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Disney workers prepare to decide on strike

The vote scheduled for Friday could pave the way for a union coalition to call for a strike at Disney theme parks for the first time in 40 years.

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

A hot labor summer is warming up at the Disneyland Resort. After filing a series of labor charges, a coalition of four major unions representing 14,000 Disney workers has scheduled a strike authorization vote this

week.

"We haven't been able to move the company on the issues most important to our members," said Andrea Zinder, president of UFCW Local 324. "The unfair labor practices that Disney has committed are so egregious that they interfere with our ability to

get a fair contract."

The strike vote slated for July 19 comes as the National Labor Relations Board is investigating alleged labor violations by the company.

Last month, the union coalition filed charges with the board claiming that more than 500 workers have faced unlawful intimidation, surveillance and disciplinary threats for wearing a union button depicting a Mickey Mouse-styled glove raised in a fist.

Disney has stated that the union buttons violate its "Disney Look" dress code.

Coleen Palmer, a Disneyland cashier, wore the button to work one day and said she was reprimanded by management for it within the first half hour of her shift.

"The intimidation is stressful for cast members," Palmer said of her co-workers. "But on the other hand, we are willing to stand up and say we are worth much more

"... we are willing to stand up and say we are worth much more than this when it comes to contract talks."

— Coleen Palmer
Disneyland cashier



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

A CRANE LOWERS the spire on a carousel ride on Thursday in Costa Mesa, as vendors, ride operators and concessionaires assemble and prepare for the 2024 Orange County Fair, this year themed "Always a Good Time."

It's beginning to look a lot like OC Fair time

BY SARA CARDINE

With just a week to go before showtime, Costa Mesa's Orange County fairgrounds are undergoing a transformation from a calm agricultural complex to a top summertime destination for food, music and fun — the OC Fair is about to begin.

Themed "Always a Good Time," this year's celebration begins July 19 and runs Wednesdays through Sundays until closing day Aug. 18. As in recent years, tickets must be purchased online prior to arrival, as they will not be

Themed "Always a Good Time," this year's celebration at the Orange County fairgrounds in Costa Mesa begins July 19 and runs Wednesdays through Sundays through Aug. 18.

sold at the gate.

Fair organizers are continuing to cap daily attendance — a crowd control move undertaken during the pandemic — but this year the limit has been increased to 50,000 visitors per day. OC Fair & Event Center spokeswoman Terry Moore assured visitors that even on sold out days, there are ways to attend.

For example, visitors looking to

enjoy one of the many ticketed events and performances taking place during the fair will be able to access the entire fairgrounds on the day of the event.

"The great secret is that, for all of the shows at Pacific Amphitheatre, the Hangar and Action Sports Arena, those show tickets all include same-day fair admission," Moore said in a

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A GIANT REPRODUCTION of a box of popcorn is put into place on the fairgrounds to draw attention to food offerings at this year's Orange County Fair.



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

CAST MEMBERS prepare for the opening act of "À La Mode: The Art of Fashion" in the costume department backstage at the Pageant of the Masters in Laguna Beach.

Fashion-focused pageant to roll out 'splendor'

BY ANDREW TURNER

Throughout history, there have been countless examples of those who have gone to great lengths to stand out from the rest.

Snappy dressers spare no expense in putting together a complete look, and this summer, the Pageant of the Masters makes its own fashion statement.

"À La Mode: The Art of Fashion" opened last week at the Irvine Bowl in Laguna Beach, inviting the general public to awaken their inner fashionista with an evening of spectacular suits, glamorous gowns and fanciful footwear.

The longtime living picture show does not abandon the tableaux vivant tradition, but it does endeavor to stimulate the audience with a

"People have an iconic image of ... Edith Head or Grace Kelly's gold dress. As long as you capture that essence, the audience is going to recognize it."

— Reagan Foy
Costume director

handful of live-action representations of the figures they will see in recreated artworks in the production.

It opens with a runway show featuring live actors and models posing as

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ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



Courtesy of Leaders4LAX

LEADERS4LAX LEVELS THE PLAYING FIELD FOR GIRLS' LACROSSE IN ORANGE COUNTY PAGE A4

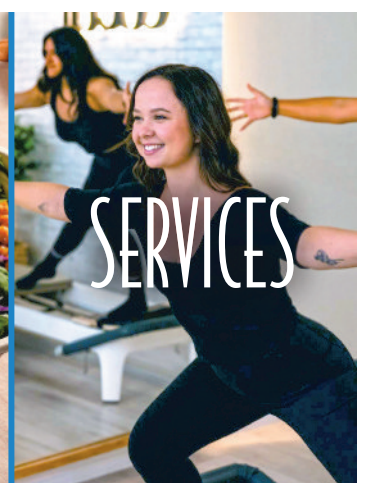
DOES THE BUENA PARK MALL HAVE ENOUGH PARKING FOR RETAIL AND RESIDENTS? PAGE A2

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Parking concerns raised at changing Buena Park Mall

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

Big changes are coming to the Buena Park Mall, including 1,300 residential units approved by city officials last year to replace its long-abandoned Sears building. Construction for the Village at Buena Park, the incoming housing development, is slated to begin this summer.

In May, Buena Park's planning commission unanimously approved a permit for a year-round Halloween entertainment attraction at the mall.

The proposed business would include seasonal mazes, classic horror-themed movie theaters and escape rooms in a city that bills itself as "Boo-ena Park" every October thanks to Knott's Scary Farm.

But the Halloween attraction has already provided a scare over parking at the mall.

John Parlet, owner of John's Incredible Pizza Co., which offers family-friendly buffets, rides and games, appealed the planning commission's decision last month.

Parlet pointed to a parking study for the Village at Buena Park that found available parking spaces will be cut in half by the development, a point of contention he said should have been considered at the planning commission meeting before the permit was approved.

"The grossly inadequate parking at the Mall is not offset by any benefit to the public and is a major detriment to the community,"



File Photo

JOHN'S INCREDIBLE Pizza Co.'s owner claims that there isn't enough parking for a Halloween business at Buena Park Mall.

the appeal claimed.

During the planning commission meeting, Robert Luther, co-owner of the proposed Halloween attraction, had agreed to have future employees park further away from John's Incredible Pizza Co., which has been a mall tenant since 2007.

But that didn't prove convincing enough to stop Parlet from filing his appeal.

City Council members considered the appeal on Tuesday during a public hearing as flagging malls

across Orange County have moved to incorporate housing into their future development plans.

City staff's position was that no additional parking was needed due to the operating hours of Luther's proposed business and state law that bans cities from imposing a minimum parking requirement on most development projects located within half a mile of a public transit.

A staff report noted that there will be surplus parking within the Village at Buena Park and that 511

spaces are going to be shared between residents and commercial businesses as part of the development plan.

The report further stated that the parking study assumed 100% tenancy at the mall, as opposed to the 65% occupancy rate it currently has.

Luther addressed council members at the meeting in making the case for his business, again.

"We are actually somewhat of an ideal tenant for this space in regards to parking as it might affect

John's Incredible Pizza," he said. "We don't even open until 7 p.m. By then, half the tenants of the mall or more are already closed."

The mall closes daily at 8 p.m. John's Incredible Pizza Co. closes every night at 10:30 p.m.

James Bastain, an attorney for the pizza company, claimed that future parking problems could cost the business as much as \$2 million in profits, a drop that would force it to close down.

"There's no way that [the mall is] going to be able to

attract new tenants if they don't have adequate parking," he said. "We need to revisit the parking issue and, hopefully, come up with a solution that can allow my client and the other tenants to stay in business."

Vice Mayor Joyce Ahn suggested that city staff speak with the mall's ownership about building public parking to get ahead of any potential issues with its mixed-use future.

For Councilman Connor Traut, the approval of a permit for Luther's proposed Halloween attraction at the mall wasn't the proper forum to revisit council's prior approval of the Village at Buena Park.

"I don't really see [parking] as a concern due to the 7 p.m. open time," Traut said. "There is a benefit to the public. It benefits ... surrounding businesses, not just [with] tax dollars but really bringing in foot traffic, as well."

Mayor Susan Sonne believed that Parlet's appeal wasn't so much about the planning commission's vote but City Council's prior approval of housing at the mall. She welcomed a future discussion on John's Incredible Pizza Co.'s concerns at a later date.

At the end of the hearing, council members voted unanimously to deny Parlet's appeal and uphold the approved permit for Luther's proposed business.

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Coming summer 2024 Cancer care reimagined UCI Health

Stanton is razing a Latino neighborhood. Is it following the law?

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

Alma Cortes, a mother of three, has lived in Stanton's Tina-Pacific neighborhood since she was a young girl in the mid-'90s.

Cortes remembers the Latino working-class community bordering Anaheim off Magnolia Avenue as one where residents knew each other, women swept their patios every morning and where a self-managed system of using trash bins reserved parking spaces amid overcrowding.

"A big reason why people stayed is because they already knew the neighborhood's routines," Cortes said. "Obviously, the rent was cheap, too. Landlords weren't going to raise it. If they did, they were going to have to start investing in repairs."

But as Stanton has bought almost all of the neighborhood in a years-long effort to redevelop it, Tina-Pacific isn't so easily recognizable, anymore.

Fenced-off plots mark where fourplexes have been razed by the city, empty units remain boarded up, and tarps cover leaky roofs after a rainy winter, with no future housing development in sight.

In June, Cortes decided to move her family out of their Tina Way apartment, where she was paying \$1,100 in monthly rent. She had some relocation assistance from a city-hired company to help cover a security deposit and the first month's rent for a new apartment outside of Stanton.

"I wanted to get out," she said. "They offered the



A FENCED-OFF empty lot in the Tina-Pacific neighborhood in Stanton.

money so I said, 'Let's just go.'"

For the past 15 years, Stanton has sought to raze and replace Tina-Pacific.

The city claimed the blighted neighborhood deteriorated to a point where it represented 15% of all police calls for service at one time.

But a lawsuit filed last year on behalf of the Tina-Pacific Neighborhood Assn., evicted tenants and the Kennedy Commission, argues that Stanton has violated state laws requiring advance relocation planning and assistance for displaced residents.

"A relocation plan isn't just about money," said Richard Walker, a Public Law Center attorney on the case. "It's not just cash for keys. It's about helping people find housing and making sure that they have a place to go to. If equally affordable housing is not available, then it's also compensation to help cover the rent for a period of time for those families."

Stanton's city manager

declined a TimesOC interview request, citing ongoing litigation.

In 2009, Stanton started buying land on the roughly 10-acre site through its redevelopment agency. By 2012, it acquired 25 out of 40 parcels and sought eminent domain powers before such agencies dissolved across the state. The city pushed forward without redevelopment funds until it became the landlord for all but nine remaining parcels.

Most recently, Stanton entered into an exclusive negotiating agreement with developers in 2021 to bring Magnolia Crossing, a proposed community of 116 market rate townhomes and 108 affordable housing units, to the site.

"The city [and] developers are, again, only negotiating," said HongDao Nguyen, Stanton's city attorney, during a special council meeting in May. "There's no project that will displace tenants and there's no need to replace housing because no project has been reached."



Photos by James Carbone

A WOMAN CROSSES Pacific Avenue in Stanton in a neighborhood where several acres are slated for demolition and development by the city.



A SKATEBOARDER crosses Magnolia Avenue in Stanton on Thursday. A lawsuit claims that Stanton is violating relocation laws for residents of the Tina-Pacific neighborhood displaced by the city's development plans.

Council members followed Nguyen's report by voting unanimously to terminate the exclusive negotiating agreement, citing the suit as the reason why.

"The purpose of the lawsuit has nothing to do with blocking redevelopment in the neighborhood," said Alfredo Amoedo, a pro bono attorney on the case. "Our plaintiffs want the redevelopment to go forward, but they want it to be done in compliance with the law."

Stanton is alleged in the complaint to have also indirectly displaced residents

through a variety of means as housing has only become more substandard under city ownership.

According to court documents, a company hired by the city is said to have sent relocation notices to residents due to storm damage to their property, but necessary repairs were never made.

A management company working on Stanton's behalf allegedly refused to accept rent payments from some tenants while miscalculating back rent owed from others, both leading to resi-

dents leaving the neighborhood.

When evictions have been carried out, the suit questions whether they were last resort actions or not.

The Kennedy Commission, a nonprofit that advocates for affordable housing, has sent organizers into Tina-Pacific for the past few years. Canvassers collected stories of residents feeling pressured by the management company into signing relocation agreements with

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Climate is topic of collaborative research

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

As temperatures rise throughout Southern California this summer, residents might be monitoring their lawns, houseplants and backyards. Students from Chapman University's Schmid College of Science and Technology have also been monitoring the vegetation in Orange County's greater backyard. The local students partnered with the Irvine Ranch Conservancy for a research project aimed at determining the highest temperatures that can be withstood by the region's native plant species.

"It was an incredible opportunity for our students to be able to explore their own backyard, to be able to contribute to our understanding of the planet and to be able to recognize themselves as scientists," said Gregory Goldsmith, associate professor of biological sciences at Chapman University.

The nonprofit Irvine Ranch Conservancy aims to steward the "protection, restoration and enhancement of urban wildlands" in Southern California, including the 40,000 acres of open land at Irvine Ranch in Orange County. Goldsmith set up the collaboration between Chapman University and the conservancy by reaching out to the latter's monitoring and research team program manager, Eliza Hernandez.

"My interest as a professor is always in creating experiences for students that are as real as possible relative to what I expect them to see when they graduate and leave campus," said Goldsmith.

Goldsmith was looking for a way for students to not only participate in a real research project but also give back to the community.

"At IRC, we are always thinking about how we can engage students to foster environmental stewardship, so working with Professor Goldsmith and his class on this research project was a great opportunity to inspire future gen-

"Understanding different thermal tolerances will help us make better conservation, management and restoration decisions."

— Gregory Goldsmith

associate professor of biological sciences at Chapman University

erations," said Hernandez. "Additionally, the student-led research furthers our understanding of climate change effects on coastal sage scrub and can inform IRC's management of this threatened plant community into the future."

Students visited different sites within Irvine Ranch Natural Landmarks, such as Hicks Haul Road and Saddleback Wilderness, to practice their identification of native plant species and contributed to a restoration project while ultimately collecting their own research data. Students collected data on 12 different plant species by measuring the thermal tolerance of leaves from each species. Leaf thermal tolerance indicates the temperature at which the photosynthetic machinery in the leaf begins to break down. The photosynthesis process is critical for life on Earth, since it produces oxygen.

"We are really interested in how extreme temperatures will affect plant function and ultimately the survival of the plants species we have in the region," said Goldsmith. "Understanding different thermal tolerances will help us make better conservation, management and restoration decisions."

Recent Chapman graduate Gabriella Dauber, who received her bachelor's degree in biological sciences, was among the students who participated in the project, collecting data from 12 different plant species, like coastal goldenbush, black sage, sagebrush, to-



Courtesy of the Irvine Ranch Conservancy

THE IRVINE RANCH Conservancy has partnered with students from Chapman University's Schmid College of Science and Technology for climate change research.

yon and coyote brush.

"My group in particular looked at different structural traits of leaves, such as thickness, width and length," said Dauber.

Goldsmith said the group found the average leaf thermal tolerance was 48.8 degrees Celsius, but they ranged among species from 46.1 to 54.1 degrees, or about 115 to 129 degrees Fahrenheit.

"One of the things students did was pull down NASA satellite records of land surface temperatures, and when they do that they see that these sites already at times experience temperatures greater than 50 degrees Celsius," said Goldsmith.

This significant research can be vital to conservation efforts to restore resilient plant communities for the future. In fact, the findings

will be presented at next month's Ecological Society of America's annual conference in Long Beach by the Schmid College students, with IRC as co-authors. The opportunity will give students the chance to practice the second part of research project like this.

"Not only is it important to be able to collect the data but also be able to interpret and then communicate that to an audience," said Dauber.

The Ecological Society of America is the world's largest professional society for ecologists and this year's meeting is expected to draw nearly 3,500 participants. Goldsmith said the group is also in the process of putting together all the data in a research paper they plan to submit to a scientific journal for publication.

Dauber said the overall experience has been valuable, and she is grateful she had the opportunity.

"It really did feel like I was part of a research project from start to finish, even though it was a lab class at Chapman," said Dauber. "I really did learn a lot of different important skills."

Goldsmith hopes the university's partnership will continue in the future.

"I feel really fortunate to be able to partner with Irvine Ranch Conservancy, and our goal is to continue to collaborate in a way that continues to create value for our students and for the management of the conservancy and the land they steward."

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PAGEANT

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historical figures from King Tut to Parisian royals. Cinema icon Edith Head, who won eight Academy Awards for her work as a costume designer, is a prominent character, too.

Reagan Foy has worked with the Pageant for 16 seasons, beginning in the headpiece department. She has served as costume director since 2016. Foy noted the importance of capturing defining elements that hold a place in the mind's eye of the viewers.

"People have an iconic image of ... Edith Head or Grace Kelly's gold dress," Foy said. "As long as you capture that essence, the audience is going to recognize it."

Foy said she typically has a few seasonal staff members in her department, along with about 25 volunteers helping out with the headpiece and wardrobe departments. Given the theme this season, more staff were needed, including an additional stitcher.

The builder set, which deconstructs the living picture artwork and largely debunks the myth of making humans appear two-dimensional within the frame, is an audience favorite. Foy works closely with David Talbot, the construction foreman, to keep up appearances. This year, audience members can plainly see a partial skirt being fitted over a volunteer. The piece is referred to as a skirt armature.

"It's a way to ... create a flat surface to paint all of the detail — the draping, the highlights, the shadows," Foy said. "If we did that in fabric, it would never look the same every



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

MELISSA MEZA ties the back of one of the featured fashion costumes for the Pageant of the Masters' show, "À La Mode: The Art of Fashion," on Wednesday.

night. It's a way of controlling it."

Diane Challis Davy, the director of the Pageant, lauded Talbot's welding skills, describing a lampshade-like frame that he made out of metal to make the phenomenon possible.

"We stretch the muslin over that frame," Challis Davy said. "Now the frame, it's not flat. It has a contour to it, so it's very clever because the frame will wrap around the performer, and we can paint it however the original artist would create that skirt."

Michelle Pohl, who said she first appeared in the Pageant as a cast member in 1987, is now in her fourth summer as the makeup director. The Pageant's reputation as a family of volunteers is very close to Pohl, whose husband and two children have been cast in three separate pieces this year.

Pohl said it takes approximately 45 volunteers in makeup to prepare for the

show backstage. The first call into the makeup department comes just after 7 p.m. The show begins at 8:30 p.m. Those who participate in "The Last Supper," the traditional finale, are usually out of makeup around 9:45 p.m.

The fashion-oriented theme excited many backstage, said Pohl, explaining that it was "a subject that's dear to all of our hearts."

Pohl had the opportunity to assist as a wardrobe consultant, bringing her personal touch to the runway show opening act.

"The runway, on the sides of that, there were audience members, and they kind of slowly trickled in as the show was getting started," Pohl said. "There are 30 audience members that are watching that fashion show, and those are the people that I dressed, or helped buy for. We have two casts, and on each cast, I matched the personalities of the cast members to a look that they could pull off

that was also congruent with 2024 fashion.

"The references that I used were people who were attending runway shows in 2024, a lot of research for street style during Fashion Week. Basically, everything surrounding Fashion Week, whether runway attendees, VIPs, celebrities, and [I] used that reference to build a look that was suitable for each of the people who are going to be watching our runway show."

The Pageant is replicating depictions of some of the more extravagant outfits throughout time, and that comes at a cost. Challis Davy said the Pageant spent an estimated \$60,000 on costumes for the show, which she added was more than any other year.

"Most of the costumes for all the living pictures, they are muslin, so unbleached cotton," Challis Davy said. "They provide the blank canvas, so the costumes are made in



CAST MEMBER Valair Williams prepares for the opening act of the Pageant of the Masters show.

muslin, and then our scenic artists will paint the costumes, so 'Blue Boy' and all the rest of them, all the people in the painting, those are almost all blank canvas, and then artists come back and paint with textile paints.

"However, this year, we made some of the costumes from the living pictures. We rendered them in real fabrics and silks and satins and brocade."

The Pageant's production of "À La Mode: The Art of Fashion" will run through Aug. 30. It features a cast of 137 volunteers and roughly 15 paid performers, Challis Davy said.

While audiences inside the Irvine Bowl will get a couple of opportunities to see some of the costumes worn, including a Met Gala scene, the Pageant director surmises that there may be another opportunity to see

them up close.

The Festival of Arts holds an annual runway fashion show, which will fall on Aug. 18 at noon, and it typically features clothing furnished from recycled and reusable materials. The Pageant theme provides for a degree of synergy, and Challis Davy described conversations as an "open invite" to have some of their models on the festival grounds that day.

"I think it will be fun," Challis Davy said. "I think everybody will enjoy seeing some of those gowns up close and seeing them in the daylight. ... The show, the red carpet, it's 90 seconds of splendor, but it's over very quickly, and a lot of people have told me that they would like to see more."

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STANTON

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little information in Spanish.

"There's been a barrier with the community, which is predominately Spanish-speaking," said Cesar Covarrubias, executive director of the Kennedy Commission. "Some of those barriers are, obviously, language and the lack of a definitive plan that allows

people to have the ability to understand what they're entitled to in terms of benefits, what's being provided and what's being offered."

The Kennedy Commission has brokered meetings between residents and city staff in recent years as residents reported a "frustration over a lack of transparency" over the future of their neighborhood.

"Our goal is the creation of more affordable housing units," Covarrubias added.

"We cannot ignore the people being impacted for the purpose of developing this property."

The lawsuit is demanding Stanton develop a replacement housing plan and halt all future displacement until such a plan is in place.

Since redevelopment money was used to acquire more than half of the parcels in the neighborhood, attorneys argue that Stanton is obligated to re-

place low-income unit taken off the market with displaced residents being offered the option of returning.

The lawsuit continues in court regardless of Stanton having terminated negotiations with the developers.

"We still believe that the city is doing wrong by these residents," Amoedo said. "The city's obligations existed before the exclusive negotiating agreement was entered into and they exist

after its termination."

What the future holds for Tina-Pacific is seemingly as uncertain as ever, especially for those who have called it home.

A friend of Cortes' left the neighborhood after a leaky roof at her unit wasn't properly fixed. Some neighbors may take relocation assistance that is being offered while others are staying put for the moment.

Cortes, who doesn't know what will happen with her

vacated apartment, recalls all the correspondence she received about relocation help was in English only.

"They sent us emails about different locations," she said. "But at the end, I couldn't just depend on them. I had to look for apartments myself because we weren't really getting anywhere."

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Leaders4LAX levels the playing field in O.C.

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

A natural athlete, Grace Burke has played girls' volleyball and basketball. But four years ago, when the Newport Beach resident discovered lacrosse, she found a new sport to be passionate about.

"When I started playing, I just fell in love with the sport. It was less of the sport itself and more of the people. The connections that you make with the girls that play lacrosse is just so different. I had never felt like that on a field or court before."

Lacrosse is a team contact sport thought to be among the oldest organized sports played by North America's indigenous population. Players use a lacrosse stick to catch and pass a ball to their teammates. Today, lacrosse is more of a collegiate sport associated with the East Coast. The five versions of the game include women's lacrosse, also known as LAX.

As a varsity lacrosse player, Burke routinely travels to Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware to play competitively and has twice earned the title of All-American. The camaraderie Burke found on the lacrosse field is especially significant to the 17-year-old, who was adopted from Russia at 9 months old.

"Community has always been so important to me. I have had to build my own community, and I know that family isn't who you are blood-related to," said Burke. "It is what you make it and who you surround yourself with. That is how I feel when I play lacrosse."

That special feeling Burke got from playing drove her to find a way to bring lacrosse to other girls in Orange County.

"It is just starting to grow on the West Coast, especially for males but slower-growing for females because there aren't as many options."

Burke learned to play using a boys' stick and admits that early on she didn't re-

alize women's lacrosse was its own sport. She recognized lacrosse was expensive to take up, and the price of admission was a barrier for many girls.

"Basic equipment alone for a beginner is \$230, which is a lot of money for a lot of people," she said.

Dedicated to removing those obstacles, Burke founded Leaders4LAX, a nonprofit that aims to level the playing field for girls' lacrosse in Orange County.

Sponsorships from USA Lacrosse, the Dragon Kim Foundation and the Mosely Grant Award have allowed Burke to organize four successful free lacrosse camps in the past year with Unidos, Boys & Girls Club and other participants.

Girls gathered at Stonefield Park in San Juan Capistrano last summer and again in January and February for the camps with Leaders4LAX. The grant money allowed Burke to provide each participant with a free lacrosse stick, goggles, a T-shirt and workbook.

"At the beginning of camp they all look a little bit nervous, but they are all excited too," Burke said.

Leaders4LAX teaches the sport using four tenets that Burke said apply on and off the field: passion, commitment, teamwork and leadership. At the camps the girls practice basic skills and do relays.

"It is really fun to watch their hard work from throughout the day come together," said Burke. "The smile on the campers' faces once they realize they can do it, they are overcoming something they never thought they would try."

Burke said she would like to get a yearly camp established and also grow Leaders4LAX's outreach.

"I know there are so many other cities, towns and states that have this same problem. A dream of mine would be to have multiple headquarters around the West Coast for girls and continue to fund

the equipment from USA Lacrosse and other organizations," said Burke.

This summer Leaders4LAX is hosting camps on July 31 and Aug. 1 at Stonefield Park in San Juan Capistrano from 9 a.m. to noon. Each participant will receive a free lacrosse stick, goggles, mouthguard, T-shirt, stickers and workbook. Burke said she encourages girls to bring a friend.

"You are both going to get the equipment to go home with and you can practice together," Burke said. "I also think bringing a friend into this experience is a shoulder to lean on. We are going to build a community right off the bat and have fun."

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Courtesy of Leaders4LAX

GIRLS GATHERED at Stonefield Park in San Juan Capistrano last summer for a free lacrosse camp with Leaders4LAX.

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STRIKE

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than this when it comes to contract talks."

The Disneyland Resort released a statement affirming its "respect and value" for cast members, as workers are referred to in Disney parlance, as negotiations continue.

"With the next meeting scheduled for July 22, we remain committed to continuing discussions and to reaching an agreement with the Master Services Council that focuses on what matters most to our current cast members, helps us attract new cast, and positions Disneyland Resort for growth and the creation of more jobs," it read.

As negotiations began in April for the thousands of theme park ride operators, candy makers, custodians and cashiers represented by the Master Services Council coalition, higher wages, a fair attendance policy, raises based on seniority and park safety have



Gabriel San Roman

THE DISNEY WORKERS Rising campaign kicked off with an April 16 press conference in Anaheim. Employees of the resort are considering a strike.

rounded out key issues.

"The company is trying to claim that their pay proposal represents a 40% increase over the term of the contract from 2023," Zinder said. "But, in reality, a portion of that was imposed upon them by Anaheim's living-wage law."

The current minimum wage under the city's measure is \$19.90 an hour, which boosted pay up from \$18 an hour under the Master Services Council's contract that expired for Disneyland workers in June.

Disney filed an appeal with the California

Supreme Court over the wage law, which declined to hear the case in ending a years-long court battle over whether it applied to the company.

Seniority-based raises are another key issue the company and the union coalition remain at odds on.

Palmer has worked at Disneyland since 1987 and makes \$23.64 an hour.

"The company's opening proposal was to recognize somebody who has been there for 20 years or more by giving them an extra 25 cents per hour," she said. "That is neither generous nor gracious, and it's certainly not fair."

In Palmer's 37 years of experience, she has never seen the company and its union workers so far apart.

Next week's strike authorization vote comes after the union coalition has already taken its frustrations directly to Disney parkgoers.

A day after Disneyland's contract expired in June, Disney workers handed balloons to guests entering the park to ding the company for being "full of hot air" during contract talks.

In another action, Disney workers passed out union buttons to parkgoers.

"We have also asked guests to sign a petition of support, which has gained thousands of signatures"

Zinder said. "The guests understand the employees' role in the experience that they have when they go to Disney. They expect the company to compensate employees fairly for that."

Disney theme park workers haven't walked off the job since a major strike in 1984 lasted 22 days, which remains the largest such work stoppage in the company's history.

If Disney workers authorize a strike vote next week, it gives the union coalition the authority to organize a walk out if necessary.

Contract talks between Disney and the union coalition are scheduled three days after the vote.

"We would like to reach a contract with Disney," Zinder said. "We hope that Disney comes to the bargaining table with appropriate proposals. If they don't, we're going to have to take some kind of serious action."

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Dinner theater sets sail with new pirates show



Courtesy of Pirates Dinner Adventure Buena Park

PIRATES DINNER Adventure in Buena Park embarks on a new adventure, "In Search of Neptune's Treasure." The show includes stunts, music and choreographed swashbuckling.

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

It is Friday night and families are seated row by row, some wearing tri-cornered hats and others waving pirate flags. The smell of roast chicken fills the air and kids eagerly watch the replica 18th-century ship at the center of the arena for signs of activity. Pirates Dinner Adventure in Buena Park has started nights like this for over 30 years.

The theater is located on Beach Boulevard near many of the city's other popular attractions like Knott's Berry Farm, Porto's Bakery and Café and the Source OC, and hosts nightly swashbuckling performances on the Seven Seas. Audience members can cheer for their favorite pirate while being served a chicken dinner and maybe even get pulled on stage.

Recently the theater switched from the previous show, "Secrets of the Deep," to nightly performances of "In Search of Neptune's Treasure." While the script, stunts and songs have changed, the show remains kid-friendly, and children enthusiastically waving their pirate flags will not be disappointed, assures show manager Toby Pruett.

"This is the world's most interactive dinner show, and the opportunity to live up to that each night is exhilarating," said Pruett. "Each cast member brings their own unique and brilliant take on the same scene each night but the audience, especially the kids, have the power to rewrite a moment or scene altogether. That theatrical immediacy is truly a gift for a performer."

Pruett leads the cast along with assistant show manager Maddie Ellingson and is also one of the show's lead actors, playing Capt. Sebastian the Black, the Pirate King.

"He is the legendary leader and rumored to be the most viscous pirate king to have sailed the Seven Seas," Pruett said.

The large live-action show has a lot of moving parts, both figuratively and literally, and updating the story is a true group effort.

"Neptune's Treasure leans more closely to traditional musical theater for young audiences. The tech work, including cue pickup, vocal demands and overall timing, are all very precise," Pruett said. "The show also

lends itself to a more classical clowning structure with elements and character types similar to commedia dell'arte stock characters."

Pruett has extensive experience living the pirate's life; the actor worked at the Orlando location of Pirates Dinner Adventure before coming to Southern California.

"I loved the show, the cast and crew and all of our operational partners, so when I moved out to the West Coast, I joined the cast out here as well," said Pruett.

Pruett moved to New York City to pursue acting right after high school and studied at the National Shakespeare Conservatory's Professional Actor Training Program. He honed his craft in the New York City theater scene before moving to Orlando to work with the major theme parks there, eventually finding his way to Pirates Dinner Adventure.

The show includes aerial acrobatics, countless stunts, choreographed fights and a magical mermaid that swims in the 250,000-gallon indoor lagoon surrounding the ship. Although action and stunts are an integral part of the show, like Pruett, many of members of the cast are actors first.

"Most have had serious, formal acting training through conservatory programs. There are a few that have special talents and a few that did come to us di-

See *Pirates*, page A8



Dr. Maheswari Senthil is a nationally recognized surgical oncologist who specializes in the management of advanced abdominal cancers.

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS

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FAIR

Continued from page A1

debriefing ahead of opening day.

Another option for those interested in coming and going on any day they please, with no blackout dates or restrictions, is a \$60 Every Day passport, which is valid even on days when general admission is sold out.

This year, in addition to the exhibits, farm displays and competitions, visitors may notice some new carnival rides, including the automotive-themed Overdrive thrill ride, the Bavarian-styled coaster, Heidi, and the Enchanted Castle, a fun-house attraction. Discounts on ride wristbands are available online through July 18.

Among the fair's many concession stands, several new items will make their debut this year, including bacon churro fries at Bacon Nation, where employees are happy to top off the novelty with vanilla soft-



WORKERS ASSEMBLE the Heidi roller coaster at the fairgrounds. This year's Orange County Fair starts July 19.

serve ice cream.

Mom's Bakeshoppe will offer Le Cookie, a croissant baked fresh with chocolate chip cookie dough on top, while guests can hunt down trendy treats like birria burgers, pickle sundaes and rainbow-colored cheese bread.

Another novelty, according to Moore, is Dr. Pepper spiked with pickle juice.

"Dirty sodas are becoming a thing," she said of

concoctions that infuse ordinary sodas with creams, flavors and other add-ins. "I tried one — it was actually good."

For those who can't commit to a single item, a Taste of the Fair option is available every day until 4 p.m. that allows fairgoers to sample food and beverages in smaller portions for \$5 per item.

While parking at the fairgrounds has increased to



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

A WORKER FROM Ray Cammack Shows, Inc. assembles picnic benches ahead of the Orange County Fair, which opens Friday and runs through Aug. 18.

\$15 daily, admission remains at \$13 for adults on Wednesday and Thursday, and \$15 Friday through Sunday. Tickets cost \$9 for those over 60 and children

aged 6 to 12, while kids 5 and under are free.

Fair hours are from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays and from 11 a.m. to

midnight on Fridays and Saturdays. For more, visit ocfair.com.

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forum

COLUMN | PATRICE APODACA

Incident at Fashion Island raises specter of gun violence – again

It was another breezy, beautiful summer day at Fashion Island in Newport Beach. I strolled at a leisurely pace, enjoying the sunshine and the chance to feel normal again after a recent surgery.



waved their arms at me, and I rolled down my window. One of them blurted out words I'm not likely to forget.

"There's a shooter. Don't stop."

Her kids were still inside the mall, she said, and she was trying to reach them on her cellphone. But in that frantic moment she still took a beat in order to warn a stranger—an act of kindness I'm also not likely to forget.

By now the tragic incident has been well-reported. Two men had attempted to rob a tourist couple from New Zealand near the Barnes & Noble bookstore. Shots were fired, but no one was struck. However, the woman died after being dragged and run over by a car driven by a third accom-

plise. The three suspects were eventually taken into custody after law enforcement pursued them to Los Angeles County.

In the days since, I've had time to ponder these events. I had gone to the mall seeking normalcy. But the uncomfortable truth is that what occurred while I was there was normal. It has, for quite some time now, been commonplace for otherwise tranquil days to be interrupted by the threat of gun violence.

People fleeing in terror. Children in danger. Random, unnecessary killing. Sirens. Helicopters circling overhead. A high-speed car chase. Rumors and unfounded assumptions. Politicians hurling accusations.

All of it — even the incongruous image of shoppers taking

shelter next to yoga pants and protein smoothies — has become utterly, depressingly ordinary.

This is the world we have created, and the world we now live in — where schoolchildren routinely practice active shooter drills, where parents feel a gnawing dread whenever their kids are out of sight, and where lazy days at the mall can turn deadly in an instant.

It hasn't escaped notice that the Fashion Island incident, as bad as it was, could have been so much worse. The shots that were fired missed. But far too often they have not.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, more than half of all Americans have experienced some exposure to firearm violence. In that light, it seems

perfectly logical that nearly three-fourths of adults report feeling stressed about the possibility of a mass shooting, and one-third say that their fear of gun violence leads them to avoid certain places and events.

Sadly, though, when it comes to crimes involving firearms, we continue to argue and draw snap conclusions about what the "real" problem is. After the Fashion Island incident, some local elected officials were oh-so quick to point fingers at what they characterize as "soft on crime" policies coming from Sacramento and Los Angeles. On social media sites, postings ranged from the sorrowful to a near-hysterical rush to view the event as a sign that the dangers of the

See Apodaca, page A8

MAILBAG

Newport council ignored constituents' concerns

I take no particular pleasure in saying that Tuesday was a sad day in the annals of City Council meetings. The sheer arrogance and nonchalance with which an issue of financial importance to the tune of tens of millions of dollars, affecting over 1,000 families, was rushed through, will be an indelible blot on this council's credibility as representatives serving its constitu-

ents. A simple request to postpone a decision on a subject of such importance, considering the last minute, highly ambiguous, major changes cobbled up to appease some of the opposition, fell on totally deaf ears. It was as if the council had not heard one word of the legitimate issues raised by dozens of attendees.

Over the past couple of years, many of us have questioned the patently absurd increase in mooring rental rates requested by the Harbor Commission, based on a provably flawed analysis by a consultant. We prepared for the July 9 meeting with the under-

standing that we would be discussing the commission's absurd request. During our protracted interaction with the commission we were absolutely assured, both verbally and in writing, that the current protocol regarding "transferability" of moorings will not be changed.

City staff's proposed changes to the Harbor Commission proposal were distributed on the Friday after Independence Day and put on the agenda for the following Tuesday — no discussions, no debate, no public input, no time to digest the ambiguous proposal or offer improvements. Based on the questions that were asked by many of the council



File Photo

A MAN FISHES off a boat in Newport Harbor. A reader weighs in on increases to mooring rates.

members, even they appeared to be uncertain of what the new proposal entailed.

One thing was clear. The written commitment by the Harbor Commission about mooring "transfer-

ability" was being reneged on, and a new commitment was being made by the City Council about "grandfathering" current mooring occupants against the increased rents. However, this commitment is not and cannot be binding on any future councils, and hence it is of little value.

One can surmise, from the above shenanigans, that what is being engineered here is a scheme to expropriate \$30 million to \$50 million from current mooring occupants and convert it into city income. Protestations by the council that the current system is unfair to newcomers and was never approved has some superficial validity. However, the council and the Harbor Commission cannot deny that this was known to them and was administered by them for decades, without question. This acquiescence resulted in prospective mooring users forking out tens of thousands of dollars to acquire a mooring.

This is not Cuba or Venezuela. This is the heart of conservative Orange County. You do not take away something from an individual without due compensation, even under eminent domain. There are ways to fix this issue equitably for all parties, if the City Council finds the humility to ask for ideas and does not cater to vested interests.

Jamshed Dastur Newport Beach

NIMBYism is at play in Surf City

So you're telling me that the same folks who dissolved the citizen-led Huntington Beach Environment & Sustainability board, who needlessly removed the city and residents from the Orange County Power Authority, who ended Main Street's renaissance as a pedestrian mall and who blindly continue to promote an air show in the sky above our precious wetlands now want us to believe they give a damn about our environment? I'm sorry, but I call "B.S.!"

For the past 20 months, the current City Council majority has set the agenda and controlled the direction of our city government. Not once in that time have they ever expressed even the slightest interest in the environmental or sustainability issues confronting our community. To say that I consider this newly found interest to be completely disingenuous would be a vast understatement. This new transparent attempt to employ environmental NIMBYism is nothing less than an insult to every conscientious individual who has ever donated,

See Mailbag, page A8

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THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Stella Zawistowski

- ACROSS 1 What a listener lends 4 Box office hit 9 Was bought 13 Try to outrun 14 Winter jacket 15 Group of three 16 Singer James 17 Wedding spot 18 Pealed 19 Isaac Stern or Hilary Hahn 21 Warsaw natives 22 Get naked 23 MBA subject: Abbr. 25 Starter course, often 28 Wisconsin collegians 32 Dalmatian feature 35 Mexican money 37 Payable now 38 Charged particle 39 _ Lama 40 Martini liquor 41 "What's up, _?" 42 Oak tree's fruit 43 Not straight 44 Lift up 47 Serving of cough syrup 49 Fuel cartel: Abbr. 50 Tiny landmass 54 Mosey along 57 Special events 61 Baby horse 62 _ as a peacock 63 Furry "Star Wars" character 64 Part to play 65 Gave an address 66 Hair products 67 Sole 68 Colorado ski town 69 Important time DOWN! 1 Face-plant: 2 wds. 2 Stage performer 3 Down-to-earth

SUDOKU grid with numbers 1-9 in various positions.

SUDOKU

By the Mephram Group

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

Sudoku grid with bold borders for 3x3 boxes.

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

- person 4 Go across 5 West African land 6 _ and sciences 7 X Games vehicle 8 Sarcastic laugh 9 Powerful 10 Taken by mouth 11 In the _ of duty 12 Canine pets 13 Guns, as an engine 20 Wall Street debut: Abbr. 21 Pea container 24 Place to

- gamble 26 The latest info 27 U.S. program that provides international aid: 2 wds. 29 Brink 30 Undoing 31 Mailed off 32 Dish with an entree 33 Swimming spot 34 A single time 36 _-mo replay 43 Attack by surrounding 45 Tennis shot 46 Imitate 48 Bro's sibling 51 Further down 52 _ Gay (WWII plane) 53 Reproachful clucks 54 Natural Black hairstyle 55 Space race goal 56 Fancy dance 58 Chicken's home 59 Crunchy veggie, for short 60 Yemen city 62 Informative ad: Abbr. Tribune Media Services

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PIRATES

Continued from page A5

rectly from circus and stunt training experience,” Pruett said.

For his own role in the new show, Pruett said he approaches the character with stronger influences from a clowning background that differs from the Capt. Sebastian in the previous show.

“With ‘Secrets of the Deep,’ Capt. Sebastian had evolved into the man the legends were born from. He had a haunting and dark past that played out more like a tragic Shakespearean character fueling his rage,” said Pruett. “This version of the captain isn’t as dark.”

The turn to musical theater means a less violent show, with a love story at its heart. New script aside, Pruett said the show is different each night, thanks to the talent of the cast.

“It’s always exciting to tell the story of our show the same way with different voices, styles and strengths of the various casts. We’re all sailing toward the same horizon, but we navigate the path a bit differently each night,” Pruett said. “That’s also what makes the show so exciting to see



CAPT. SEBASTIAN the Black, played by Toby Pruett, at Pirates Dinner Adventure in Buena Park.

Courtesy of Pirates Dinner Adventure Buena Park

FYI

What: Pirates Dinner Adventure
When: Monday through Friday at 7 p.m.; Saturday at 5 and 8 p.m. and Sunday at 3:30 and 6:30 p.m.
Tickets: piratesdinneradventure.com

more than once.”
 Pruett said he is honored to take the stage each night with his fellow cast mem-

bers, as an actor, stunt performer, choreographer, director and now show manager.

“Each night we have the opportunity to have the best show ever, and that is exactly what we strive to do for our audiences,” said Pruett. “There isn’t another crew anywhere that I would rather sail these seas with than my pirate’s family on both coasts.”

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MAILBAG

Continued from page A6

volunteered or in any way participated in efforts to protect Huntington Beach’s environment.

If Councilman Casey McKeon wants to address issues like air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, congestion and roadway public safety, that’s great. However, to make any future progress, he will need to understand that the solution to those issues and the future sustainability of our community does not involve championing a failed status quo that relies on single-family housing and private automobiles.

Steve Shepherd
 Huntington Beach

As I predicted in my remarks at the Huntington Beach City Council special meeting called on Monday afternoon, the effort by the council majority to ram home a charter amendment on housing restrictions quickly became a “show trial” worthy of the term’s many negative associations. The council’s three minority members

shunned the meeting and refused to accord it any public credibility. Only the four amateur authoritarian members sat on the dais to perfunctorily pass the amendment to put on the November ballot.

A statement from the council minority was read into the record, which blasted the majority on many grounds, especially the rushed nature of the proceedings and the complete lack of analysis of “unintended consequences.” Similar “rush jobs” to weaponize the City Charter successfully occurred in March at the expense of hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars and despite dubious drafting.

The egregiousness of this charter amendment was compounded by its alleged environmental protection trappings and its “in your face” invitation for state action to punish Surf City for its institutional insolence. This was one show trial that fooled nobody on either side. It was pure political theater that could hurt the city big time. Show trials only work if the public is cowed or conned. This

meeting achieved neither aim.

Tim Geddes
 Huntington Beach

Settlement is unsettling

Now it is evident why City Atty. Michael Gates wanted to keep the details of the air show settlement secret. The original law suit brought against the city by the Pacific Airshow was for a one day cancellation, and the city had the protection of the public as its defense, since the area sustained damage from the oil spill.

How does this translate to a multimillion-dollar settlement that could last 40 years and forces the city to accept subsequent entities, if the contract is sold or transferred to others?

A trial could have resulted favorably for the city and instead this supposed settlement has cost public funds without justification. This settlement has to be set aside as self serving, since there are still many unanswered questions.

Richard C. Armendariz
 Huntington Beach

APODACA

Continued from page A6

wider world are encroaching on what was once a peaceful suburban oasis.

The reality, however, is maddeningly complex and inadequately understood, and the data we do have can be difficult to analyze. Americans routinely identify crime as one of their top concerns, yet many are likely reacting on an emotional level while the information available is incomplete and often confusing.

We know, for instance, that the violent crime rate in California rose 3% last year compared with 2022, but the number of homicides declined significantly; the reasons why are still being studied.

We also know that the large majority of homicides are not committed by random strangers, but by someone the victim knows — a friend, acquaintance or family member. How do we better address this type of violence? What’s more, most gun deaths are suicides, which points us to a whole other set of questions and concerns.

A recent development could help provide a clearer picture. U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy last month issued a landmark advisory declaring firearm violence to be a public health crisis.

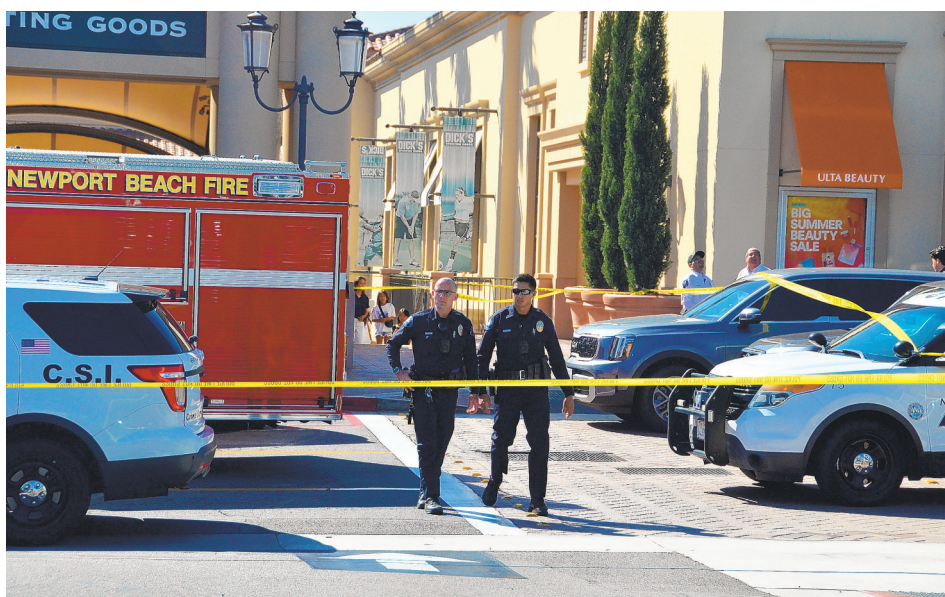
This decision could have far-reaching effects because it frees the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to study gun violence and approach it as

a treatable public health issue. This is the kind of common-sense measure we need.

I, too, felt a rush of anxiety when I heard the words: “There’s a shooter. Don’t stop.”

Fear is a powerful thing. It motivates us to run and hide when bullets fly. But it can also lead to misjudgments and missteps. At the very least, our response to violent crime should be based on accurate information, which is always the first step toward rational decision-making.

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.



Susan Hoffman

POLICE OFFICERS cross behind crime scene tape outside Fashion Island in Newport Beach after a New Zealand woman was killed during an attempted robbery.

MARNI

MOYNAT

GUCCI

RIMOWA

CAMILLA

GENTLE MONSTER

WEEKEND MAX MARA

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