amendments to the municipal



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

FOUNTAIN VALLEY has terminated its declaration of a local emergency related to COVID-19. Above, medical assistants screen patients at a COVID-19 mobile testing site in December 2020.

code that bring the city into compliance with state law as it relates to family day-care homes.

Prior to the passage of State Senate Bill 234 — the "Keeping Kids Close to Home Act" — on Sept. 5, 2019, a distinction had existed between small family day-care homes (up to eight children) and large family day-care homes (up to 14 children).

The legislation eliminated the distinction

between small and large family day-care centers. Therefore, those with up to 14 children are allowed to operate within the city's residential zones.

Fountain Valley had previously regulated large family day-care homes by requiring permits and subjecting them to rules regarding hours of operation, drop-off and

See **COVID-19**, page A5

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THU, SEP 8
THE SAMPLES



TUE, SEP 13
COREY FELDMAN

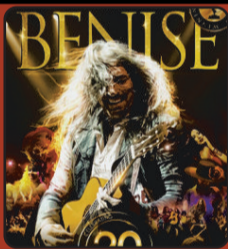


THU, SEP 15
COCO MONTOYA



SAT, SEP 17
JOHN MARK MCMILLAN

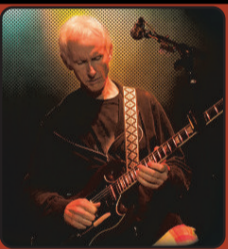
- 9/8 THE SAMPLES
- 9/9 YYNOT (RUSH TRIBUTE)
- 9/10 IDOL X / HEART OF BLONDE / CONTENDERS (BACK TO THE 80s!)
- 9/13 COREY FELDMAN
- 9/15 COCO MONTOYA
- 9/17 JOHN MARK MCMILLAN
- 9/18 BENISE "SPANISH NIGHTS"
- 9/21 ERIC GALES
- 9/23 ROBBY KRIEGER OF THE DOORS
- 9/24 ROBERT JON & THE WRECK
- 9/25 CHRISTOPHER CROSS
- 9/27 MICHAEL SCHENKER / ERIC MARTIN OF MR. BIG
- 9/28 SAMANTHA FISH
- 9/30 LEONID & FRIENDS (CHICAGO TRIBUTE)
- 10/1 TOM SANDOVAL & THE MOST EXTRAS FROM VANDERPUMP RULES
- 10/2 PLAIN WHITE T'S
- 10/6 THE SPINNERS
- 10/7 ACCEPT w/NARCOTIC WASTELAND
- 10/8 CASH'D OUT (JOHNNY CASH TRIBUTE)
- 10/12 LEONID & FRIENDS (CHICAGO TRIBUTE)
- 10/14 BILLY VERA & THE BEATERS
- 10/15 MICK ADAMS & THE STONES
- 10/16 PETTY CASH (JOHNNY CASH & TOM PETTY TRIBUTE)
- 10/19 TODD SNIDER / RYAN MONTBLEAU
- 10/20 SOPHIE B HAWKINS
- 10/21 OINGO BOINGO FORMER MEMBERS
- 10/22 OINGO BOINGO FORMER MEMBERS
- 10/23 JOURNEYMAN (ERIC CLAPTON TRIBUTE)
- 10/27 CANDLEBOX
- 10/28 BUCKCHERRY
- 10/29 LARRY CARLTON (FAREWELL WORLD TOUR 2022-2023)
- 11/1 DAVE MASON - 2022 WORLD IN CHANGES TOUR
- 11/4 YACHTLEY CRUE (YACHT ROCK TRIBUTE)
- 11/5 PIANO MEN (BILLY JOEL AND ELTON JOHN TRIBUTE)
- 11/9 BIG HEAD TODD & THE MONSTERS
- 11/10 MARC BROUSSARD
- 11/11 KIDS OF CHARLEMAGNE (STEELY DAN TRIBUTE)
- 11/12 TYRONE WELLS
- 11/17 DAVE ALVIN & JIMMIE DALE GILMORE AND THE GUILTY ONES
- 11/18 FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS
- 11/19 BEATLES VS STONES - A MUSICAL SHOWDOWN
- 11/20 O-TOWN



SUN, SEP 18
BENISE



WED, SEP 21
ERIC GALES



FRI, SEP 23
ROBBY KRIEGER



SUN, OCT 2
PLAIN WHITE T'S

- 11/23 HEARTBEAT CITY (CARS TRIBUTE)
- 11/25 LEE ROCKER OF THE STRAY CATS
- 12/2 WHICH ONE'S PINK? (PINK FLOYD TRIBUTE)
- 12/3 WHICH ONE'S PINK? (PINK FLOYD TRIBUTE)
- 12/4 FEE WAYBILL w/SPECIAL GUESTS
- 12/8 THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY
- 12/10 FLOCK OF SEAGULLS
- 12/11 PROGJECT 'THE ULTIMATE PROG ROCK EXPERIENCE'
- 12/13 SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS
- 12/14 TOMMY EMMANUEL w/MIKE DAWES
- 12/15 TOMMY EMMANUEL w/MIKE DAWES
- 12/16 GARY HOEY'S ROCKIN' XMAS SHOW
- 12/17 WALTER TROUT
- 12/18 WALTER TROUT
- 12/23 AMBROSIA A VERY SPECIAL HOLIDAY SHOW
- 12/30 L.A. GUNS
- 12/31 THE ENGLISH BEAT
- 1/1 THE ENGLISH BEAT
- 1/10 JAZZ IS DEAD 25TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR
- 1/14 THE PETTY BREAKERS (TOM PETTY TRIBUTE)
- 1/21 RONDSTADT REVIVAL (LINDA RONDSTADT TRIBUTE)
- 2/3 DESPERADO (EAGLES TRIBUTE)
- 2/4 DESPERADO (EAGLES TRIBUTE)
- 2/10 ARETHA STARRING CHARITY LOCKHART
- 2/11 OTTMAR LIEBERT & LUNA NEGRA
- 2/12 JESSE COLIN YOUNG
- 2/18 JOURNEY USA (JOURNEY TRIBUTE)
- 2/25 DENNIS TUFANO / CANNIBAL AND THE HEADHUNTERS
- 3/19 GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA



THU, OCT 6
THE SPINNERS



FRI, OCT 7
ACCEPT



WED, OCT 19
TODD SNIDER



THU, OCT 20
SOPHIE B. HAWKINS

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THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

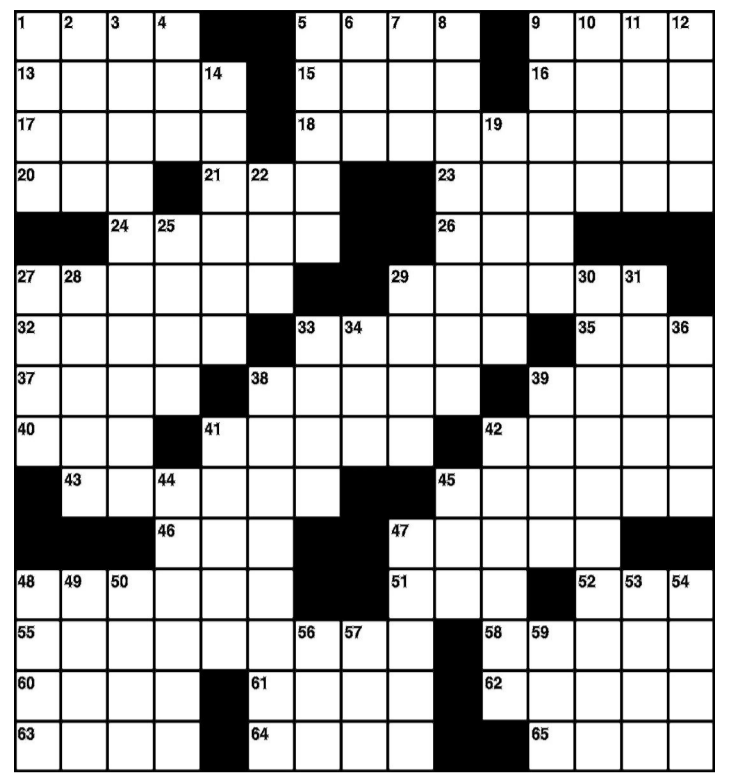
By Jacqueline E. Mathews

ACROSS

- 1 _ canal; dental procedure
- 5 Applaud
- 9 Up in _; fuming
- 13 First phase
- 15 Residence
- 16 Ski resort west of Denver
- 17 Weasel's relative
- 18 In _; living
- 20 In favor of
- 21 Flock femme
- 23 Like sunglasses
- 24 Actor Ed
- 26 _ McMuffin; breakfast order
- 27 1950s or 1960s, e.g.
- 29 Like a slimeball
- 32 Enlighten
- 33 Transparent
- 35 Propel a boat
- 37 Cutting tool
- 38 Recipe verb
- 39 Ice cream concoction
- 40 "Let sleeping dogs _"
- 41 Explosion
- 42 Frolicsome leap
- 43 Respect highly
- 45 In an impartial way
- 46 "Morning _ Broken"
- 47 _ Gras
- 48 Rest
- 51 Hubbub
- 52 Koch & Sheeran
- 55 Italian & Ranch
- 58 Ease; slacken
- 60 Urgent
- 61 Of ships & seamen: abbr.
- 62 Skier's surface
- 63 Weeps
- 64 Health clubs
- 65 Actor Gwynne

DOWN

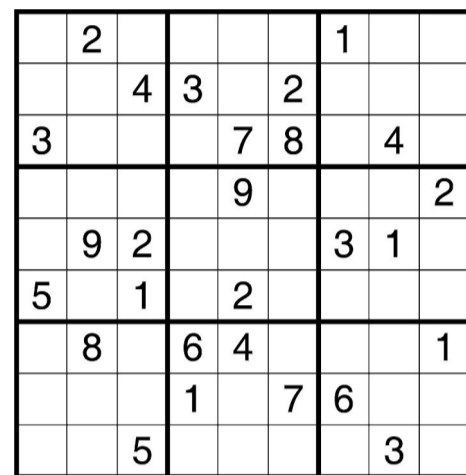
- 1 Santa's landing place
- 2 "_ bigger and better things!"



SUDOKU

By The Mephram Group

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



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

- 3 Excludes from a group
- 4 Brian of "Chicago Med"
- 5 _ up; be happy again
- 6 Smoked salmon
- 7 Parisian pal
- 8 Bugged
- 9 Get even for
- 10 Carry on
- 11 Lab animals
- 12 Iditarod vehicle
- 14 Fashionable
- 19 Wild feline
- 22 Teeny
- 25 Not in harm's way

- 27 Good buy
- 28 Man's nickname
- 29 Gumball price, back in the day
- 30 Store owner
- 31 Alpine goatherd's song
- 33 Shut noisily
- 34 "_ Just Not That Into You"; '09 film
- 36 Cautious
- 38 Godsend
- 39 Uttered
- 41 NFL team
- 42 Christmas songs
- 44 Grad school papers
- 45 Passing craze
- 47 Ship poles
- 48 Betting numbers
- 49 Small musical group
- 50 Sage or thyme
- 53 Hoodwink
- 54 Earned a ticket
- 56 Thumbs-down vote
- 57 Black Jack, for one
- 59 North Pole toy maker

Tribune Media Services

Man sentenced in fatal Costa Mesa stabbing

BY CITY NEWS SERVICE

A 26-year-old man, who was acquitted of a murder in Anaheim in 2018, pleaded guilty and was immediately sentenced to 14 years in prison Tuesday for a deadly stabbing in Costa Mesa.

Jasper Bear Belknap pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter and admitted sentencing enhancements for the personal use of a deadly weapon and committing offenses while out on bail.

Belknap pleaded guilty to killing 23-year-old Austin D. Robinson of Costa Mesa on Feb. 12, 2018. That conflict occurred about three months after his acquittal in a dragging death in Anaheim.

As part of the plea bargain struck Tuesday with prosecutors, Belknap also resolved pending cases against him of burglary,

identity theft and possession of drugs, his attorney, Rob Harley, said.

Belknap was given credit for 1,905 days in custody, Harley said.

"We had a really good self-defense case," Harley told City News Service.

However, Belknap did not want to gamble on a murder trial because he would have faced a 28 years to life sentence if convicted, Harley said.

Robinson was dealing drugs in Costa Mesa when he grew angry and accused a group of people with Belknap of having stolen money from him, Harley said.

Belknap went back to Robinson to buy more drugs, "And he turned around and that's when the knife came out and he accused [Belknap] of being part of the group that stole money from him," Harley said.

Belknap turned the knife back at the victim

and it went into Robinson's chest, puncturing his lung, Harley said.

When Belknap ran away the victim was still standing, but he later collapsed, Harley said.

Robinson called 911 after he was stabbed, and Costa Mesa police responded at 2:41 a.m. to the 2900 block of Grace Lane, according to prosecutors. The victim was rushed to a hospital where he was pronounced dead hours later.

Belknap was acquitted on Nov. 7, 2017, of the dragging death of 45-year-old Felipe Viera Lugo. Co-defendant Diana Carolina Lopez pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter in the June 16, 2015, botched robbery death and was sentenced to 11 years in prison.

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JAIL

Continued from page A1

department booked some 2,900 arrestees into the city jail, averaging 414 bookings per month. That activity nearly came crashing to a halt in March, when several Allied Universal employees quit, claiming in exit interviews the third-party company had stopped paying them.

An earlier request to seek services from another provider was scuttled when Allied Universal, which acquired the initial contracting company G4S Secure Solutions in 2021, was the sole firm to respond with an offer.

Department leaders scrambled to staff the jail, locating two park rangers who'd been jail trained and securing additional temporary officers. Offi-

cials examined possibly contracting with the city of Huntington Beach for services or closing Costa Mesa's jail altogether and having officers transport arrestees to county facilities.

"[That] would take our police officers off the street in an untimely manner and really diminish services to our patrol," Lawrence said.

Basic jail services in Costa Mesa had been provided on a contract basis since 2013, when a former conservative-majority council determined cutting city staff — and the costly benefits and pensions they engender — could cut costs by as much as 45%.

Costa Mesa resident Ralph Taboada, who sits on the city's Finance and Pension Advisory Committee, urged officials to take a deeper dive into the

potential long-term costs of adding people to the city's payroll.

"What's the cost of these 11 employees for the next five years?" Taboada posed. "There needs to be a more diligent financial analysis, so you guys can make the most informed decision available to you."

But a differently minded Mayor John Stephens explained Tuesday contracting public services to a for-profit provider left the city in a compromised position.

"To go with contractors for an essential service function creates a vulnerability, particularly when there's only one contractor you can go with," he said. "There's not a cheaper option, and there's not a better option — this is an easy decision."

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RIP CURL WORLD SURF LEAGUE FINALS

H.B. surf star eyeing world title

BY JOE HAAKENSON

SAN CLEMENTE — Kanoa Igarashi couldn't have been much older than 5 years old when he was asked by a television news reporter what his goal in surfing was.

"World champion," he said. Now, nearly 20 years later, a world championship is within reach for the Huntington Beach local.

The Rip Curl World Surf League Finals will be held in the next week or so depending on conditions — most likely this Friday — at Lower Trestles in San Clemente. Igarashi is one of five men and five women who will compete for surfing's ultimate prize.

While winning a surfing contest certainly is something Igarashi is capable of, he has an uphill battle to climb because of the format which was implemented by the WSL last year.

The top five ranked surfers in both the men's and women's divisions are determined by the 10 Championship Tour contests over the past year. The No. 1-ranked surfers — Filipe Toledo of Brazil and Carissa Moore of Hawaii — receive automatic bids into the finals in a best-of-three heats matchup.

As the No. 5 seed, Igarashi will first have to beat the No. 4 seed — Brazil's Italo Ferreira, the 2019 world champion and the 2020 Olympic gold medalist.

If Igarashi wins that heat, he gets No. 3-seed Ethan Ewing of Australia. A win there puts him up against No. 2-seed Jack Robinson of Australia. And a win there puts him into the best-of-three matchup with Toledo, who will be rested and ready.

But instead of giving the "one wave at a time" cliché response, Igarashi, 24, is honest when asked



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S competitors Johanne Defay, Jack Robinson, Italo Ferreira, Tatiana Weston-Webb, and Carissa Moore, kneeling, and Stephanie Gilmore, Kanoa Igarashi, Brisa Hennessy, Ethan Ewing, and Filipe Toledo, standing, hold their official jerseys for the World Surf League Finals.

about the task in front of him.

"It's just overwhelming, there's no running away from it," he said. "You literally have the best surfers in the world right in front of you. It's not just one time, not two, it's three, four, five, I don't even know how many heats it is.

"Right away, right off the bat I have to wake up and go up against a world champion [Fer-

reira]. That describes my day, and I just want to make sure I wake up and am ready to surf a lot of heats but at the same time, I really have to put everything I have into the first heat."

Igarashi and Ferreira have a history, most notably in the Olympic gold medal heat last year in Japan when Ferreira came out on top and Igarashi went home with sil-

ver.

"If someone were to ask me who I'd want to compete against here at Trestles, I would say the first guy I want to surf against is Italo," Igarashi said.

Against Ferreira, and if he makes it that far, against Toledo, Igarashi would be surfing against charter members of the "Brazilian Storm," the Brazilian surfers who

have dominated the men's division in recent years and have made Lower Trestles their home away from home.

Toledo and other Brazilians live in San Clemente now. But Igarashi isn't buying any talk of a "home wave advantage."

"To be honest, I think the per-

See *Surf*, page A4



KATRINA FOLEY
ORANGE COUNTY SUPERVISOR

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HIGH SCHOOL ROUNDUP

Costa Mesa girls' golf pulls out league win over Ocean View

The Costa Mesa girls' golf team pulled out a nailbiter against Ocean View on Tuesday afternoon, as the visiting Mustangs defeated the Seahawks 226-227 in an Orange Coast League match at David L. Baker Golf Course.

Junior Sydney Ngo earned medalist honors for Costa Mesa (2-1, 2-1 in the Orange Coast League), carding a one-over-par 32 on the front nine.

Ocean View dropped to 1-2 overall and in league play.

Orange Lutheran 181, Edison 213: After sweeping a home-and-home set with Brea Olinda last week, the Chargers fell to the Lancers on Tuesday in a nonleague match at Black Gold Golf Club.

Edison is now 3-2 overall. **Santa Margarita 189, Huntington Beach 197:** The Oilers' Chloe Griffith and the Eagles' Ryan Bullock shared medalist honors with rounds of one-under-par 35 on Tuesday in the nonleague match at the Huntington Club.

Huntington Beach took its first loss of the season, dropping to 3-1 overall.

Claremont Webb 189, Pacifica Christian Orange County 227: The Tritons fell to 2-3 overall following



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

COSTA MESA'S Sydney Ngo, shown against Estancia on Sept. 29, 2021, led the Mustangs to a win over Ocean View on Tuesday in an Orange Coast League match.

Tuesday's defeat in a San Joaquin League opener at Newport Beach Golf Course.

GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

Edison 3, San Clemente 1: Summer Witherby paced the Chargers with 17 kills in their 20-25, 25-22, 25-22, 25-17 win over the Tritons on Tuesday in a nonleague match at home.

Edison (8-10) remains home to take on Laguna Beach in a Sunset Conference crossover match on Thursday, before the Chargers host the Dave Mohs Tournament on Friday and Saturday.

St. Margaret's 3, Estancia 0: The Tartans handed the Eagles their second straight loss on Tuesday in a non-league match at St. Margaret's Episcopal School.

Estancia (8-2, 1-1) plays host to Costa Mesa in the first meeting of the Battle for the Bell on Thursday.

Westminster 3, Fountain Valley 2: The visiting Barons rallied from two sets down, but the Lions took the decisive fifth set and the nonleague match by a score of 25-20, 25-23, 16-25, 16-25, 15-10 on Tuesday.

Fountain Valley (7-5) plays host to Los Alamitos on Thursday in a Sunset

Conference crossover match.

Laguna Beach 3, Aliso Niguel 2: Eva Travis had 36 kills to lead the Breakers past her former team by a count of 17-25, 25-19, 18-25, 25-21, 18-16 on Tuesday in a nonleague match at Laguna Beach High.

Travis authored 11 kills in the fifth set alone for Laguna Beach (8-5). Kyra Zaengle also had 12 kills for the Breakers. Sara Johnson had five total blocks, and Grace Christian handed out 44 assists.

Ocean View 3, Westminster La Quinta 0: The Seahawks had 13 service aces as a team in Tuesday's sweep of the Aztecs in a nonleague match on the road.

Ocean View (3-3) takes on Portola at home on Thursday.

Pacifica Christian Orange County 3, Upland Western Christian 0: Sophomore opposite Chara Wondercheck had eight kills, six digs and four service aces to lead the Tritons to a 25-23, 25-16, 25-23 straight-sets win on Tuesday in a San Joaquin League match at home.

Senior outside hitter Ava Loritz contributed five kills and five aces for Pacifica Christian (6-2), which plays

host to Tarbut V'Torah on Thursday at 4 p.m.

Freshman setter Addie Roberson added five aces for the Tritons, and sophomore libero Charlotte Carlson also had six digs and three aces.

GIRLS' TENNIS

Corona del Mar 12, University 6: Sophia Andrei-Birca and Polina Briggs each won twice in singles for the Tritons in Tuesday's nonleague match at University High.

Lauren Jones and Cate Montgomery swept in doubles for CdM (3-0), which hosts Portola in a challenging match Wednesday at 3 p.m.

Fountain Valley 14, Trabuco Hills 4: The Barons ran their record to 3-0 on the season with a nonleague win on Tuesday at home.

Fountain Valley travels to take on Mater Dei on Thursday.

Serra 14, Huntington Beach 4: The visiting Lions took down the Oilers on Tuesday in a nonleague match, evening Huntington Beach's record at 1-1.

Laguna Beach 11, San Clemente 7: The Breakers emerged victorious in their season-opening match against the Tritons on Tues-

day at Laguna Beach High.

Laguna Beach plays host to Aliso Niguel on Thursday in a nonleague match.

Palos Verdes 14, Marina 4: The Vikings are 2-3 on the season following Tuesday's nonleague defeat at home.

Marina welcomes Oxford Academy to its courts on Thursday.

Western 13, Ocean View 5: The visiting Pioneers beat the Seahawks in Tuesday's nonleague match.

Ocean View (0-2) will look to break into the win column at home against Costa Mesa on Thursday.

Sage Hill 12, Newport Harbor 6: The Lightning doubled up the Sailors on Tuesday in a nonleague match at Newport Harbor High.

Sage Hill improved to 5-0 overall, while Newport Harbor (3-1) suffered its first loss of the season.

BOYS' WATER POLO

Sage Hill 16, Los Amigos 5: The Lightning earned a second straight blowout victory to open the season on Tuesday in a nonleague match at home.

Sage Hill (2-0) has outscored its opponents — Garden Grove and Los Amigos — by a count of 34-9.

— From staff reports

FOOTBALL

Continued from page A4

session for Laguna Beach (1-2), the Breakers went for it all on a fourth-down play in their own territory, and Jackson Rodriguez made the catch and took it in for a 60-yard touchdown.

Rodriguez made 10 receptions for 157 yards and three touchdowns, making several plays when his team most needed them. He made an over-the-shoulder grab to put the Breakers on the scoreboard with 10 sec-

onds left in the first half.

Early in the fourth quarter, Rodriguez took a hit that looked like it might knock him out of the game. Rodriguez returned to throw a downfield block for Ryner Swanson on a shallow crossing route that went for 21 yards, and then Das put a short pass on him for his third score of the night.

"I had bruised my rib two weeks ago in our game in Idaho, and [Northwood's] safety ... had come in and hit me with the crown of his helmet

right in that rib," Rodriguez said. "I was just worried that it was broken and I'd punctured my lung because I couldn't breathe.

"Our trainer checked me out ... and said I was all good, so I was like, 'All right. I got to get back out there. I got to keep playing. I got to finish the game.'"

Laguna Beach did not show much balance offensively, but Rogers turned his 10 carries into 122 yards. He took the first play from scrimmage coming out of halftime for a 65-yard rushing touchdown.

Northwood's lead was down to 17-14 at that point.

The Breakers were able to make big gains in the running game despite it accounting for a low percentage of the team's offensive plays. Shanahan likened it to pitching backwards in baseball.

"You're just trying to throw that off-speed pitch at the right time and hope it pops," Shanahan said. "It popped twice big for Nick. Then on the final play, when he was physical and finished the run and got the first down to end it, it

was awesome."

Rogers' dash down the left end for a 46-yard touchdown with 3:54 remaining gave Laguna Beach its first lead of the night — the only one the Breakers needed.

"Coach just said, 'You got to keep fighting,'" Rogers said. "They wanted it more in the first half. We had to want it more in the second half. We had to keep fighting. Even though we were down by a bit, we had to clutch up."

Gavin Zaengle had an interception on defense to

start the fourth quarter for Laguna Beach, which travels to take on Capistrano Valley Christian (2-0) on Sept. 9.

Eugene Miyata threw three touchdowns for Northwood (2-1), the reigning CIF Division 11 champions. Ahmad Kazi, Andrew Penrod and Joseph Harper were on the receiving end of those scores.

Ryan Kesler also had two interceptions defensively for the Timberwolves.

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