

One way to put audiences in a trance

Improv comedian Colin Mochrie and hypnotist Asad Mecci team up for 'Hyprov' at the Irvine Barclay Theater.

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Hypnotherapy is one creative way to keep those new year's resolutions. This month, the Irvine Barclay Theater is using hypnosis as a way to entertain theater-goers too.

"Hyprov: Improv Under Hypnosis" combines improv comedy and hypnosis for an interactive show. Starring hypnotist Asad Mecci and comedian Colin Mochrie, best known for his work on "Whose Line is it, Anyway?" "Hyprov" has sold out in Canada and the UK and will come to the Barclay for one night only on Friday, Jan. 10 at 8 p.m.

The tour titled, "Yes, It's Real" was inspired by the questions the duo received from audiences after touring the show the first time, from 2019 to 2023.

"We are so excited to launch this new tour and return to some of our favorite cities and visit some new ones," Mecci said in a statement.

"And we just want to remind everyone; yes, it's real," Mochrie added.



Courtesy of the Irvine Barclay Theatre

See **Trance**, page A4 **COLIN MOCHRIE** and Asad Mecci bring "Hyprov: Improv Under Hypnosis" to the Irvine Barclay Theatre in January.



Now open in Irvine

UCI Health

Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center

San Clemente teenager makes a difference through blood pressure screenings

BY MATT SZABO

Rohen Vargo enjoys his Wealth, Poverty and Ethics class at St. Margaret's Episcopal School, though what he learns can sometimes be troubling.

The St. Margaret's junior analyzed a heat map of south Orange County and found that San Juan Capistrano had one of the lowest rates of yearly preventive healthcare checkups.

"So many things are different if you drive like 10 miles; the difference in life expectancy and the difference in the average people who go to see a primary care physician every year," Rohen said. "It's kind of shocking to me, in comparison to Laguna Beach or Newport. I wanted to

learn more."

He reached out to a health equity group at UC Irvine. The teacher of the class at St. Margaret's, Victor Cota, is also the school's director of equity and inclusion. He told Rohen that maybe he should do a project on the subject.

Rohen reached out again. Teresa Schickling, the development director at south county nonprofit Family Assistance Ministries, said she met him at her organization's Hunger Walk in October.

"Our partnership with him has been nothing less than what you would expect from some 50-year-old entrepreneur," Schick-

See **Teenager**, page A2



Courtesy of Brooke Utterback | Family Assistance Ministries

ROHEN VARGO talks to a client at a blood pressure screening clinic in San Clemente on Dec. 21.

ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



Courtesy of OC Brick Convention

OC BRICK CONVENTION BUILDS FOR CHARITY PAGE A2

THE END OF 'END OF THE RANGE' IN IRVINE PAGE A5

NEWPORT BEACH ARTIST KITTY NOIR CONFRONTS HER PAST TO HELP OTHERS MOVE ON IN 'WAR STORIES' PAGE A9

Realtor's historic homes calendar advocates preservation

RENEE PINA holds up her first-ever "Historic Homes of Costa Mesa" calendar at her own 1952 historic home in 2021.



File Photo

BY SARA CARDINE

With a fourth edition of an annual "Historic Homes of Costa Mesa" calendar hot off the presses, local Realtor Renee Pina — whose interest in the provenance of local domiciles comprises equal parts passion and profession — is at it again.

The full-color 2025 calendar features local homes built between 1933 and 1946 with notes on the structures, the eras they represent and residents past and present.

Selling for \$10 apiece at a handful of local spots, including Costa Mesa's Eastside Mini-Mart, the Kéan Coffee on Westcliff Drive in Newport Beach and the Costa Mesa Historical Society, the publication's proceeds benefit the volunteer-run historical society.

Since the initial calendar was released in December 2021, Pina

has worked her way chronologically through a spreadsheet of historical properties, beginning in the early 1900s and advancing through decades with each installment.

"You can see the progress of how buildings change, the architectural styles," she said in an interview Monday. "[And] 1933 was a big year for Costa Mesa because a big earthquake [in Long Beach] damaged so many of our historic properties. It was a period of recuperation."

One residence featured on this year's cover — a California-style bungalow located at 1965 Santa Ana Ave. — was the former home of Harry and Claire Wright, owners of the erstwhile H.W. Wright Co. Hardware, one of Costa Mesa's oldest businesses.

Built in 1933 on the corner of

See **Homes**, page A7

OC Brick Convention builds for charity

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

The OC Brick Convention is building up to its third annual event in Costa Mesa and raising money for charity.

Billed as the largest Lego fan event in California, the convention will take place at the OC Fair & Events Center on Jan. 11 and 12. Lego lovers of all ages are expected to turn out for the event, which will expand on last year's convention.

"We are pulling out all the stops for the 2025 event with twice as many Lego creations as the inaugural event," Brick Convention founder Greyson J. Riley said in a statement.

The 24-year-old Riley is the author of "Medieval LEGO," a book that teaches medieval history through Lego illustrations. He began organizing Lego conventions at the age of 14, and his events now take place across the country in major cities like Memphis, Orlando and New Orleans.

Since the Denmark-based Lego company first began producing its colorful plastic building blocks in 1949, the children's toy has grown in to a worldwide brand with movies, games and amusement parks, like the nearby Legoland California Resort in Carlsbad. The toy has also developed a strong adult fan base and many of the sets have become collectibles.

"Lego is so much more than a toy," Riley said. "The OC Brick Convention will show attendees that all of the possibilities with Lego are endless."

Professional Lego artists



Courtesy of OC Brick Convention

OC BRICK CONVENTION'S third annual event takes place Jan. 11 and 12 at OC Fair & Events Center.

will be on hand, building creations and mingling with other Lego enthusiasts. The event will also have a section dubbed the Construction Zone, with thousands of bricks for attendees to build themselves. The Castle Build Zone will give fans a chance to participate in the building of a medieval Lego creation while the Star Wars Zone will feature builds inspired by the Star Wars galaxy. Multiple vendors will be on site selling new and retired Lego sets. Fans can also look forward

to meet-and-greets with Lego celebrities, like Lego social media influencer Madison Rice and Baltimore-based professional Lego artist, Mel Brown. Brown has been featured on reality competition shows like "LEGO MASTERS" on Fox (season 1) and the Food Network's limited series, "Buddy vs. Christmas." Amado Canlas Pinlac, known in the Lego world as ACPin, will also have a full gallery of his award-winning Lego Star Wars and botanical displays.

Since launching in 2023,

OC Brick Convention has raised over \$24,000 for charity. This year a portion of the proceeds from ticket sales will go towards Creations for Charity, an online-based nonprofit that buys new Lego sets for underprivileged children around the world during the holidays. The volunteer-run organization distributes the sets to shelters, orphanages, hospitals and schools in underserved areas.

Tickets to the OC Brick Convention are priced at \$14.99 online and \$20 at the door. Parking is \$12. Two

sessions are scheduled each day, the first from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the second from 2 to 5 p.m. Both sessions on both days offer the same exhibits and activities.

Riley said fans of all ages will find something to help build their love of Legos. "We look forward to putting on one of the largest Lego fan events in the world here in Costa Mesa in January," he said.

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"Lego is so much more than a toy. The OC Brick Convention will show attendees that all of the possibilities with Lego are endless."

— Brick Convention founder Greyson J. Riley



UCI Health Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center & Ambulatory Care

UCI Health

Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center



TEENAGER

Continued from page A1

ling said. "He has been incredible. I keep telling him all the time, 'Come back in two years, I'll hire you.' Every step of the way, no one has told him what to do, he has proposed everything he could. He's a pretty amazing kid."

Rohen got some seed money and purchased automated blood pressure cuffs, plus a log book so participants could track their results.

Sixty of the cuffs were given away at FAM's Adopt-A-Family Christmas event, held at their company headquarters in San Clemente on Dec. 21. This was the launch of his "Health in Your Hands" project, as Rohen and his team were provided a booth.

Rohen also gave out a pamphlet, created in tandem with a cardiologist and a representative from the Orange County Health Care Agency, that describes what results mean and refers patients to local free clinics.

"It allows people to be proactive about their own healthcare at home," Rohen said. "It's not just for themselves. They can use it for their parents, their partner, their kids. Once you have it at your house, it really is a very helpful tool if you know how to use it."

He recruited other St. Margaret's students, Claire Martin and Sienna Ganem, to serve as translators into Spanish.

Nurse Karen Mora, who works with the Capistrano Unified School District, was another volunteer who answered Rohen's call to help out at the event.

"We were checking the blood pressure right there at the table and showing them how to use the machines," Mora said. "It went extremely well. We gave all of the blood pressure cuffs

away. Rohen didn't think we would give them all away, but everybody wanted them. And actually, on screening the clients there, we found that a couple of the readings were quite high. We referred them to the appropriate clinics in the area.

"I think it was a vital connection to the community and promoting health in the community. Kudos to his project; I'm glad I was a part of that."

Rohen said many of the "Health in Your Hands" clinic visitors were Latino, Ukrainian or Russian.

One woman at the event had symptoms of headache and dizziness and had skipped her medication that morning, Rohen said. Her blood pressure categorized her as hypertension Stage 2, and her daughter was called to come pick her up and give her her medication at once.

This helped show the teen how much a simple screening could accomplish.

"I was super-happy with [the event]," Rohen said. "Learning about an issue from a data standpoint, from analyzing the math, that's completely different from actually showing up and meeting the people and seeing the benefits of the project."

FAM, established in 1999, is one of the larger nonprofits in south O.C. and typically serves as far north as Irvine. Schickling said FAM gave out 2.6 million pounds of food in 2023, serving about 22,000 people.

The organization also operates two shelters, the Gilchrist House for women and their children and the FAMily House.

"Our goal is prevention, first off, and second, getting people back on their feet together," Schickling said. "As much as possible, we like to keep husbands and wives and their children to-



Photos courtesy of Brooke Utterback | Family Assistance Ministries

NURSE KAREN MORA and St. Margaret's School students Rohen Vargo, Claire Martin and Sienna Ganem participate in a blood pressure screening clinic on Dec. 21.

gether because then they stay together."

Rohen wants to continue collaborating with the organization in the future. He said he plans to offer the same type of clinic at the two shelters if he can secure more funding.

He also hopes to forge relationships with other food pantries in San Clemente, where he lives.

Schickling won't be surprised if he successfully meets that goal.

"So many of our clients, they don't get the type of healthcare that they need, and a basic healthcare is blood pressure," she said. "Rohen is very persistent, and he was very passionate about wanting to help people and help them in a different way, help them with something that they might not have available to them."

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NURSE KAREN MORA demonstrates a blood pressure cuff on Sienna Ganem during the blood pressure clinic on Dec. 21.

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COLIN MOCHRIE and Asad Mecci star in "Hyprov: Improv Under Hypnosis" at the Irvine Barclay Theatre.

TRANCE

Continued from page A1

The show begins with Mecci inviting 20 volunteers from the audience on stage. Each volunteer is hypnotized, and those most receptive to the hypnosis

remain on stage to improvise the rest of the show with Mochrie. The unconscious minds of the participants steer the show's course, making each 90-minute performance a new and original experience. Hypnosis is believed to be a state of altered con-



Photos courtesy of the Irvine Barclay Theatre

"HYPROV: IMPROV Under Hypnosis" at the Irvine Barclay Theatre combines improv comedy with hypnosis.

sciousness achieved by focusing on a certain thought or object. People under hypnosis are thought to be more susceptible to suggestion, which is why hypnosis is sometimes used to help with quitting smoking or breaking bad habits. Suggestion is key to good improv, which is performed unscripted and comes to life spontaneously.

Certified by the National Guild of Hypnotists, Mecci

is no stranger to putting his expertise to creative use. He has used hypnosis to help many professional athletes, like tennis and basketball players, by teaching visualization and mental imagery techniques to help enhance their abilities. He collaborated with figure-skating coach Brian Orser to develop a visualization application used by Orser and the athletes he coached in the 2014 and 2018 Winter

Olympics.

Mecci has also been hired by major corporations to teach motivation and stress management using hypnosis. Just this year he released an album titled "An Exploration of Hypnotic Sound" with Canadian-American singer/songwriter Rufus Wainwright.

In 2015, Mecci teamed up with Mochrie to create "Hyprov" (pronounced hip-rawv) at Second City in

Toronto, Canada's local chapter of the improv and sketch comedy troupe. After developing the show on the local stage, the duo took the show on the road in 2016, first landing in Just for Laughs London, followed by Just for Laughs Montreal and then Edinburgh Fringe.

Rave reviews lead to "Hyprov: Improv Under Hypnosis" embarking on a 100-city tour from 2019 until 2023. The tour included a 12-week stint off-Broadway and a six-month residence at Harrah's in Las Vegas.

"It's been an incredible journey," said Mecci.

Now, Mecci and Mochrie prepare to bring the show to Orange County where they hopes to put local audiences in a trance.

Irvine Barclay Theatre is located at 4242 Campus Drive, Irvine. Tickets range from \$39 to \$135 and are available at thebarclay.org.

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Thomas Edward Roletti

Thomas Roletti, 64, of Sun City, Arizona, passed away on December 13, 2024. Born in Newport Beach, California, to Edward and Patricia Roletti, Thomas spent his early years in Southern California, where he graduated from Newport Harbor High School in 1978. He later moved to Arizona, enjoying over three decades of life in the desert.

Thomas worked in the transportation and shipping industries for almost thirty years before retiring. He was known for his love of Italian cuisine, seafood, and enjoying time out on the ocean, which brought him joy throughout his life. He is lovingly remembered by his siblings, Susan Roletti Franklin (Wayne) and Michael Roletti (Debbie); his nephews and niece, Jason Franklin, Barret Franklin (Lea), Shannon Franklin Hegarty (Terrence), and Michael Roletti Jr.; and friends and extended family.

The family extends their heartfelt gratitude to Banner Boswell Medical Center and Regency Mortuary for their compassionate care. Honoring Thomas' wishes, his ashes were scattered off the California coast, where he created some of his most treasured childhood memories. In lieu of flowers, the family welcomes donations to the Mae House (www.maehouse.org), a residential community and home for adults with developmental disabilities including a beloved family member.

Thomas will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

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The end of 'End of the Range' in Irvine

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

"End of the Range: Charlotte Skinner in the Eastern Sierra" is coming to an end on Jan. 18 at UC Irvine Jack and Shanaz Langson Institute and Museum of California Art. Art lovers have only a couple weeks left to enjoy the exhibition that highlights the work of the influential landscape painter.

Organized by the Nevada Museum of Art, the show contains 31 paintings, plus drawings and photographs that span Skinner's lifelong career. Additionally, 24 works from the artist's close circle of friends and 13 related paintings from Langson IMCA's collection are included.

"Charlotte Skinner was a remarkable individual, and it has been a privilege to shed light on her creative practice and share her artistry with a broad audience," exhibition curator Kolin L. Perry, said in a statement.

Ahead of the closing, Langson IMCA, temporarily located at 18881 Von Karman Ave., Suite 100, will host a Gallery Talk with UC Irvine earth system science professor Julie Ferguson and anthropology professor Valerie A. Olson on Jan. 11.

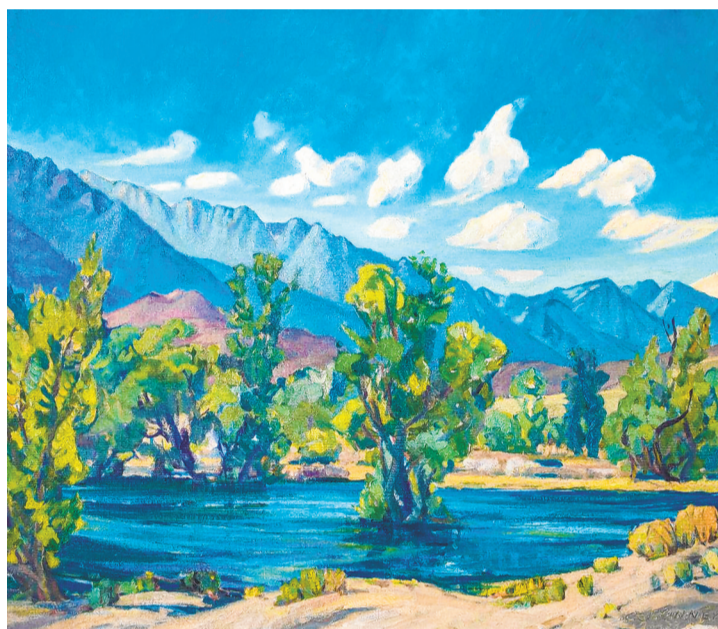
Charlotte Butler Skinner (1879 to 1963) was known for her oil paintings of the Sierra Nevada mountain range and surrounding desert country like Owens Valley, Lone Pine Peak and

Mount Whitney, which captured the splendor of the landscape before it was drastically altered by the Los Angeles Aqueduct. Her detailed impressions of the jagged peaks and rugged terrain of natural rock formations can be viewed for their beauty but also as preserved moments in history.

The expansive "Pasture Lands, Owens Valley" depicts a sprawling valley with mountains as purple as those one might picture when listening to the lyrics of "America, the Beautiful." The lush greenery of "Rampant Owen's River, 1938" feels serene and tranquil, making it easy to imagine what it must have felt like on the riverbank the afternoon Skinner painted it.

The reverence she had for her majestic surroundings is evident in the vibrant works. Her passion also made itself known when Skinner ran for public office, hoping to combat the diversion of water from Owens Lake to L.A. When her efforts failed, Skinner and her husband moved to Eugene, Oreg., in 1933, while extended family remained on their 10-acre homestead in California.

Skinner would later resettle on the central California coast, immersing herself in printmaking, teaching children's art classes and collecting Native American baskets, two of which are featured in the Irvine exhibition. Landscape painting however,



ABOVE: Charlotte Butler Skinner's "Rocks," date unknown, is on display at UC Irvine Jack and Shanaz Langson Institute and Museum of California Art.

LEFT: "Rampant Owen's River," Charlotte Butler Skinner, 1938, oil on canvas, 26 inches by 30 inches.

Photos courtesy of the Langson Institute and Museum of California Art

remained her focus the rest of her days.

Changes the Owens Valley and Eastern Sierra

have undergone since Skinner captured the area on canvas will be the focus of the Gallery Talk with

Ferguson and Olson.

Ferguson has a research background in reconstructing past changes in climate

through the chemical composition of shells and deep-sea sediments. As an environmental anthropologist, Olson's research focuses on largely unpopulated environments, like ocean subsurfaces, and how those remote areas become sites for new ecological technologies and politics. The two educators will use their combined expertise to discuss the geological and social histories of the Sierra Nevada and Owens Valley desert, giving the audience a renewed vision of Skinner's works.

The Gallery Talk is free and open to the public, with no advanced registration necessary, taking place on Jan. 11 at 11 a.m.

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COLUMN | **PATRICE APODACA**

Chapman experts make an economic forecast for the coming year

Economic forecasting is a data-driven exercise. Lots and lots of numbers are crunched and formulas applied. Only math geeks need apply.

Or so the stodgy image would lead us to believe.

But there's more to it than that. Otherwise, every forecast would predict exactly the same thing. While the majority tend to move in the same direction with their predictions, there's always some divergence when it comes to degrees of change expected, and some forecasters have been known to buck the consensus and go out on a limb on occasion.

The fact is that a certain amount of art is involved in the discipline of divining our economic future, even with the most rigorously statistics-based forecasts. Just ask the folks behind Chapman University's closely watched economic forecast.

"It definitely is not a perfect science," said Raymond Sfeir, the director of

Chapman's A. Gary Anderson Center for Economic Research and Anderson



Chair of Economic Analysis. Sfeir and Chapman's President Emeritus James Doti are the lead authors of the forecast.

"There is an art to it. You cannot just run the model and say 'This is it.' The equations cannot depict the real world 100%. You need to make sense of what the equations are giving you."

That appreciation for nuance — along with a keen attention to the ways that economic variables connect with other variables — might explain the Chapman forecast's reputation for a relatively high level of accuracy over its 47-year history.

When revealing its annual forecast last month, Chapman included a comparison of its accuracy vs. other well-known forecasters such as investment banking giants Morgan Stanley and Goldman

See *Apodaca*, page A9



Allen J. Schaben | Los Angeles Times

A VIEW OF the campus of Chapman University in Orange in June 2022.

MAILBAG

'Future' coverage brought up memories of the past

If ever there was a movie that has stood the test of time (pun intended) it would be "Back to the Future" with Michael J. Fox and Christopher Lloyd.

The article, "Club's cars travel to 'Future' show" in the Dec. 29 Daily Pilot & TimesOC covered the film and musical at Segerstrom pretty well with emphasis on the DeLorean car that whisked Marty and Doc back in time.

I've seen the movie and its two follow-up films many times through the years, and even though I know exactly what is going to happen in the movie, it's not unlike seeing it for the first time when it first came out back in 1985. There are lines and phrases from the movie I've heard hundreds



AUTOGRAPHS FROM cast and crew of the 1985 film "Back to the Future" appear on a DeLorean outside the opening of the musical version at Segerstrom Center for the Arts Dec. 29.

Don Leach
Staff
Photographer

of times but still conjure up mental images of those particular scenes. When Marty says to Doc Brown, "Whoa, that's heavy Doc." And Doc replies with his, "There's that word again. 'Heavy.' Why are things so

heavy in the future?" Christopher Lloyd, even though he appears gruff and uneven in the movie, adds a certain amount of style and class. And like he says in the movie, "If you're gonna build a time machine into a car, why not do it with some style?" referring to the DeLorean.

My favorite line from Doc would have to be, "1.21 gigawatts! 1.21 gigawatts. Great Scott!" Yeah Doc,

great Scott, what a movie for all time because when you have a time machine, you have all the time you need.

Bill Spitalnick
Newport Beach

Surf City on readers' minds

The recent statement by Huntington Beach Mayor Pat Burns regarding the Superior Court's decision to dismiss the state's lawsuit over voter ID laws is, frankly, poppycock. While it is true that the court dismissed the state's case, the

See *Mailbag*, page A10

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Charlotte Butler Skinner, *Rocks*, date unknown, Oil on board, 13 x 15 in. Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art, bequest of John A. White, Jr., in memory of Charlotte Skinner's grandson, James Skinner.

End of the Range: Charlotte Skinner in the Eastern Sierra

Final
Weeks

Closes January 18, 2025

Exhibition on view at:
18881 Von Karman Avenue, Suite 100, Irvine, CA 92612

Explore the artistry of Charlotte B. Skinner (1879-1963), renowned for her vibrant depictions of California's Sierra Nevada and Owens Valley desert country. This exhibition, organized by the Nevada Museum of Art, has been generously supported by John A. White, Jr., in memory of Charlotte Skinner's grandson, James Skinner.

Free admission and free two-hour parking
Open Tuesday – Saturday, 10 am – 4 pm

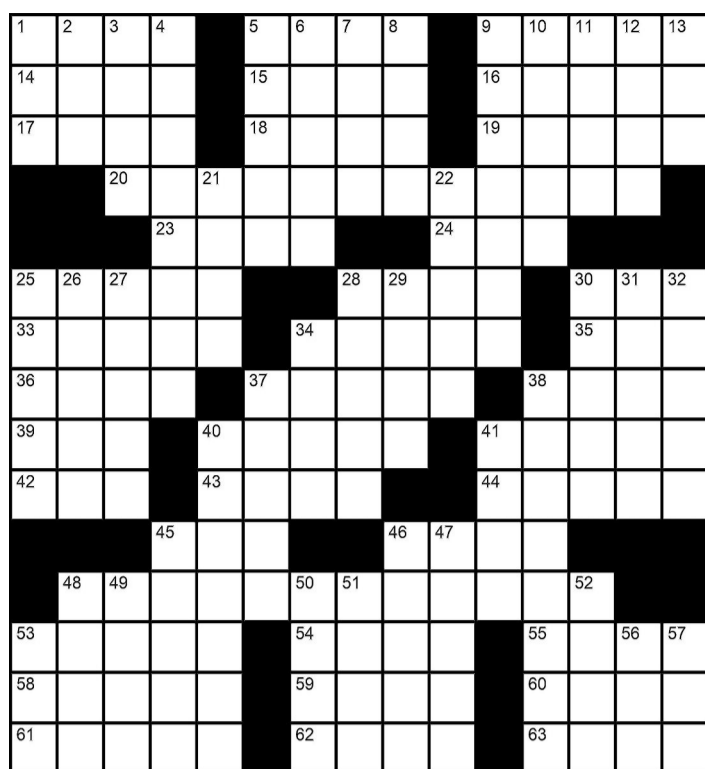
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UCI Jack & Shanaz Langson
Institute & Museum of California Art

THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Stella Zawistowski

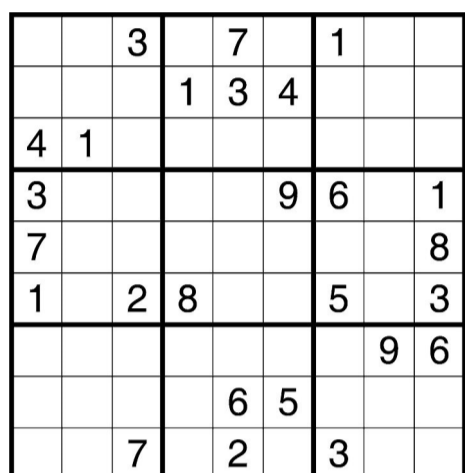
- ACROSS**
 1 Impartial
 5 Newspaper essay
 9 Well-dressed
 14 Otherwise
 15 "Grizzly" animal
 16 Edition of a newspaper
 17 Sandwich shop
 18 Merit
 19 Enormous
 20 Set of reference books: Abbr.
 23 Short run
 24 "Why _ you still here?"
 25 Deep yellow
 28 People of Arizona
 30 Every bit of
 33 Took a risk
 34 Body lotion brand
 35 Clairol product
 36 "Pants on fire" person
 37 Maker of cookies
 38 Extra amount
 39 Pen fluid
 40 Nightclub charge
 41 Subject for discussion
 42 Spelling competition
 43 Tampa Bay baseball team
 44 Cage for rabbits
 45 "I agree"
 46 Look over quickly
 48 Collection of an artist's top songs: 2 wds.
 53 Handed out
 54 Lotion additive
 55 Mysterious glow
 58 America's national bird
 59 Buy-for-less event
 60 Unbending
 61 Tuba's section
 62 "Have you _ seen such a thing?"



SUDOKU

By the Mepham Group

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



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

63 Require

DOWN

- 1 Gave a snack to
 2 Bitter beer
 3 Archipelago part
 4 Rudolph, Comet, or Vixen
 5 Does as told

6 Georgia fruit

7 English nobleman

8 First 007 film: 2 wds.

9 Lagos's country

10 "All kidding _"

11 TV chef Ming

12 Fish in a can

13 To date

21 Hallmark product

22 Origami material

25 Go off script: 2 wds.

26 Stephen King's state

27 Slow down

28 Walks in nature

29 Finished

30 Take in

31 Kind of poetry

32 Bloodsucking creature

34 Maritime force

37 Brag

38 Everest or Fuji

40 Makes from scratch

41 Bangkok native

45 Shouts

46 Took unlawfully

47 Merriment

48 Equipment

49 Indian music variety

50 Comfortable feeling

51 Eastern European

52 Certain

53 Secretary

56 Fish eggs

57 Kit _ caboodle

Tribune Media Services



Courtesy of Renee M. Pina

HARRY AND CLAIRE Wright, in an undated photo, stand in front of a 1933 home built at Newport Boulevard and Rochester Street, relocated to 1965 Santa Ana Ave.

HOMES

Continued from page A1

Newport Boulevard and Rochester Street, the Wright House was moved in 1950 and more recently renovated by its current owners, who purchased it in 1999.

"A lot of older homes were on farmland, and as owners were selling off the lots and downsizing, they basically had to move the homes," Pina said of a mass migration of historic buildings to new addresses.

Growing up in a historic home in Long Beach and having worked in the real estate industry since 1988, first as a loan processor and title secretary, then as an agent, Pina is on a mission to preserve properties by highlighting the city's storied structures while helping owners seek historic designations.

That's been a bit of an uphill climb in Costa Mesa, where officials have identified potentially historic properties but have yet to implement a comprehensive preservation program.

A single early 20th-century craftsman-style residence — the Huscroft House — was approved by city leaders in 2008 for

designation under California's Mills Act, which offers owners of historic homes a tax break in exchange for their commitment to restoring and preserving properties.

Today, homeowners seeking a Mills Act determination must pay \$10,000 for an appraisal of a home's historical value, a bridge too far for most.

But Costa Mesa's John Barnett, who purchased an English Revival-style home at 208 Magnolia St. in 2020 and painstakingly renovated the interior, earlier this year crossed that bridge, becoming the city's second Mills Act owner.

The property was featured in the 2023 edition of Pina's "Historic Homes of Costa Mesa."

"It was a long freaking process, I'll tell you," Barnett said Tuesday, describing a three-year odyssey through the city's planning department. "The people at the city were all nice, there was just no sense of urgency. Hopefully, now that this one has been done, it will be easier to get other ones through."

The homeowner advises others like him to first discuss their properties with the Costa Mesa Historical Society, whose members were granted a role in considering designations after

the city disbanded its Historical Preservation Committee.

"Go to the Historical Society, get on their list and say, yes, this is a house we want to protect," Barnett advised. "They're one of the gatekeepers, so I would do that first before spending any money."

In addition to a steep Mills Act fee, Pina says skyrocketing land values in Orange County aren't doing any favors to the cause of historical preservation, instead incentivizing owners to sell to developers or others seeking to create income properties.

"Costa Mesa homes are selling for \$4 million now — we're basically Newport Beach with a different ZIP code," said Pina, who represents Costa Mesa on the Santa Ana nonprofit Preserve Orange County.

"I'd like to see more people who are passionate about this come together. That's why I do this calendar."

Calendars can be purchased at the Costa Mesa Historical Society, Kéan Coffee, Eastside Mini Mart or by visiting reneempina@gmail.com, emailing reneempina@gmail.com or calling (949) 698-2003.

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Singer shares her sobriety struggle on second album



Eric Licas

POP SINGER Kitty Noir poses at the Lab in Costa Mesa Thursday. Her sophomore album, "War Stories," drops Jan. 15.

BY ERIC LICAS

Jilan Ji carries a lavender coin bearing a quote from Shakespeare's "Hamlet" with her everywhere she goes. The words of Polonius — "To thine own self be true" — shine through its paint.

The token signifies one of her proudest achievements: her first 365 days of sobriety. To earn it, she had to find herself after years of substance abuse had stripped away practically everything she had to live for beyond staying high.

It's been about two years since she found the strength to tell a friend she was done and wanted to get clean. He took her to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting that night, and that was her first step toward regaining control of her life. She had found work as a traveling nurse before deciding to go back to school and recently settled on a major in film at Orange Coast College. She lives in her own apartment with her cat on campus, something she never

thought she could have managed when she was using.

"I learned a lot of life lessons," she said. "I learned morals and boundaries. I'm a way stronger person, in general. I know how to stick up for myself now. I know not to put myself in toxic situations. I've learned so much from those experiences."

She also turned to music as an outlet and wrapped up her first tour of performances under the stage name Kitty Noir last year. Since then she's been pouring her soul into her sophomore album. She plans to release "War Stories" on Jan. 15, her "sober birthday."

The pop singer expanded her skills for her second full-length effort, mixing and mastering all but two of the 15 tracks on the upcoming record. She was partly inspired by studio time spent with producer J Beatzz, who worked on the other two. Other notable artists he's

See *Singer*, page A10

APODACA

Continued from page A6

Sachs and other universities like UCLA. This study is performed every couple of years — a clever bit of data-driven marketing that has helped solidify the stature of the economics department and, arguably, the university as a whole.

Two years ago, Chapman's analysis found that it ranked No. 1 in accuracy for its prediction of the nation's real gross domestic product (GDP) from 2004 to 2021 — a range of time, it should be noted, that included the Great Recession and the COVID-19 pandemic. This time around it retained the top position, although it pointed out that the scores were extremely close

within the upper echelon. Economic forecasting, it turns out, is also a game of inches.

Those inches matter though. Chapman's forecast is intently followed by members of the business community. Hundreds of them attend the forecast presentation in person, and thousands more watch online, hoping to glean clues that will be utilized in their decision-making.

They are eager to know the most likely outcomes for the direction of the economy in the coming year. Will we keep growing? If so, how much? What are the chances of a recession? What will happen with interest rates, consumer spending and prices? The answers to all these questions will influence important choices they make

about their companies, including whether 2025 will be the right time to expand and hire more workers.

Sfeir acknowledged that some factors that have influenced the economy have been trickier to predict, and as a result some assumptions Chapman has made have been a bit off at times. He was surprised, for example, by consumer behavior during and after the pandemic, when Americans initially splurged on manufactured goods, followed by a dramatic shift to spending on services and experiences such as travel and restaurant dining.

So what did Chapman predict in its latest forecast?

To broadly summarize, no recession is expected in

2025. The economy will continue to grow, but more slowly and mainly because of "massive injections of fiscal stimulus" by the federal government. Inflation will rise, and the Federal Reserve Board will continue lowering interest rates, but not much.

Sfeir does have worries, primarily about the huge federal deficit that politicians in both major parties not only avoid dealing with but actively contribute to by promoting measures that will continue to balloon the debt. That's a big negative for the economy, he said, and a guarantee that an ever-growing share of federal revenues will be used just to service the debt.

There are other open questions and causes for concern. Notably, the in-

coming administration has promised to impose steep tariffs on foreign goods, which Sfeir said would lead to higher consumer prices.

"We know this is not going to help inflation," he said. "That's why interest rates will not go down much next year. We expect inflation next year to go up."

The impact of the immigration policies the new administration intends to pursue is another potential negative. If thousands and thousands of undocumented immigrants are deported, that would result in higher costs for businesses and higher prices for consumers. But Sfeir said it's impossible to give a definitive prediction without knowing the details and scope of the policies.

What's more, Orange

County and California overall have some particular issues — primarily our extremely high housing costs — that are expected to continue to be a drag on the economy.

As usual, these economic prognostications include all sorts of caveats. In spite of its solid track record, Chapman's forecast is not meant to be an attempt at fortune telling. It's an educated guess backed by all those numbers it continually collects and analyzes — coupled with a hearty application of artistic license.

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

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SINGER

Continued from page A9

lent his talents to include Travis Scott, Nicki Minaj, Future, Rihanna, Miguel, Chris Brown, Stevie Wonder and OutKast.

Noir also adds shades of grit to her pop star persona on "War Stories," delving deeper into her struggle with addiction and some of the underlying trauma associated with it. Writing the song "Therapy Session," for example, felt so personal that she almost held back on releasing it.

"I had to put myself in a really dark place, and I had to mentally put myself back where I was years ago when I was out using," Noir said. "I felt a lot of the feelings and the anger and you can hear that on the song ["Therapy Session"] where I'm almost screaming."

Another song, "Dear Grandma," refers to the day she missed her grandmother's funeral because she was getting high at a motel instead. It serves as an apology, a letter of gratitude and a reminder to cherish the limited time we have with our loved



Courtesy of Kitty Noir

KITTY NOIR works the board at Birdland Studios in Los Angeles on Thursday. She's releasing her second album, "War Stories" on Jan. 15, on the anniversary of the date she became sober. It includes songs about her struggle with addiction.

ones.

Many of the tracks on her new album are downbeat anthems of self reflection. Noir said she hopes opening up about her

experiences will help people in similar situations know they're not alone, and a life after addiction is possible.

Life in recovery has its

own challenges. Alcohol is ubiquitous in many social settings for young adults, making it harder for people working on their sobriety like Noir to meet new

people. At times, she's had to step away from individuals in order to stay on the path she has chosen for herself.

"I can't go out with

them. It's not that I can't, but I don't want to. They kind of peer pressure me sometimes, and that's when I'm like, 'OK, I'm going to stop hanging out with you because I don't want to be around [drugs and alcohol], and you just don't understand. I'd rather surround myself with people who do understand.'

Building a community of people working toward the same goal of recovery has been critical for her. Many of them have become part of the modest fan base she has been cultivating, and finally getting a chance to connect with them at live shows has been one of the most gratifying experiences of her life.

"I would meet them at one and they were like 'When's your next show?' And so they kept coming to different shows, and it was really cool to see people coming back."

She said she's proud to be among a relative handful of pop artists working to build a space where people overcoming their addictions are seen and can express themselves.

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Twitter: @EricLicas

MAILBAG

Continued from page A6

mayor failed to address a critical legal nuance: The state cannot proceed with litigation until the law in question is implemented and subsequently violated. Simply put, no case can move forward until the law is broken.

As a taxpayer in Huntington Beach, I demand transparency regarding the city's legal expenses over the past year. The previous council majority spent significant taxpayer funds on litigation, often in an apparent attempt to flout established laws.

These expenditures must be fully disclosed to the residents of Huntington Beach, especially given the city's growing financial challenges.

HOW TO GET PUBLISHED

Send an email to erik.haugli@latimes.com and include your full name, hometown and phone number (for verification purposes) with your submission. All letters should be kept to 350 words or less and address local issues and events. The Daily Pilot reserves the right to edit all accepted submissions for clarity, accuracy and length.

City Atty. Michael Gates claimed in the press release, "Today was another great day in court, the judge got it right yet again. This is another black eye for the State of California, and a tremendous win for the City of Huntington Beach and election integrity."

This statement, however, is difficult to celebrate when Huntington Beach's financial standing continues to slide into the red. What exactly is being pri-

oritized here — genuine governance or political theater?

Residents deserve accountability and answers, not spin and unnecessary legal battles.

Andrew Einhorn
Huntington Beach

Regarding the nonresident's letter in the Daily Pilot (Dec. 22) about boycotting Huntington Beach, that money will not be missed. The City Council, which includes seven con-

servative votes, was elected by the citizens of H.B. We couldn't care less about what others think, but it gives them something to cry about. Think MAGA.

Peter Anderson
Huntington Beach

As we transition in 2025, many past letters to the editor have chastised our current conservative Huntington Beach leaders over their rudderless "right-wingery." Those, in turn, have been called out by various MAGA minions who decry both their frequency and fulminations. Fair enough.

However, for critics to complain that the Daily Pilot does not print a "fair and balanced" Mailbag, especially when those critics' letters are published, and competing local newspapers don't even

publish letters from readers, is simply unfounded.

The Daily Pilot Mailbag is a reflection of community views and input. Readers must remember that this is not the L.A. Times writ large. While The Times is the largest metropolitan daily newspaper in the country, the Daily Pilot is focused largely on Orange County coastal communities. It maintains the editorial flexibility to serve its local readership fairly and responsibly. I think it does a good job.

I am for diversity and transparency in all facets of civic affairs and for balanced coverage of local actions and issues. However, our citizens must feel they are being listened to and well-represented in order to be as supportive as our current leaders would like them to be.

When such is not the case, responsible criticism can and should be expressed. Is that not fair?

Tim Geddes
Huntington Beach

Now that the ballot initiative petitions regarding Huntington Beach public libraries have both been qualified for the ballot, what will the openly partisan Huntington Beach City Council choose to do? Citizen-led ballot petitions are examples of democracy in action. Our taxpayer dollars have built and sustained the city's public libraries for over 100 years. We deserve the right to vote on how our public institutions will acquire materials and be managed. Will we get to?

Cathey Ryder
Huntington Beach



TUMI



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SUR LA TABLE



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