

## Collectible pieces of city heritage

The Yorba Linda Street Legacy program gives residents a chance to own a local street sign while offsetting the cost of replacing them.

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

If you have always wanted to own a piece of Yorba Linda history, consider this a sign. The Yorba Linda Street Legacy program is giving local residents the chance to own a piece of the city's heritage by purchasing a decommissioned street name sign.

"We do a sign refresh every seven years and the timeline corresponds with our street paving program, so when we repave the streets we also replace the signs," said Geoff Spencer, principal management analyst for the city.

The city replaces the signs by geographic zones, completing one zone each year as a part of the seven-year cycle. The decommissioned signs have typically been sent to a recycling center from which the city receives roughly five cents per sign. But when they were being replaced last year, a resident reached out to a city official asking if he could buy one of them. That sparked an idea.

"It was a wake-up call that got us interested in figuring out how we can give back to the community and also let people connect with the history of the streets that they have lived on," Spencer said.

The city launched the Yorba Linda Street

See *Heritage*, page A10



James Carbone

**GEOFF SPENCER**, principal management analyst with the city of Yorba Linda, holds a Eureka Avenue street sign at the municipality's maintenance yard. The city is selling used street signs for \$30 each.



## Now open in Irvine

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James Carbone

**CAROL GRAVES**, a Newport Beach resident and former Equestrian Center boarder, visits one of the only remaining horses at the O.C. fairgrounds in Costa Mesa Thursday. The stable that once held up to 100 equines now holds only six.

## Some skeptical as fairgrounds officials vow a return of horses

BY SARA CARDINE

Horses figure prominently in marketing for the Ranch Community Center — the new brand and concept for the O.C. fairgrounds' Equestrian Center — but appear to be missing from the complex's strategic plan and the grounds where they used to flourish.

A billboard for the nascent center, erected on the northwest corner of the Costa Mesa property, depicts a trio of stabled horses, while a photo gallery on the Ranch's website shows a facility bustling with people, resident animals and activity.

However, the same 7-acre site that once teemed with up to 100 equines and their owners, many of them trainers who offered paid lessons as well as workshops, therapy sessions and rides for the broader community, now sits largely vacant as sandy arenas remain untrod.

Fair spokeswoman Terry Moore confirmed Thursday that five individuals are boarding six horses in five stalls. No trainers are currently working at the site.

The vacancy follows a bitter legal dispute between fairgrounds operators and equestrians over the terms, tenancy and manage-

ment of the center in recent years and comes as Orange County Fair & Event Center officials build out the space with more public-facing programs under the newly re-branded Ranch concept.

But while the mainstay of equestrian tenants have left the building, and as lawsuits continue to wend their way through the courts, those who want to see horses have a strong presence at the fairgrounds continue to make their voices heard.

Center officials on Thursday considered public feedback sub-

See *Horses*, page A4

## Contractor for taxpayer-funded projects faces wage theft allegations

BY ERIC LICAS

The owner and foreman of a Fullerton-based construction company that took on taxpayer-funded jobs in Orange, Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties face felony allegations of wage theft and fraud.

The owner of Towo Enterprises Inc., Yun Su Chung, and the company's foreman, Jae Weon Kim face allegations of conspiracy and lying to discourage an injured worker from receiving benefits. The owner of the company has also been charged with 14 additional felony counts, including intent to evade taxes and falsifying official documents.

They pleaded not guilty in December and were released from custody after posting bail. Their

next court date is set for April 23, according to online records.

Their charges were sparked by an investigation by the non-profit Center for Contract Compliance that began over three years ago, representatives for the organization said Wednesday in a news release.

"The offense was not discovered earlier because Yun Su Chung, the owner of Towo Enterprises, Inc. and his superintendent, Jae W. Kim directed employees to lie to compliance inspectors at job sites," attorneys with the Orange County district attorney's office wrote in a criminal complaint filed Dec. 12.

At least five people working for Towo Enterprise Inc. came to

See *Contractor*, page A2



**A CLIMATE PROTEST** in Irvine in 2019. Irvine City Council's climate action plan is still an unapproved draft after Tuesday's meeting.

File Photo

## Irvine delays adopting climate plan on achieving carbon neutrality by 2040

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

On Tuesday, Irvine City Council dusted off its draft Climate Action and Adaptation Plan draft at cutting greenhouse gas emissions and discussed it for the first time in nine months.

Councilwoman Kathleen

Treseder requested the update from city staff and sought a vote to approve it.

"If we really want Irvine to be the greenest city, this is the foundational document to do that," she said during the council meeting. "We can't have it both ways. We can't say...we want Irvine to

be the greenest city, we emphasize the environment, and then keep delaying the CAAP"

Back in 2021, Irvine became the first city in Orange County to set a carbon neutral goal. The following year, it earned the distinc-

See *Climate*, page A2

# Anaheim backs state bill on Middle Eastern and North African data inclusion

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

The Anaheim City Council lent its full support to a legislative effort to properly categorize Middle Eastern and North African people when government agencies collect demographic data.

Introduced by Democratic Assemblyman John Harabedian, whose 41st Assembly District encompasses Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties, the MENA Inclusion Act would require state and local agencies to include separate categories for major Middle Eastern and North African groups for reports published in 2027 and after.

Anaheim Councilman Carlos Leon, whose district includes the officially designated Little Arabia enclave, requested a discussion and vote on a resolution supporting the bill, also known as Assembly Bill 91, during the March 25 council meeting.

"For too long, Middle Eastern and North African communities have been statistically invisible in demographic data, grouped under categories that fail to reflect their distinct cultural and socio-economic experiences," Leon said.

The proposed resolution stated that Anaheim is home to more than 20,000 people who identify as Middle Eastern and North African.

Leon pointed to Little Arabia, which was designated in 2022 and now has freeway signs, in stating that Anaheim has set the standard for recognition.

"It is time for California to follow suit," he added.

According to U.S. Census Bureau estimates in 2020, the state is home to an estimated 740,000 people who identify as Middle Eastern and North African, the largest such population in the nation.

For years, those commu-

nities have been grouped as "white" on census and other forms, which has prompted efforts to more accurately collect critical demographic data.

But a push to pass the bill last year died when budgetary concerns led to its suspension.

The greater Los Angeles area chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, which is headquartered in Anaheim, applauded the bill's revival this year.

"For too long, the Middle Eastern North African community in California has been underrepresented and deprived of resources due to a lack of accurate data collection," Basha Jamil, CAIR-LA's policy manager, said in a statement. "As the largest civil rights organization representing American Muslims and over 1 million California Muslims, CAIR-CA has firsthand seen the effects of this issue on the



**TWO MEN** converse in front of a Little Arabia business in Anaheim. The city voted to back the MENA Inclusion Act.

Allen J. Schaben  
Los Angeles Times

community across all spheres of life — be it in schools, social services, or courtrooms."

CAIR is one of several organizations advocating for the bill's passage as part of a MENA civil rights coalition that includes locally-based groups like the Arab American Civic Council and Access California Services.

The bill's passage could have local impacts for Little Arabia.

"It opens doors to small

business loans, technical assistance and equitable development planning," Amin Nash, policy and advocacy coordinator with the Arab American Civic Council, told council members.

Mayor Ashleigh Aitken and Leon sent individual letters of support for the bill.

Council members made one small revision to their own resolution to read that Anaheim will "recognize," as opposed to "support,"

the culture and contributions of its own MENA community.

With that amendment, the council unanimously approved the resolution backing the MENA Inclusion Act, which will be shared with Anaheim's state representatives, including state Sen. Tom Umberg, who is one of the bill's cosponsors.

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## CONTRACTOR

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the Center for Contract Compliance in October 2021. They reported that the company was providing less than the prevailing wage mandated by state law. One said they had been injured on the job but did not get worker's compensation pay.

Prosecutors claim Chung tried to conceal wage theft and reduce his premiums by providing inaccurate information to his worker's compensation insurance providers. The costs saved by alleg-

edly doing so would have given his company an unfair advantage over other contractors competing for publicly funded jobs.

"Wage theft and insurance fraud not only affect workers but also have a direct impact on a public agency's ability to deliver high-quality projects on time and within budget," Center for Contract Compliance Executive Director Branden Lopez told the Daily Pilot in an email Friday. "...When contractors underpay employees—pocketing funds meant for their wages—the quality of work suffers."

Towo Enterprises Inc. did work

that was paid for by taxpayers in numerous cities across Southern California between April 2019 and November 2022, according to court documents. Some of their projects included the remodeling of the amphitheater at the Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve, the Orange Coast College horticulture program's greenhouse and the East Broadmoor Trail at Santiago Canyon College, as well as street repairs and improvements in Anaheim, Brea, San Clemente and Ontario.

In the 2020-2021 fiscal year alone, the California Labor Commissioner's office issued 516 cita-

tions to contractors hired for publicly-funded projects who had shorted their workers over \$10,979,508 in wages. That's almost 20% of the combined \$56,949,252 withheld by employers caught breaking labor laws in both the public and private sector that year.

"The CCC uncovers around \$5-to-7 million annually in wage theft on public work projects," Lopez said. "The labor commissioner cites contractors for two or three times more than this annually. This does not include any of the cases in situations when an aggrieved worker hires their own

attorney to sue for back wages."

Research suggests the true cost of wage theft may be exponentially higher than the value reported to state officials. A study conducted by the Rutgers University School of Management and Labor Relations estimates workers in Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, San Francisco and Santa Clara counties lost an average of \$2.3 billion to \$4.6 billion in pay annually due to minimum wage violations between 2014 and 2023.

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## UCI Health Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center & Ambulatory Care

### UCI Health

Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center



# Mission Viejo advances new rules for group and sober living homes

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

Tonya Willis came before the Mission Viejo City Council on Tuesday to share what it is like living next to two side-by-side sober living homes in her neighborhood.

She complained about altercations in the street, profanity and loud music.

"My children don't play out in front of the house," Willis said.

It's a familiar story of frustration that council members have heard from residents before as homes meant to help people suffering from addiction have been seen as a cash grab turned public nuisance by bad actors.

But after years of spearheading efforts to regulate sober living homes, council members finally had a local law before them to strengthen the city's hand.

The law, which passed a first reading unanimously, will require that all new and



Gabriel San Román

**ONE OF THE** regulations of sober living homes approved by the Mission Viejo City Council this week is that they must adhere to a "good neighbor" policy and refrain from "excessively loud, profane or obnoxious behavior."

existing sober living homes apply for a group home permit with contact information for the owner, operator and house manager listed.

Sober living homes, which must offer legitimate recovery programs, can no

longer be within 1,000 feet of each other.

A house manager must be available on a 24-hour basis.

New regulations also outline an eviction policy where 48 hours prior to taking such action, a sober liv-

ing home has to notify a resident's emergency contact and arrange for a ride to take them to a home address or another care facility.

In addition, sober living homes must adhere to a "good neighbor" policy and

refrain from "excessively loud, profane or obnoxious behavior."

"This has been a long time coming," said Councilwoman Trish Kelley. "I'm excited about this. This is going to be a great tool in our toolbox."

Willis had questions about the new law, including whether sober living home operators would be fined for violating it.

City Atty. William Curley mentioned that a violation of city code entails a \$500 fine, but that Mission Viejo wouldn't necessarily be taking that approach with regard to sober living homes.

"We would look to the cost of city abatement," he said. "We will not subsidize bad activity, and if we have to shut it down, we'll want everything back."

In circumstances where existing sober living homes are already within 1,000 feet of each other there will be a winnowing of sorts, which could include which facility

applies for a group home permit first.

During the same meeting, council members also received an update on legislative efforts in Sacramento from Jeff Corless of the California Sober Living and Recovery Task Force.

A slew of bills from local members of the state Assembly and Senate, both Republican and Democrat, seek to address issues from group and sober living homes.

Assemblywoman Diane Dixon (District 72) is proposing Assembly Bill 3, which aims to remove single-family home zoning protections for new facilities next year if they open within 300 feet of another home with the same owner, shared amenities and more than six residents between the two.

Through Senate Bill 329, state Sen. Catherine Blake-spear (District 38) wants to

See **Sober**, page A7

## CLIMATE

Continued from page A1

tion of being the largest city in the county to opt for 100% renewable energy as a means to meet the climate goal by 2030.

But in June, council directed staff to make the draft a work plan, instead of a regulatory document. City staff also received direction to explore a new carbon neutral goal of 2040, just five years before California's own statewide objective.

That revised effort was complicated in December when a new council voted to withdraw from the Orange County Power Authority sometime this year. The agency has been rocked recently by audits

and departures from two members, including the city of Huntington Beach.

In the meantime, the city lowered its renewable energy plan with OCPA to a 47% Basic Choice tier, which paused finalization of the draft climate plan, per city staff.

The delay on approving the plan motivated several climate activists to speak out during the council meeting.

"The more we wait, the more unready we are for the decades to come," said Tomas Castro, an activist with Climate Action Campaign. "It also bears remembering that the CAAP goals cannot be met without participating in OCPA."

Luis Estevez, Irvine's acting director of public works and sustainability, outlined

that much of the city's greenhouse gas emissions come from land use, transportation and building energy in a presentation to council.

The original 2030 carbon neutral goal would have required significant fleet overhauls, substantial electric vehicle charging station installations and a complete pivot away from landfills.

A new goal of carbon neutrality by 2040 could be more attainable, Estevez said, even as Irvine's energy options appear limited for now.

Estevez told council members that Southern California Edison's "Green Rate" program, with a 100% renewable option, isn't accepting new applicants due to capacity con-

straints.

OCPA's option at that tier would entail significant rate increases for this year and next.

But Estevez outlined three achievable pathways to carbon neutrality before council.

The first two options considered updates to the draft climate plan with either 100% or 47% renewable energy supplying Irvine residents and businesses with power. A third option could delay carbon neutrality until 2045, when state law will mandate 100% renewable energy for all electrical utilities.

"I am pleased to hear from the staff that even though we're on Basic Choice, we can still meet our goals by 2040," Treseder said.

She wanted a vote from her colleagues on adopting the climate plan draft before the meeting adjourned Tuesday night.

Irvine Mayor Larry Agran acknowledged that he had not reviewed the draft climate plan thoroughly and favored revisiting the issue at a future council meeting with a final draft in hand.

Agran had outlined lofty green goals during his state of the city address earlier this month, a speech that was briefly disrupted by climate activists who want the city to stick with OCPA.

"I'm not only enthusiastic about real implementation of a climate action plan," he said on Tuesday. "But just saying yes tonight to something that hasn't even been distributed to us

seems to me to be a very, very poor example of governance."

Councilman Mike Carroll raised his hand when Agran asked who on the council had thoroughly reviewed documents related to the draft climate plan.

He spoke in opposition of the plan and also called Treseder's push for a vote a political "charade."

"I'm not enthusiastic about a political trap," he said in wanting to punt discussion of the climate plan off the agenda indefinitely.

Council voted 4-2 to scuttle discussion at the moment, with Agran and Treseder voting against the move.

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# Local gems shine at Casa Romantica

"Gems of California Impressionism" showcases local landmarks by early 20th century California impressionists through June 15 at the San Clemente Cultural Center.

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Crystal Cove. Mission San Juan Capistrano. Irvine Park. These are just a few of Orange County's familiar treasures. They are also featured in Casa Romantica's latest art exhibition, "Gems of California Impressionism."

"You have the farmlands and the beautiful beaches represented, and about half the paintings [on display] are from this area," said the exhibition's curator, James Irvine Swinden.

Made up of masterworks from the James Irvine Swinden Family Collection and underwritten by the Traditional Fine Arts Organization, the exhibition at the Casa Art Gallery in San Clemente is full of recognizable landscapes and lauded names of the California Impressionism movement.

California Impressionism was inspired by the French Impressionists who coined the phrase "plein air," the French term for "in the open air," for the practice of painting outdoors. California Impressionists took to the practice as well, painting the state's foot-

## IF YOU GO

"Gems of California Impressionism" is on view at Casa Romantica Cultural Center and Gardens, 415 Avenida Granada in San Clemente through June 15.

hills, mountains and coastlines beginning in the late 19th century.

"This building was made at the same time many these works of art were made, so it is full of significance," Swinden said to a crowd of art lovers attending a preview reception at Casa Romantica on March 20.

Curated by Swinden, a direct descendant of the Irvine family, the selection of 24 works on view gives visitors an idea of what Southern California — and Orange County in particular — looked like in the early part of the 20th century.

"This is Mission San Juan Capistrano," Swinden said, motioning to a work by Joseph Kleitsch titled "San Juan Capistrano," featuring trees shading the unmis-



Courtesy of Casa Romantica

"GEMS OF California Impressionism" on view at Casa Romantica showcases the James Irvine Swinden Family Collection.

takable adobe brick building. "We know this was painted after 1920, because the wall is up."

Swinden points out another artwork, this one by Colin Campbell Cooper, of the historic Mission Revival style train station. It's titled "Capistrano Train Station."

"This painting was painted prior [to Kleitsch's rendering of the mission], because this is the train station and there is no wall," said Swinden.

El Toro Road is significant to Swinden, since it separated the Irvine Ranch property from Mission

Viejo; a work by Anna Hills depicting the thin, tall eucalyptus trees lining the road is among his favorites. He is fond of the palate knife work technique Hills used in the piece.

"She still had to play the game, because she wasn't using her first name," said

Swinden, referring to the days when female artists were often sidelined because of their gender. "She was president of the Laguna Beach Art Assn. on two separate occasions, which never would have

See *Gems*, page A10

# Knott's Boysenberry Festival turns 10

The boysenberry-themed food and entertainment festival in Buena Park runs daily. It opened Friday and will continue through April 27.

BY JESSICA PERALTA

The celebration of the little berry that helped put Knott's Berry Farm on the theme park map has returned for its 10th year — and rest assured, boysenberries reign supreme.

This year's lineup of more than 80 boysenberry-themed menu items is nearly completely new for the Knott's Boysenberry Festival.

"I only have four returning savory items and about six drinks," said Laura Brubaker, Knott's vice president of food and beverage. "The rest are all new."

Although food is a large piece of the pie at the festival, merchandise, entertainment, themed park decor, an arts show and crafts fair all help round it out.

The festival, which opened Friday and will run daily through April 27, is

now a large, annual production, but it didn't start out that way.

"The Boysenberry Festival began in 2014 as part of an overarching spring event," said Jon Storbeck, Knott's vice president and general manager. "The event was so successful that in 2015 it became THE event. As the event has grown, so has the number of [food and beverage] offerings, specialty merchandise, crafter participation and entertainment."

New entertainment for its 10th anniversary includes Boysen Bear's Pie Kitchen Games in Calico Park and "The Great Bank Robbery" show at the Bird Cage Theatre.

Entertainment producer Christopher Do said that every year, the teams in the various Knott's departments have the chance to bring a fresh perspective to the Boysenberry Festival.

"This year we have the chance to look into our Knott's history and tell some great stories, whether we are leaning into our friends from Bear-y Tales, to a melodrama that takes place within Knott's Berry Farm for 'The Great Bank Robbery,' and of course telling the story of our founders in 'Knott's Preserved,'" he said.

"Knott's Bear-y Tales: Return to the Fair" 4D interactive dark ride debuted in 2021 at the park as a nod to its history and the original dark ride. Characters from the ride are part of the Boysen Bear's Pie Kitchen Games.

"Two of our sneaky coyote pups, Moxie and Brawny, have stolen our pies," Do said. "Our games now feature Boysen Bear as guests help to bring together all the ingredients to replace the stolen pies, culminating with a kids



Jessica Peralta

FROM JAMS to clothing and accessories, Knott's Boysenberry Festival offers a wide array of themed merchandise for the season.

pie-tasting contest before our big pie-eating contest at the Calico Mine Stage."

"The Great Bank Robbery" comedy melodrama is another homage to the park's past.

"Knott's Berry Farm has been entertaining for decades, and with that comes locations and stories that our guests have come to

know and love," Do said. "The Great Bank Robbery" tells the story of Ernie Evertrue being put to the test as notorious bank robber Bells Colton sets his sights on the Calico Bank. The story takes place in Calico and there may even be a nod to a few classic Knott's Berry Farm landmarks."

"Knott's Preserved: A

Musical Celebration" is a returning show telling the story of Walter and Cordelia Knott and Knott's Berry Farm through music and dance, according to Do.

"This year, we have added some video elements to help continue to tell our rich history and unique

See *Knott's*, page A7

## HORSES

Continued from page A1

mitted in response to a draft of a strategic plan, submitted to the board in January, which highlights the mission, vision and objectives of the center through 2029.

The 12-page plan identifies innovation, stewardship, operational excellence and visitor experience as primary objectives for the center and mentions the expansion of programs at the Ranch. But the document contains no explicit reference to horses or the reinvention of equestrian activities there.

While no public outreach meetings were held, citizens were asked to submit comments through an online survey. Among 505 responses submitted, 447, nearly 89%, specifically pertained to keeping horses and equestrians thriving at the fairgrounds.

"The OC fair has a duty to preserve the historical equestrian community here in Costa Mesa," wrote a local resident named Madison. "This new plan should include reasonable boarding for the local public to board their horses at a well kept facility (with improved facilities) and equestrian trainers who maintain lesson programs.

"Without the knowledge and life long experience of local horse trainers you

OC FAIR & Event Center officials

Thursday reviewed feedback on a five-year strategic plan that included little mention of equestrian programs. Nearly 89% of 505 comments supported a strong horse presence at the fairgrounds.

Photos by James Carbone



cannot be successful — they are a key part of running a clean, safe, and enjoyable equestrian facility."

"No equestrian center mentioned in the Strategic Plan? WHY?" wrote Alexis of Costa Mesa. "Put it back in there. You board members are ruining a once vibrant community of people where 12-year-olds rode with 70-year-olds and friendships developed over a common interest — horses. Thousands of people have enjoyed their time out there over the years. Please support it and include it in your strategic plan."

A previous strategic plan, covering operational objectives from 2022 through 2024, contained two pages specific to the Equestrian Center. It described numer-

ous goals, such as hiring a supervisor, developing a revenue-generating horse show and working with nonprofit groups to provide free or low-cost riding lessons.

Gibran Stout — a local equestrian ousted from the center for refusing to pay increased rental fees who is involved in litigation against the OC Fair & Event Center — criticized officials Thursday for not involving the public in plans for the Ranch.

She, too, asked Center directors to specify objectives in the strategic plan and involve the community in creating robust equine programs at the site.

"When you have 90% of the people saying they want something, let's do it. Those responses from the

public were from all the public. We're all the public, we're all the community. Listen to 90% of your feedback."

Board President Nick Kovacevich said he didn't see anything in the comments that haven't already been incorporated into plans for the Ranch.

"The good news is, it sounds like we've already listened to them and we've already incorporated that, so they can essentially rest assured it's moving in the right direction that they want," he added.

"I hear from members of the public, they're significantly uninformed or there's even been, maybe, misinformation they've picked up on," Kovacevich continued. "If you've attended any board meeting



HORSE STALLS at the Ranch Community Center now sit largely vacant and sandy arenas remain untrod.

in the last year and a half, you know the topic of losing the Equestrian Center has come up, and every time it's actually the board demanding that we reinvigorate that center and the grounds and add more programming."

Director Barbara Bagnieris also expressed astonishment over the tenor of the comments.

"This seems more about semantics to me. We used to call it the Equestrian Center and now we call it the Ranch — the same activities are going to happen at the Ranch but more expanded for the community. Maybe that's the confusion?" she posed.

In a follow up interview Friday, fairgrounds spokeswoman Moore accredited the low census at the stables to the fact that trainers, who often board nu-

merous horses for programs, have vacated, leaving only a handful of owners with fewer wards.

Moore further said initial occupancy plans focused on boarders, whose contracts and agreements are more straightforward than ones for those who conduct lessons and services at the site, and said officials will soon roll out a plan for inviting area trainers to the Ranch.

"Trainers bring in horses and fill stalls. [And] right now we don't have trainers there," she said. "The Ranch Community Center is the new plan, and we're moving forward with that plan. Exhibits are being built, and partners are coming in — we're getting there."

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forum

COLUMN | PATRICE APODACA

Ongoing misinformation about MMR vaccinations flies in the face of facts, imperils children

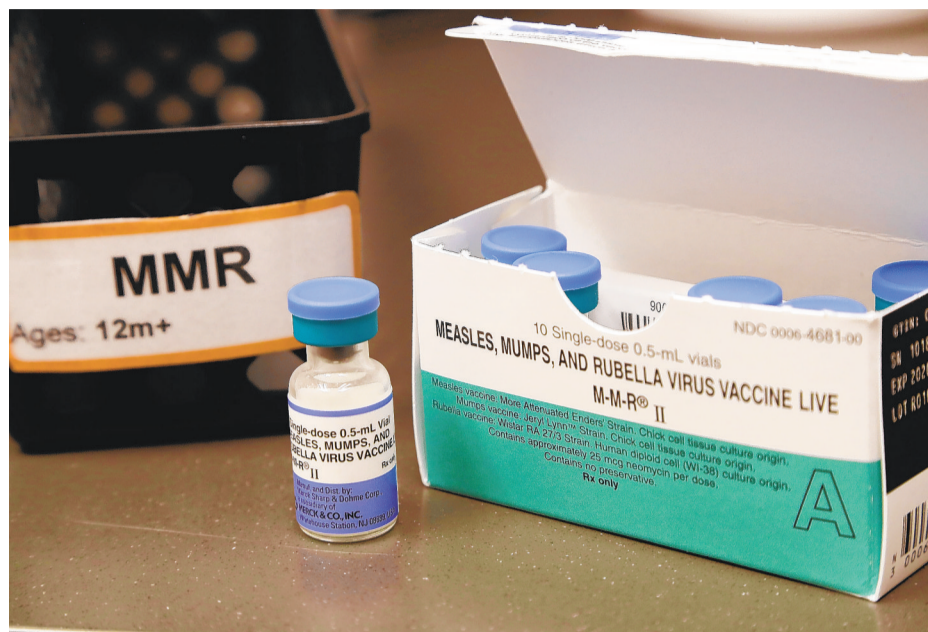
Throughout a career spanning three decades, Dr. Jasjit Singh has seen people die. Of course she has. An expert in pediatric infectious diseases, she currently serves as assistant director for the division for Children's Hospital of Orange County and the medical epidemiologist for CHOC Hospital. In her line of work, disease and death come with the territory.

But it's particularly tragic when those deaths are entirely avoidable. And worse still, when they involve children—unvaccinated children who succumb to diseases that we know how to prevent.

"I have seen kids die of flu, pertussis, meningococcus," she said. "It is so devastating."

But here we are, in 2025, confronting once again diseases that we had long ago conquered. Or so we thought. The factor that might have been overlooked in our success with vaccines — one of the greatest triumphs in medical history — is that people are often irrational.

How else to explain declining vaccination rates and growing skepticism over the safety and efficacy of standard childhood vaccines that have been proven, over and over again, to be overwhelmingly safe and effective? We see the conse-



Elaine Thompson | Associated Press

BECAUSE THERE have been outbreaks in the U.S., parents should request information on measles, mumps and rubella vaccination rates from their children's schools, columnist Patrice Apodaca writes.

quences of such thinking currently playing out in parts of Texas and New Mexico that are experiencing a measles outbreak in communities with low vaccination rates. One child and one adult have died, while more than 350 people have contracted the disease so far. By the time this column appears, there will likely be more people infected.

California has some of the toughest school vaccination laws in the nation, and a relatively high level of compliance. But don't for a second think that an outbreak couldn't happen here, as it did in late 2014 and early 2015 when at least 131 measles cases

were identified, most connected to Disneyland. Sure enough, some measles cases have recently been reported throughout the state, including one of an Orange County infant who arrived at Los Angeles International Airport last month following overseas travel. More are likely on the way.

It's no mystery why measles is resurgent in some areas.

New data from the California Department of Public Health show that 93.7% of kindergarten students were vaccinated against measles, mumps, and rubella in the 2023-2024 school year. That's

down from 94.1% the previous year — continuing a years-long decline — and below the 95% threshold for achieving herd immunity, the level at which we are considered protected from these viruses taking hold and spreading.

That's worrisome enough, but there's another important point to consider.

Statewide, or even countywide, vaccination rates mask the fact that rates vary substantially community by community, school to school, and there are many under-vaccinated pockets at risk of becoming

See Apodaca, page A8

MAILBAG

Spreading partisan falsehoods from the dais does not serve residents

At the March 18 Huntington Beach City Council meeting, Councilwoman Gracie Van Der Mark falsely claimed former President Joe Biden "abandoned" astronauts, foolishly repeating comments by current President Donald Trump and Elon Musk.

So, I have reviewed factcheck.org, Snopes, Reuters, AP News and Fox News on this topic. I want to expose facts and debunk misinformation. The prolonged astronaut mission was due to technical challenges with their return spacecraft, and NASA had planned their safe return months before the administration change, debunking claims that Biden abandoned them.

Space exploration should be nonpartisan to ensure astronaut safety and responsible decision-making, but Trump's entanglement with Musk creates a profound conflict of interest and egregious ethical misconduct. So why do LOCAL politicians keep bringing up and spreading national misinformation? These toxic narratives only divide our city further.

Can't wait for Van Der Mark's next medical "expertise" on the bird flu! Maybe she'll push vitamin A as a measles cure instead of vaccines.

Finally: Roses are red, violets are blue, this Huntington Beach Council puts their agenda before serving you.

Andrew Einhorn  
Huntington Beach

On Thursday, Feb. 20, 2025, the Daily Pilot published an article titled "Kluwe arrested at H.B. council meeting." In response to the arrest, Councilwoman Gracie Van Der Mark stated, "We respect everyone. We're not out there attacking people who don't think like us. We're not out there running across and trying to intimidate people who don't agree with us."

However, my understanding of respect differs greatly from Van Der Mark's.

Consider the following: On May 23, 2023, then-Mayor Tony Strickland and then-City Atty. Michael Gates signed the Air Show Settlement Agreement, yet the full details were not disclosed to the public until an entire year later.

At the April 16, 2024, City Council meeting, then-candidate Chad Williams insinuated that an incumbent council member was a pedophile.

On June 4, 2024, then-Councilman now Mayor Pat Burns used an expletive to deride three former council members.

On June 18, 2024, when confronted about his inappropriate remark, Burns denied directing it at those members, instead calling them narcissists for assuming they were the targets. His comment was only reluctantly documented in the official meeting minutes.

On Dec. 3, 2024, Gracie Van Der Mark, ending her

See Mailbag, page A8

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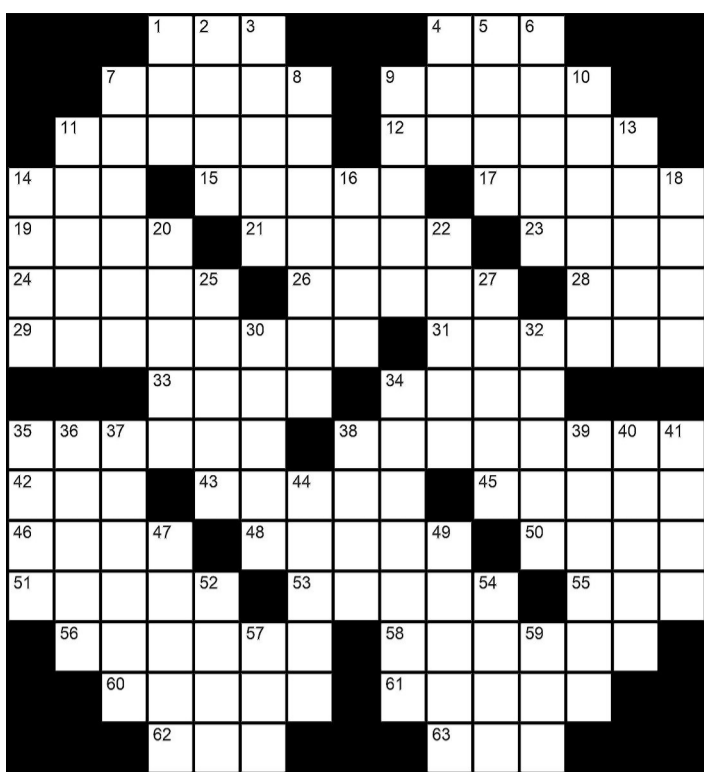
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**THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE**

By Stella Zawistowski

- ACROSS!**  
 Memorable time period  
 4 "Masterpiece" channel  
 7 Working end of a candle  
 9 A-lister, for short  
 11 Send for  
 12 Pleasant scents  
 14 Army bed  
 15 Yanks on  
 17 Young ladies  
 19 Social organization  
 21 Violent protests  
 23 Red road sign  
 24 Symbol of insertion  
 26 Gripping tools  
 28 Donkey Kong, for example  
 29 Records ahead of time  
 31 Crudely painted  
 33 Federal agents, for short  
 34 Mend, as a sock  
 35 Tile artwork  
 38 Government with a king or queen  
 42 Rock in a lode  
 43 Ancient Roman language  
 45 New employee  
 46 Singer Lambert  
 48 Pitcher Ryan  
 50 Fancy party  
 51 Charlie Parker's genre  
 53 Some saxophones  
 55 "Planet Money" network: Abbr.  
 56 Hit refresh  
 58 Gets away from  
 60 Sandwich shops  
 61 Floor models  
 62 Pregrown grass  
 63 Chicken serving



**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](http://sudoku.org.uk).

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

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

- DOWN**  
 1 Graceful tree  
 2 Inclined pathway  
 3 Love, in French  
 4 Miles \_ gallon  
 5 Web diary  
 6 Tractor-trailers  
 7 Upcoming  
 8 Pep up  
 9 Broken-bone supports  
 10 Bill for drinks: 2 wds.  
 11 Green energy variety  
 13 Skiing locale  
 14 USSR, to a

- Soviet  
 16 Author Lowry  
 18 Traveled quickly  
 20 Fighting fish  
 22 Four-door car  
 25 Language spoken in India  
 27 "Succession" star Snook  
 30 Pie nut  
 32 Disassemble  
 34 Gave to a charity  
 35 Biblical kingdom  
 36 Choose from a menu  
 37 Bottom of the ocean: 2 wds.  
 38 Run-of-the-\_  
 39 Origami birds  
 40 Gives a hand to  
 41 2025, for example  
 44 Frogs' relatives  
 47 Double agents  
 49 Written work of fiction  
 52 Sport played on horseback  
 54 Identical  
 57 Financial \_  
 59 Beagle or poodle

Tribune Media Services

**KNOTT'S**

Continued from page A4

story, from what a berry stand off of Beach Boulevard was to where we are today," he said.

This year, the "Tied Up in Knott's" art show, located at the Factory Store, features 45 Southern California artists.

"This show features some incredible work that showcases Knott's uniqueness," Do said. "Jesstasmic created a fully functioning lamp with a hand-sculpted base fabricated after Mrs. Knott's Chicken Dinner with a stained-glass lampshade. Vincenzo Savastano took inspiration from [classic Knott's character] Whittles and created packing for a 'Super Whittles in Boysenberry Land' video game. Phineas Huckleberry recreated Doctor Fox's wagon from Bear-y Tales in an ultraviolet 3D miniature with soundbite from the original ride."

But of course, boysenberry-themed food features prominently at the annual festive, and this year is no different.

While there aren't many returning items this year, Brubaker said the boysenberry honey garlic chicken wings, boysenberry elote and boysenberry Hefeweizen beer are so popular that they've become staples.

"People rant about these



Mel Melcon | Los Angeles Times

**NEW AT** this year's Knott's Boysenberry Festival is "The Great Bank Robbery" show that will be staged at the Bird Cage Theatre in Calico.

items, they become best sellers and there is mutiny if I don't have them the following year," she said.

Experimentation with boysenberry is part of the fun of creating the dishes and drinks that can range from a slight essence of the berry to a complete palate takeover.

"The boysenberry is such a versatile fruit, we are so lucky that it can float into a savory drink or sweet item so well," Brubaker said. "In a barbecue sauce or even as a drizzle, who doesn't like a little sweet in their life?"

She said some of the most outside-the-box boysenberry dishes on the menu this year include short rib lasagna — the boysenberry is in the meat and cheese layer. Tres leches funnel cake has

boysenberry in the funnel batter. The chile verde has boysenberry in the sauce — giving it a purple hue as opposed to the green typical of the traditional Mexican dish.

"[For the ] tiramisu, we had to make sure the purple didn't turn green and look moldy," she said.

With all of the experimenting over the years, Brubaker can't think of an ingredient that doesn't work with boysenberry.

"Sometimes the chefs just need to tweak them," she said. "I recall a boysenberry marinara that was not good, too sweet for the sauce, and one time we tried to [make] a curry, but it turned out gray."

JESSICA PERALTA is a contributor to the Daily Pilot.

**SOBER**

Continued from page A2

speed up investigations of state-licensed sober living homes to no more than 60 days after a state audit found that the Department of Health Care Services took more than a year to complete 22 of 60 probes reviewed.

The task force was founded in Mission Viejo in 2022 and is co-chaired by Mission Viejo Councilwoman Wendy Bucknam, County Supervisor Katrina Foley and Assemblywoman

an Laurie Davies, educates its members and the public on such legislative efforts.

It has also grown to become a bipartisan coalition that brings together local and state officials, law enforcement and residents. Beginning this year, the task force became its own nonprofit organization.

Bucknam credited the task force with the regulations she and her council colleagues gave initial approval of.

Foley helped lead county efforts to draft a

template law for the consideration of cities like Mission Viejo.

A second, procedural vote at a future council meeting will formally pass the regulations into law.

"I do think that this is a good idea," said Councilwoman Cynthia Vasquez. "It is definitely about protecting our residents here in the city of Mission Viejo, and it's also about protecting the residents that are in these homes."

gabriel.sanroman@latimes.com  
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select one

**French Onion Soup Gratinée**  
 Gruyère cheese, crostini

**Corn Chowder**  
 Fresh corn, Applewood smoked bacon

**Golden Beet Salad**  
 Spinach, shaved fennel, tomato, goat cheese, balsamic vinaigrette

**Bungalow Salad**  
 Greens, hearts of palm, olives, feta, red onion, bay shrimp, tarragon vinaigrette

**Classic Caesar Salad**  
 Chopped hearts of romaine, herb croutons, tomato, shaved Manchego

#### ENTRÉE SELECTIONS

select one

**Filet Mignon**  
 8 oz. filet mignon, Yukon Gold mashed potatoes, fried shallots

**Bone-In Rib Eye**  
 16 oz. prime bone-in rib eye, Yukon Gold mashed potatoes, fried onion strings  
**(Thirty Dollar Supplement)**

**Lobster Pot Pie**  
 Ten ounce sautéed Maine lobster, carrots, celery, potatoes, sherry lobster cream sauce.

**Pan-Roasted Swordfish**  
 Butternut squash succotash, lemon aioli

**Miso-Marinated Chilean Sea Bass**  
 Soy glaze, coconut rice, stir-fried vegetables, mushrooms, lemongrass ginger beurre blanc

**Prime New York Steak**  
 Fourteen ounce prime New York strip, horseradish potato gratin

**Australian Lobster Tail**

10 oz. drawn butter, grilled lemon, Yukon Gold mashed potatoes

**(Twenty Dollar Supplement)**

#### DESSERT

\$7 Supplement

**Apple Cobbler**  
 Vanilla bean ice cream, house-made whipped cream

**Hot Fudge Sundae**  
 Vanilla bean ice cream, walnuts, house-made whipped cream, hot fudge

**Vanilla Crème Brûlée**  
 Vanilla custard, fresh raspberries

**Toll House Pie**  
 Like a warm chocolate chip cookie in pie form, walnuts, vanilla bean ice cream

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California's coast and the Los Angeles River flow in art on display at Hilbert

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

One of California's most precious resources flows through two new exhibitions at the Hilbert Museum of California Art at Chapman University. Water is captured in "California's Golden Coast: Selections from The Hilbert Collection" and "The Los Angeles River: An Unexpected Beauty," both now on view in Orange, through Aug. 9. "We have so many paintings, drawings and prints that have to do with the coast," said Mary Platt, director of the Hilbert Museum. "Whether it is people having fun on the beach, little villages and towns and cities on the waterfront or people sailing on the water."

Platt worked closely with museum founder Mark Hilbert to curate "California's Golden Coast" and the result is more than 40 pieces in both watercolors and oils, painted from the 1930s to today that reflect life and leisure on the coast and the way it has changed over the years.

The show opens with a piece from Danny Galieote that's titled "The Big Gang."

"Danny Galieote was a Disney artist, he worked during the 'Tarzan,' 'Treasure Planet,' 'Princess and the Frog' era as a character animator," said Platt. "Now he does these 1940s-influenced paintings."

Girls in bikinis with vaguely retro hairstyles sit on beach towels facing the water and each other, away from the viewer. In the background, waves curl up to the shore and pillowy clouds fill the sky. The busy frame is similar to Galieote's "Beach Bevy," another seaside scene that is part of the Hilbert's permanent collection with a composition inspired by

Michelangelo's "Battle of Cascina."

Equally lively is a piece by Katie Crown depicting a crowded beach. It's interpreted quite differently from Galieote's work, with sharp angles and more abstract figures.

Some works imagine a more lonely coastline, with a single early morning surfer or local landmarks such as Ruby's on the pier.

"This exhibition just captures all the phases of the coastline, from their most crowded to the least crowded," Platt said.

Platt also co-curated "The Los Angeles River" with John Kosta, where the California artist captures the exquisite beauty to be found within the concrete landscape of the L.A. River.

"Most Angelenos have seen their river hundreds of times, often in short glimpses as passed over on highways or trains. This is a river submerged in the public's consciousness, always present and yet often invisible," a statement from Kosta reads.

His "Los Angeles River Series," completed over several years, explores the urban atmosphere that has grown around and in some ways, restrained the river.

"He has spent the last 15 years depicting all the various aspects of the L.A. River, which is now of course channelized into this concrete river course," said Platt.

Kosta has made an effort to capture the river at different ebbs and flows, with special attention paid to the monumental architecture. There are examples of how humans and animals interact with the river, with perhaps the best juxtaposition of such a relationship present in "Los Angeles River Painting #83-Alterado." Rain runoff



"CALIFORNIA'S GOLDEN Coast: Selections from The Hilbert Collection" showcases California's coastline.

Sarah Mosqueda

IF YOU GO

The Hilbert Museum at Chapman University is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. It's closed Sunday and Monday. Admission is free, but advance reservations are recommended and can be made at hilbertmuseum.org.

creates puddles in which an egret hunts for frogs, a stark white flash against dark, stagnate water that's edged with algae.

A mini-exhibition, also curated by Platt, continues the theme of water in the Sodaro South Building. "Surfin' Cinema: Surf Movie Posters from The Hilbert Collection" captures the surf lifestyle depicted in surf movies of the 1960s and '70s, a time when movie posters were illustrated works of art.

"These are all original movie posters," Platt said. "It is a little show, but I like to use all the wall space we can."

A fourth exhibit opened

this week at the Hilbert Museum, "Sunlight and Shadows: Emil Kosa Jr. Art from The Hilbert Collection." Curated by Gordon McClelland, the show highlights works the Hollywood film industry veteran painted when he wasn't on set at 20th Century Fox studios from the 1940s through the '60s. While his name might not sound familiar, he is responsible for some of the industry's most iconic special effects paintings.

"A lot of people might think they don't know the work of Kosa," said Platt. "But if you have seen the 20th Century Fox searchlight logo, he de-



Courtesy of the Hilbert Museum

"THE LOS ANGELES River: An Unexpected Beauty" at the Hilbert Museum features paintings by John Kosta.

signed that."

Kosa earned an Oscar for his work on the 1963 film "Cleopatra" and was responsible for the matte painting of the Statue of Liberty coming out of the sand used during the shocking finale of 1968's

"Planet of the Apes."

Kosa's cinematic eye is evident in works that cleverly use light to strategically illuminate the focus of a painting. A watercolor titled "On the Fringe" is a view of Los Angeles from Bunker Hill, painted during the redevelopment years when old Victorian homes and some sections of Chinatown faced demolition. Fingers of light through dark clouds create a feeling of gloom over all that is being lost to change.

All of the pieces in "Sunlight and Shadows" come from the Hilbert Collection, a testimony, Platt said, to its expansiveness and the variety of exhibitions the museum is able to pull for the continually changing South galleries.

"This gives you an example of how deep and broad the Hilbert Collection of California art is," Platt said.

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APODACA

Continued from page A6

ing the nexus of an outbreak.

So while the overall immunization rate for kindergartners in Orange County remains well above that 95% threshold — undeniably good news — the levels at some schools and among many home-

school children don't meet that mark. Parents can, and should, request information on vaccination rates from their children's schools.

Let's be clear about one other common misperception, which is the belief held by some that measles isn't a dangerous disease or at least not as risky as the MMR vaccine itself. We have decades of data and

reams of research debunking such assertions. And it's an utter myth, yet a frustratingly persistent one, that the vaccine can cause autism.

It's impossible to ignore that the misinformation about vaccines is occurring against a backdrop of greater skepticism about science and public health generally, and a political environment that feeds

distrust of expertise and doubts about established facts.

While no medical intervention is entirely without risk, those posed by standard vaccines are vanishingly small compared to those of the terrible diseases they help prevent. The negative health effects of measles, in particular, are often underestimated; it is by any measure a serious disease.

The measles virus is extremely contagious, and it typically causes a high fever, rash, sore throat, fatigue, sensitivity to light, severe headaches and other

symptoms that can last for two weeks or more. Also, as Singh notes, measles wipes out a part of the immunological memory, making those who have had the virus more susceptible to other diseases such as pneumonia and encephalitis for an extended period of time.

It's possible that, in a strange way, vaccines have become a victim of their own success, in that many people might not now fully appreciate, because they've haven't seen for themselves, the dangers of diseases that we had once believed were under con-

trol. Nor does everyone apparently understand the awful price we will pay if immunization rates continue to fall.

Sadly, they might soon learn.

"What I guess I'm worried about in the meantime [is] how much pain and suffering will occur, particularly in children," Singh said.

Can this troubling trend be turned around? For highly skilled professionals like Singh, there is no choice but to try. Vaccines might be the biggest public health accomplishment in modern times, but that success will only continue if people receive the correct information — and believe it. On that score, much work remains to be done.

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.

MAILBAG

Continued from page A6

term as mayor, presented the three outgoing non-MAGA council members with "gifts" of MAGA posters, followed by a MAGA-themed victory celebration, right on the dais.

On Feb. 18, 2025, despite overwhelming public opposition to politicizing the library, the City Council unanimously approved a MAGA library plaque. When former council member Natalie Moser spoke against it, Burns sarcastically shouted for her to take a blue card so he could "meet" with her.

How is any of this behavior respectful?

Respect is not just a word, it's reflected in actions. The actions of this council have repeatedly demonstrated a pattern of intimidation, divisiveness, and disregard for public trust.

Judy Morris Huntington Beach

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS

Crossword puzzle grid with words filled in. Words include: ERA, P B S, FLAME, CELEB, SUMMON, AROMAS, COT, PULLS, GIRLS, CLUB, RIOTS, STOP, CARET, VISES, APE, PRETAPES, DAUBED, TMEN, DARN, MOSAIC, MONARCHY, ORE, LATIN, HIREE, ADAM, NOLAN, GALA, BEBOP, ALTOS, NPR, RELOAD, EVADES, DELIS, DEMOS, SOD, LEG.

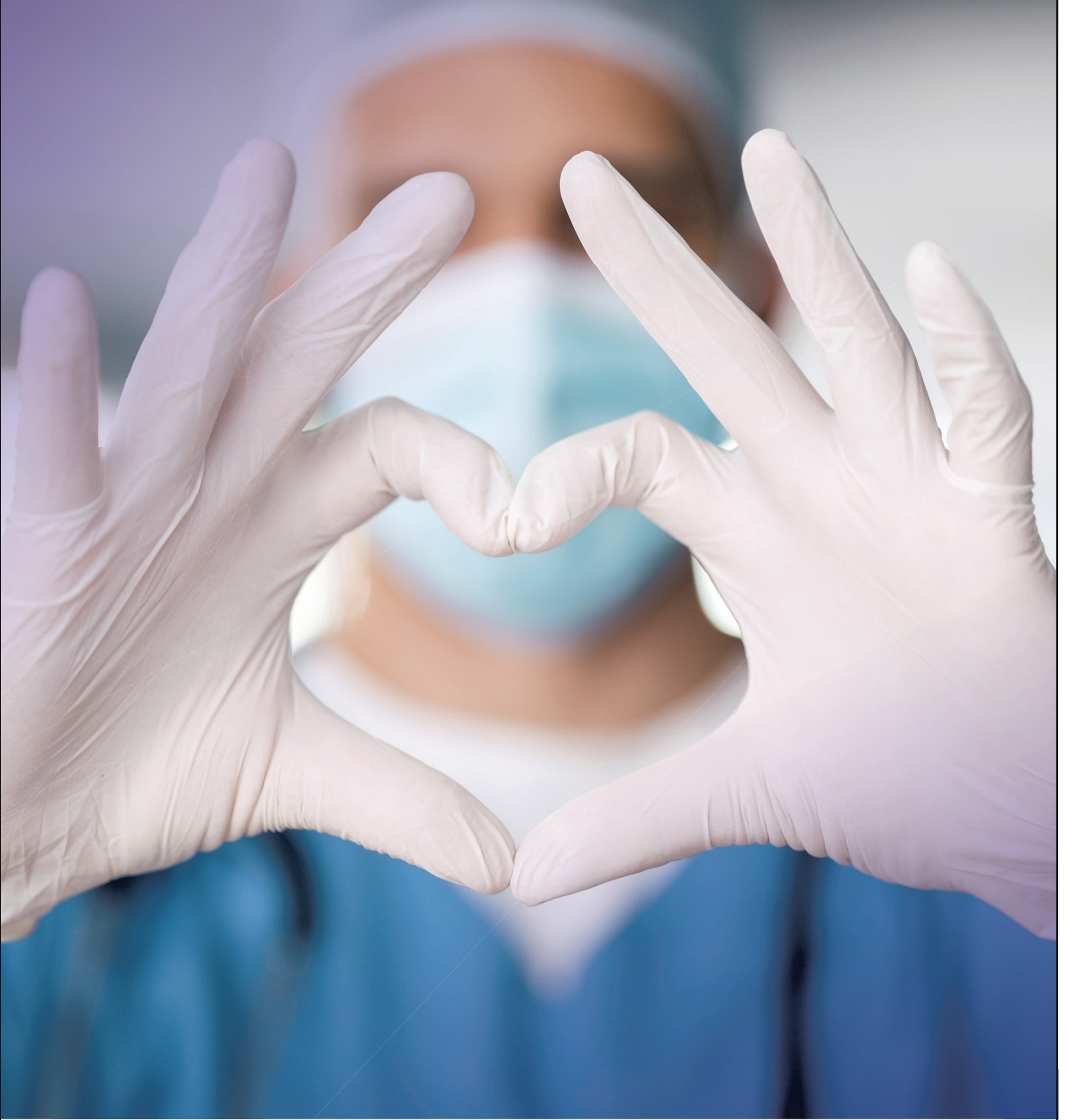
9 2 8 6 1 5 7 4 3
4 1 6 3 7 9 2 5 8
7 3 5 8 2 4 1 6 9
5 4 1 9 6 7 3 8 2
6 8 9 1 3 2 4 7 5
3 7 2 5 4 8 9 1 6
1 9 7 2 5 6 8 3 4
8 6 3 4 9 1 5 2 7
2 5 4 7 8 3 6 9 1

Daily Pilot
A Times Community News publication.
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## HERITAGE

Continued from page A1

Legacy pilot program last October and continued it through December, selling the signs for \$30 on a first come, first served basis.

"In the very first round of the program we wound up selling 326 signs out of a total of 433 signs," Spencer said.

Since the pilot program was so successful the city decided to continue selling the signs, with the current program underway expect to run until April 28. Proceeds will go into a fund that will, in part, be used help offset the cost of replacing the older signs.

"The Yorba Linda Street Legacy sign program is just another example of the city's commitment to providing exceptional services and programs to our community," said Janice Lim, Yorba Linda's mayor.

To secure one of the metal keepsakes, residents are asked to fill out an application at the city of Yorba Linda website with their contact information and list up to three street name signs they would like to buy, in order of preference. If residents are looking to buy more than three, a second application must be filled out. The city will review each request and asks that interested applicants allow up to two weeks for processing and retrieval of the signs.

During the pilot program, the city received 713 applications, more than staffers could fulfill.

Analisa Salvado, senior office



Courtesy of the city of Yorba Linda

**DYLAN MAK** picks up his decommissioned street name sign from Analisa Salvado, city of Yorba Linda senior office assistant, on March 25.

assistant in City Hall, is currently heading up the program, making frequent trips to the city yard where the street name signs are being stored along with other traffic signage and equipment. Salvado said she has especially

noticed a demand for major thoroughfare signs.

"The biggest streets are the most popular ones," said Salvado, "Yorba Linda Boulevard, Imperial Highway, Fairmont Boulevard and Lakeview Avenue. With the

pilot program and the current round, I would say we received the most applications for Yorba Linda Boulevard."

Like most city signs, those for sale are made of aluminum and coated with reflective material on

both sides. The green and brown street name signs are about 9 inches tall, with different lengths determined by the number of characters in a given street's name. They also have varying degrees of weathering, depending on where they were positioned and how much sunlight they received. None of the signs are "like new."

Buyers will have the chance to inspect the sign when they pick it up from Yorba Linda City Hall, but even when the fixtures are weather-worn, not very many customers have been deterred from plunking down their \$30.

"We have people from outside of the city of Yorba Linda buying signs, they want to buy the sign from the street they grew up on," said Spencer.

Other residents are looking to buy the signs for the street they currently live on, or maybe a street carries the same first or last name that they do.

The next round of the decommissioned signs won't be available until 2026, when the next street repaving is expected to get underway.

Mayor Lim said the demand for a piece of Yorba Linda memorabilia speaks to the sense of community found in the city.

"I love that these signs once helped people find their way around town and now they're helping people connect deeper with our shared history," the mayor said.

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## GEMS

Continued from page A4

happened on the East Coast during that period of time."

Hills also went on to advocate strongly for the founding of the Laguna Beach Art Museum.

Besides showcasing Orange County art, Swinden noted the exhibition is also a testimony to the taste of his mother. Joan Irvine Smith was a philanthropist, arts patron and heiress to the Irvine family fortune who began collecting California Impressionist art in the early 1990s.

"Most of the paintings

resonate on some level, either because of their beauty, they have some historical significance or they talk about the duties we have as individuals to the environment," said Swinden. "That was important to my mother."

Smith hoped her collection would inspire stewardship of California's natural resources and she tapped her son to help set up a museum that could house the collection. In 1993, Swinden became president and chief champion of the Irvine Museum.

"Her view was to use the art not only for the beauty, but also to make people aware of their social re-

sponsibility to the air, land and water," Swinden said. "These paintings really spoke to her."

In 2016, Swinden transferred the museum's collection of California Impressionist paintings, then valued at approximately \$17 million, to UC Irvine and he remains instrumental in championing regional California art.

On April 17, Swinden will return to Casa Romantica for an art lecture at 7 p.m. Family Sunday on May 4 will be "Plein Air Day" with plein air painting activities for the whole family.

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Twitter: @SarahNMos



### JAMES IRVINE

Swinden, right, speaks to visitors about his collection of works from early 20th century California Impressionism artists.

Courtesy of Casa Romantica



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