



Photos by James Carbone

JAY BREWER, the founder of the Reptile Zoo holds Coconut, an albino alligator at the Reptile Zoo in Fountain Valley.

Grant aims to clean up the air

\$500M from EPA targets transportation in effort to combat climate change in Southern California region.

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

Orange County officials are looking towards a cleaner, greener future after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency awarded Southern California air regulators \$500 million to curb climate pollution.

Authorized by the Biden administration's sweeping Inflation Reduction Act, the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant will empower local agencies across the Southland to invest in electric alternatives for the transportation of goods.

Orange County Supervisor Katrina Foley hailed the federal

See *Grant*, page A4

'Reptile Royalty' returns for season 2

The Hulu series, starring the Reptile Zoo founder Jay Brewer and family, brings a world audience to Fountain Valley.

BY MATT SZABO

Jay Brewer recently got back from the "super wedding" of power couple Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant in India.

Brewer, the founder and owner of the Reptile Zoo in Fountain Valley, said he's known Ambani for about 15 years. He got a taste of his own celebrity status while on the trip.

"I don't really call myself a celebrity," said Brewer, who has millions of followers on social media. "I never realized how well known I was until I walked around India. Even when I was all dressed up in my Indian stuff, you can't get more camouflaged for me, and people were still like, 'Can I get a photo with you? I love your videos.'"

Brewer hopes people also love his television show.

The second season of the Hulu series "Reptile Royalty," a reality TV look at the day-to-day operations of his famous zoo, was

See *Reptile*, page A4



MASON OH, 7, of Irvine, feeds a tortoise at the Reptile Zoo.



SAM CARTER, a reptile handler, shows guests a Burmese python named Banana at the Reptile Zoo in Fountain Valley on Monday.

Students cook up a Feast of Flavors

With help from the Dragon Kim Foundation, a pair of classmates teams to share different cultures through food.

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Crean Lutheran High School students Jasmine Lee and Lara Cinar come from different cultural backgrounds: Lee is of Chinese heritage and Cinar of Armenian descent. The two friends, however, realized that through their cultures' food they could learn a lot about each other.

"Food is a universal connector," Lee said.

Cinar agreed, "I definitely learned about the Chinese culture more because of Jasmine."

See *Flavors*, page A2

First responders get revved up for demolition derby at O.C. fairgrounds

BY SARA CARDINE

Professionally trained to traverse obstacle courses for emergency fleets, perform strategic PIT maneuvers and expertly steer massive fire engines loaded with equipment, water and personnel, most first responders know their way around a vehicle.

But in a special event at the Orange County fairgrounds, firefighters, police officers and sheriff's deputies — and the seasoned chiefs who lead them — will toss their proverbial safety manuals out the window as they smash, crash and trash their way to victory.

A three-night demolition derby



COSTA MESA Fire Chief Dan Stefano looks over an RV Thursday with City Councilman Manuel Chavez and Emily Aguilera from Save Our Youth.

Don Leach | Staff Photographer

comes careening into the fairgrounds' Action Sports Arena July 31, Aug. 1 and Aug. 4, as area public safety personnel compete for a spot in the winners' circle and for the benefit of Children's Hospital

of Orange County (CHOC).

Some will ride in an 8-track course, attempting to avoid collision until only one vehicle re-

See *Derby*, page A5

ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



Allen J. Schaben | Los Angeles Times

DISNEY WORKERS TO VOTE ON \$24-AN-HOUR WAGES FOLLOWING STRIKE AUTHORIZATION PAGE A2



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Disney workers to vote on new contract

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

After union members voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike, Disney and the Master Services Council, a labor coalition representing 14,000 theme park workers, have hammered out a tentative agreement.

The announcement came Wednesday after two days of intense bargaining that carried over into the early morning hours.

"We have shown Disney that we are the true magic makers of the park and today proves that when workers stand together for what they deserve, we win," read a statement Wednesday from the coalition's bargaining committee. "We look forward to making our voices heard during the voting process to ratify this contract."

A contract update touted a three-year proposal to union members that includes "significant" wage increases and pay boosts based on seniority.

Under a minimum wage law in Anaheim, workers represented by the union coalition currently make at least \$19.90 an hour, a modest increase from the previous contract.

A summary of the proposal provided to workers on Friday details a \$24-an-hour minimum wage for union members. Hourly pay would increase by a dollar for the second and third year of the contract.

In past negotiations, Disney sought a five-year agreement not unlike the one it secured with 8,500 food and beverage workers represented by Workers United Local 50, the single biggest union in the Disneyland Resort.

Under that contract, wages are



Allen J. Schaben | Los Angeles Times

HUNDREDS OF Disney workers rally for better wages outside Disneyland as the theme park marked its 69th birthday.

set to rise to \$23 an hour on Sept. 1.

The shortened length of the proposed contract is one concession made by the company.

"We care deeply about the well-

being of our cast members and are pleased to have reached a tentative agreement with Master Services Council that addresses what matters most to our cast while positioning Disneyland Re-

sort for future growth and job creation," said Jessica Good, a Disney spokeswoman.

The tentative agreement temporarily averts the first possible strike at Disneyland in 40 years.

Back in 1984, a coalition of 2,000 union members walked out for 22 days.

Tucker Showkeir, a ride op-

See **Contract**, page A10



FLAVORS

Continued from page A1

The pair are members of the 2024 Fellowship Class of the Orange County-based nonprofit the Dragon Kim Foundation and partnered for a project they called Feast of Flavors, a free cooking camp designed to teach youth the importance of diversity and embracing one another's differences.

"We see a lot of diversity today in the world, and there is also a lot of hate. We want kids to know from a young age that despite our differences we can all step back and see that in some ways, we are the same," said Cinar. "We also want them to be passionate about their own culture and learning about other kids' culture too."

The teens highlighted different cultures over the two-week cooking camp by teaching kids recipes from their respective backgrounds and also talking about their history and connection to their cultures. Through Feast of Flavors, Lee and Cinar have also created a cookbook with the recipes they learned.

"Food has lot of history behind it, which is why we brought in elders from the different cultures," said Lee. "So, kids are not only learning how to make a new food, but also learning about the importance of it."

Cinar brought in her grandmother, Lusvart Cepkinian, to teach kids how to make an Armenian dish called sarma.

"Sarma is ground beef wrapped in grape leaves, and it's a really traditional dish," said Cinar. "Especially in the summertime, grape leaves are a really popular plant people grow in their backyards in Armenia. People usually use fresh grape leaves, but we also use cabbage leaves."

Cepkinian said she learned to make sarma as a child in Armenia with her mother and sister, and she was happy to teach the kids about it.

"We filled the grape



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

LARA CINAR, left, and Jasmine Lee hold a Filipino pancit noodle salad and Irish soda bread during the Dragon Kim Foundation luncheon at the Boys & Girls Club in Costa Mesa on Friday.



AN INDIAN PULAO rice bowl at the Boys & Girls Club in Costa Mesa was part of Feast of Flavors.

leaves, and all the kids were watching and chopping the parsley," said Cepkinian. "They were very interested."

Dragon Kim Foundation, a social entrepreneurship incubator for high school youth, helps to fund teen-led community service projects.

"So far we have funded 300 projects over the last seven years; this is the

eighth cohort this year," said Daniel Kim, who founded the foundation with his wife, Grace.

Kim said his foundation challenges students to think about what they would do to help the community if they had the resources. Students are given leadership and business training and a mentor to work with through the seven-month program. They



LARA CINAR'S grandmother, Lusvart Cepkinian helps kids at the Boys & Girls Club with the Armenian alphabet.

also receive funding for their projects.

"Funding is an important piece, but we believe it is not the most important piece," said Kim. "We give them the tools for them to take their vision and really make it come to life."

The culminating event for Feast of Flavors took place on a recent Friday afternoon at the Boys & Girls Club of Costa Mesa,

where a delectable spread of multicultural food was laid out in the club kitchen.

"Costa Mesa, specifically, is a very culturally diverse city, and it is important for our kids to learn more about different cultures and meet people from different cultures and have that experience in a safe and fun environment," said David Blair, director of philanthropy at the Boys & Girls

"We see a lot of diversity today in the world, and there is also a lot of hate. We want kids to know from a young age that despite our differences we can all step back and see that in some ways, we are the same."

— Lara Cinar

Clubs of Central Orange Coast. "This partnership with the Dragon Kim Foundation has been an incredible way to bridge that, using food as a medium."

In addition to food from Lee and Cinar's background, club members were invited to bring a dish from their own culture to share.

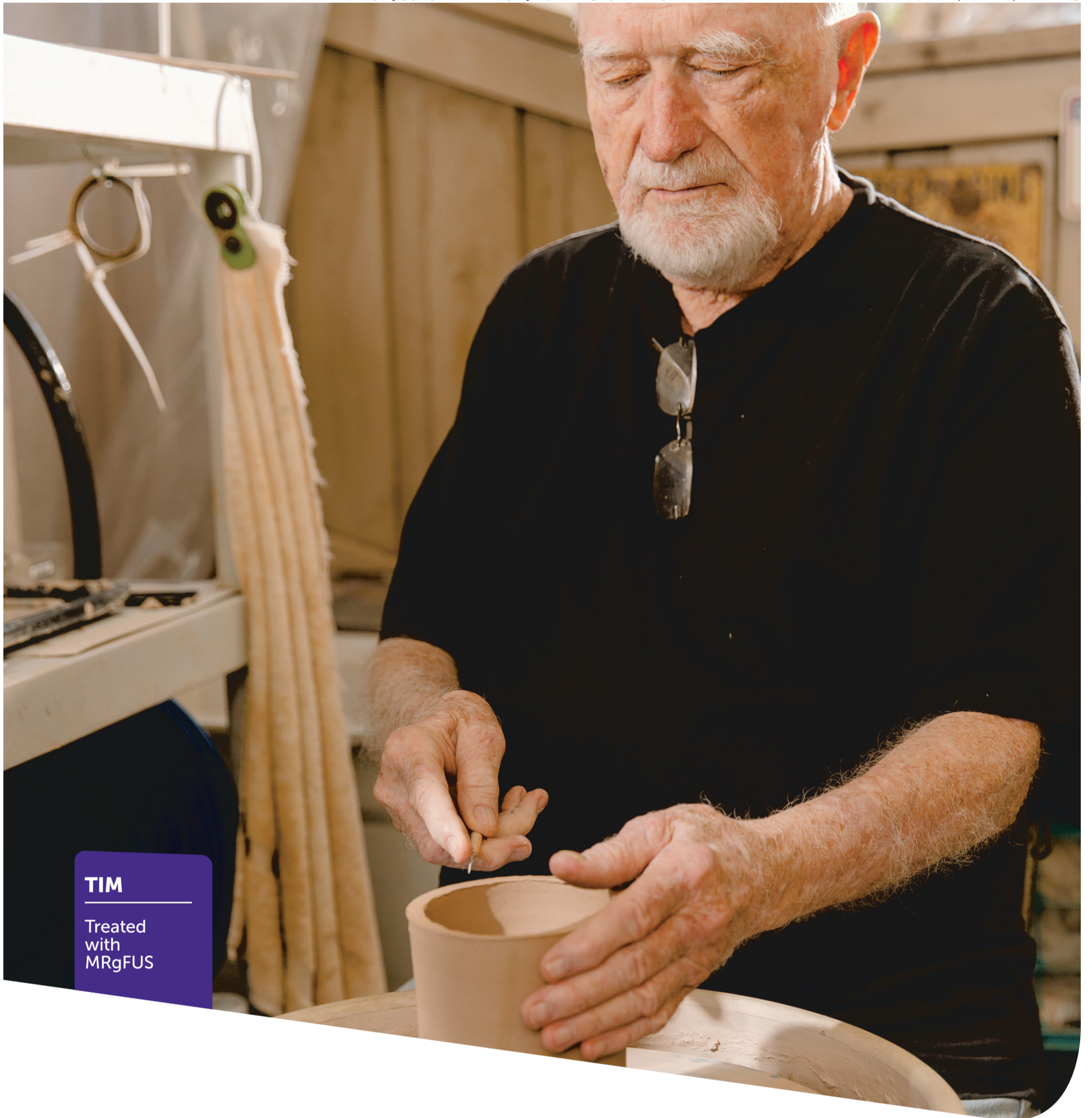
"We have a few goodies from a bunch of different cultures, like Armenian, Indian and Mexican," said Cinar.

A few club members stood around the table admiring the food and remarked that they had never seen some of the dishes before, although they agreed they looked appetizing. A tray of pancit, a Filipino noodle dish and pulao, a rice pilaf dish popular in India, were among the plates at the feast.

Cepkinian was at the Boys & Girls Club event too, helping Cinar and Lee teach kids about the Armenian alphabet and helping her granddaughter set up the food.

"I am so proud," said Cepkinian. "They are keeping their culture and their traditions for the next generation."

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Auditions open at school that moves beyond dance

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Each year the Wooden Floor in Santa Ana holds open auditions for the opportunity to step onto a path to higher education. Although the first step begins on the dance floor, the organization's chief executive officer, Dawn S. Reese, says it is much more than a dance school.

"The Wooden Floor is a creative youth development organization; we are not a dance studio. We inspire and transform the lives of young people through the power of dance and access to higher education over a 10-year journey," said Reese.

Founded in 1983, the Wooden Floor serves students as a privately funded nonprofit. Originally the school began as a summer pilot dance program for at-risk youth named Saint Joseph Ballet by founder Beth Burns, a

then-sister with the order of St. Joseph of Orange. The Wooden Floor has since evolved and served more than 95,000 students.

Students not only gain access to dance education but also receive guidance and assistance through the organization's year-round holistic model. Families participating in the program get access to free tutoring and college and career readiness workshops as well as family counseling and parent workshops, many at no charge.

"Our programs and services are based on financial need, and many children attend free of charge," said Reese. "In addition to weekly somatic-based dance education classes, children may receive academic services, 1:1 tutoring, social-emotional wellness workshops, college planning and mentoring, as well as counseling."

The Wooden Floor uses an exploratory dance education approach and utilizes the 5 C's, which are outlined by the Orange County Department of Education as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity and character.

"At the Wooden Floor, we added a sixth C: courage," Reese added.

Each year, auditions are held in the fall. This year auditions will take place on Oct. 19 from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Wooden Floor at 1810 N. Main St. in Santa Ana. The tryouts are open to students in third through fifth grade who have financial need and a love for movement. No dance experience is necessary and children are not expected to have anything prepared for the audition.

The impact the Wooden Floor has had on students who participate in its program is impressive.



Courtesy of the Wooden Floor

THE WOODEN FLOOR, a "creative youth development organization" in Santa Ana, is preparing to host its free annual auditions in October.

Twenty consecutive graduating classes have had 100% of their seniors graduate on time and enroll in higher education.

The school has also seen another trend.

"Over the past five years, 50% declare STEM majors in mechanical engineering, biotechnology, computer sciences and pre-med/

biology, to name a few," said Reese.

Visit thewoodenfloor.org for more information about its 10-year program and upcoming auditions.

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James Carbone

JAY BREWER, the founder of the Reptile Zoo, answers questions from visitors to the zoo on Monday.

REPTILE

Continued from page A1

released on July 19.

The six episodes feature everyone from the Harlem Globetrotters to the Fountain Valley Fire Department, from comedian Gabriel "Fluffy" Iglesias to internet personality Brent Rivera.

Brewer said he enjoyed working with all of them.

"Especially my age [59], when I was a kid, the Harlem Globetrotters were a big deal," he said. "So to be able to let the animals perform with them was quite an experience, to say the least."

At the middle of it all is Brewer, whose middle daughter Juliette is also prominently featured as the face of the Reptile Zoo's Instagram and YouTube pages.

One of the episodes in Season 2 features Jay and Juliette visiting Florida, where a motion-capture video turns them into animals.

"That's like Disney stuff, right?" Jay Brewer said. "That's over the top. They made a model of our shop, and we turned into reptiles and partied."

Of course, "over the top" could describe Brewer's antics fairly well as he runs a zoo with more than 100 species of reptiles, amphibians and arachnids.

On Monday, he entertained visitors as he grabbed an albino alligator named Coconut from her cage.

Vicki Hoffman, who lives in Anaheim, watched two grandchildren visiting from Idaho take a picture with Brewer. They first found out about the Roku series on the day of the trip and were no doubt going to stream it soon.

"They came to visit me here in Orange County, and they've seen all of his videos on YouTube," Hoffman said of her grandkids.

"Their stepdad has shown them all of Jay's videos, so of course they're following

See *Reptile*, page A7

"There's just so many cool things that we really do. ... I am shocked how much of an impact you can have on humanity, being just somebody that's a lot online and a lot on videos and TV. It's kind of wild."

— Jay Brewer

founder and owner of the Reptile Zoo in Fountain Valley

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GRANT

Continued from page A1

funding as "significant" and "transformative" for the metropolitan area she helps govern.

"We want clean air and a strong economy," she said. "This grant will help us get there."

Foley joined Sen. Alex Padilla on Monday for a press conference in Commerce announcing the historic grant, which is the largest the EPA has ever awarded to combat climate change.

Orange County accounts for 25% of the greenhouse gas emissions in the Southern California region covered by the grant, which includes Los Angeles and Riverside counties, a swath that encompasses 13 million residents.

County officials are hopeful that the Southland could see as much as a 31% reduction in greenhouse gases over the next quarter century.



File Photo

ORANGE COUNTY accounts for 25% of the greenhouse gas emissions in the Southern California region covered by a \$500-million grant from the Environmental Protection Agency.

"Transportation and our landfills are our most significant contributors of greenhouse gases," Foley said. "If we're able to bring the transportation greenhouse gas numbers down, that's going to contribute greatly to the reduction in

pollution and smog."

Funding will help purchase 1,000 medium and heavy-duty vehicle chargers, 800 medium and heavy-duty zero-emission electric vehicles and 18 electric locomotives throughout Southern Cali-

fornia.

The initiative is also expected to create hundreds of new green jobs.

"If we are electrifying our heavy duty equipment, and we are creating jobs, those jobs are going to be predominantly in that central

Orange County census area," Foley said.

Another key goal of the initiative is to reduce air pollution from diesel emissions in low-income communities.

"We know that in cities like Anaheim and Santa Ana, we don't have as many parks and we certainly don't have beaches where people can go breathe clean air," Foley said. "The more that we can invest in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the more we can invest in ways that will reduce pollution and smog and help our families have better air to breathe when they're out playing."

Last October, Foley encouraged all O.C. cities to apply for the regional grant alongside the county. Multiple agencies, including the county of Orange, submitted a Priority Climate Action Plan in March.

The "Invest Clean" initiative was one of 25 projects nationwide to receive federal funding and the only one in California approved.

It comprises 42% of the funding for cleaner transportation alone.

In all, the EPA awarded \$4.3 billion across 30 states.

Foley said the county is ready to buy the cleaner, greener equipment. County officials are waiting on the South Coast Air Quality Management, which was awarded the grant, to allocate the funds.

Meanwhile, Foley is spearheading an effort to develop a countywide Climate Action Plan.

"The county CAP is going to be separate from the grant and hopefully helps open up more funding resources for us in other areas that we're trying to become more sustainable and create more clean energy opportunities," Foley said.

The draft is due before the board in September but will be open for review next month.

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Girl Scout's ethnic studies class brings award



Courtesy Girl Scouts of Orange County

KAI YAMAMOTO received the Girl Scouts of USA's Gold Award scholarship in June for her work in developing an Asian American and Pacific Islander ethnic studies class.

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

Kai Yamamoto started as a freshman at Millikan High School in Long Beach during the height of the pandemic and the activism against racism that blamed Asians for it.

Yamamoto, born in China and raised by adoptive Japanese parents from Okinawa, felt a similar need to take action. She attended a brave-space event hosted by a teacher where a plan to develop an Asian American and Pacific Islander ethnic studies course emerged.

As a student, Yamamoto didn't see the broad spectrum of AAPI communities reflected in the curriculum, even as a Cambodia Town stood in Long Beach.

"The only history that we ever learn in our schools is the Chinese Exclusion, Japanese internment camps and the transcontinental railroad that Chinese immigrants helped build," Yamamoto said. "Where's all these other different cultures that we never hear about? I wanted to show students that there's more to AAPI history than those three historical events."

Four years later, the ethnic studies course Yamamoto helped to build won her a \$5,000 Gold Award scholarship from the Girl Scouts of the USA in June.

A Girl Scout with Troop 881 in Anaheim since she was 5 and a longtime member of the Orange County Buddhist Church, Yamamoto felt a sense of pride when she learned of the scholarship award at the Girl Scouts of Orange County's Green and Gold celebration held last month at the Bowers Museum in Santa Ana.

"Girl Scouts of Orange County is incredibly proud of Kai," said Dr. Vikki Shepp, the group's chief executive, in a statement. "Her Gold Award project focuses on inclusiveness, empathy, and diminishes Asian American Pacific Islander stereotypes."

In developing the class, Yamamoto collaborated with the Long Beach Unified School District, Cal State Long Beach and col-

lege professors. The free AAPI ethnic studies course has been offered by Cal State Long Beach since February 2022 and is approved for college credit.

Yamamoto enrolled in the class as a sophomore and took a field trip outlined in one of its four units.

"We went on a field trip to Little Tokyo and toured the Japanese American National Museum there," she said. "There's just not enough time in the school year to cover every part of history. But when we were able to go into that museum and see [everything], we were able to bring advocacy through understanding."

The 15-week class focuses on identifying key ethnic studies concepts, studying AAPI immigration, surveying contemporary issues and a final project where students identify a problem in the community to take action on.

Lessons touch on Cambodian, Korean, Vietnamese, Filipino and Pacific Islander stories in addition to the experience of Chinese and Japanese Americans.

The course's outline is also offered as a nationwide resource for educators by Diversify Our Narrative, a student led nonprofit that seeks to build an "anti-racist future through education."

For Yamamoto's own future, she's headed to UC Berkeley in the fall after having graduated from Millikan High School. The scholarship award will help cover tuition costs.

Yamamoto plans on double majoring in political science and international relations while eyeing a minor in AAPI studies.

She hopes to come back to Long Beach to work with local government and the port to promote diversity and inclusivity in their work.

"My dream job is to work for the United Nations," Yamamoto said. "That's where I'm hoping I'll end up."

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

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DERBY

Continued from page A1

mains on the track. A special Motorhome Madness event features fire and police chiefs at the helm of reconditioned RVs specially decorated for the occasion.

Costa Mesa Police Chief Ron Lawrence — who will be competing for the third year in a row, after winning an audience favorite award last year for his K-9 themed RV — said the chaotic arena looks like a scene taken right out of a "Mad Max" movie.

"People are going wild and cheering, blue and white smoke billowing from my engine, my circa 1980s motor home slowly creeping into the arena as they announce my arrival," Lawrence explained via email.

"It's as though I am a Roman gladiator riding my metallic beast into battle at the Coliseum."

Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Chief Dan Stefano began

participating in the fundraising event eight years ago, when admittance was opened to fire personnel. In 2023, he placed second after his temporarily stalled RV led to a technical win by Orange Police Chief Dan Adams.

This year, his motor home will be decorated by student members of Costa Mesa nonprofit Save Our Youth (SOY), which provides programs and scholarships for at-risk and low-income students in the Newport-Mesa Unified School District.

SOY students accompanied by mentor and Costa Mesa City Councilman Manuel Chavez on Thursday met with Stefano at the yard, where the motor home was getting built out for the event, to discuss designs for the bright red behemoth.

"It's like a bumper car on steroids," he said of the stripped-out motor home. "You're trying to take out the other vehicles, but you do it by backing up. You

can't do it head on because you'll collapse the radiator. The minute the RV doesn't run or the back portion of the RV is too compromised, you're out."

This year, Stefano will have his cross-hairs set on Orange County Sheriff Don Barnes and Orange County Fire Authority Chief Brian Fennessy, both participating for the first time.

But aside from the competitive aspect of the derbies, Stefano said the annual events are great ways for first responders to bond with one another and forge connections with the local community, all for a good cause.

Ahead of the July 31 kickoff, participating first responders took a tour of CHOC to connect directly with the child patients who benefit from the fundraiser.

"It was incredible to engage with those kids and their families," he said. "This is so great, particularly for public safety [employees], just connecting



Courtesy of Dan Stefano

A PILE OF wreckage is all that remains after a Motorhome Madness demolition derby at the O.C. fairgrounds in 2023. This year's event takes place July 31, Aug. 1 and Aug. 4.

with the community and showing the human side of what we do. I think that's what drives people."

Lawrence, who said he enjoys the friendly cross-agency rivalry, called Motorhome Madness one of the most unique philanthropic endeavors he's ever

been involved in.

"It is such a wonderful opportunity to give back and work with my peers and local businesses that are as passionate about raising funds for the children as I am," he added.

Doors open at 6:30, and the show begins at 7:30

each night. All proceeds benefit CHOC and include free same-day admission to the O.C. Fair.

To purchase tickets or donate directly to the cause, visit raiseup.choc.org/derby.

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forum

COLUMN | **PATRICE APODACA**

Feeling disconnected? You're not alone

We tend to think of loneliness as a sad, forlorn condition. But what we sometimes overlook is that it can also be dangerous.

Particularly now. Healthcare professionals are increasingly warning that loneliness has reached epidemic levels throughout the nation. And though we might be tempted to dismiss such pronouncements as hyperbole or underestimate the consequences, a closer examination reveals that loneliness is actually a serious health issue.

What's going on, and why are medical and mental-health experts so worried?

Their concern stems from the fact that socialization is a basic human need; indeed, we are biologically wired for social connection. It's as fundamental a part of our health as breathing and eating. That was true in the age of hunter-gatherers, when people had to work together for their survival, and it remains so in our complex modern society.

But for some time now, evidence has accumulated that shows we are struggling to maintain healthy relationships.

A 2022 study, for example, found that only 39% of American



Gary Coronado | Los Angeles Times

See *Apodaca*, page A7 **LONE PINE PEAK**, elevation 12,949 feet, is located on the east side of the Sierra Nevada mountain range.

A WORD, PLEASE JUNE CASAGRANDE

A look at the rules and myths surrounding 'and'

You use the word "and" every day, hundreds, perhaps thousands of times. But have you really mastered this most ubiquitous of conjunctions? Turns out, there's more to using "and" than you may realize. Here are seven things you probably didn't know about the ultimate English joiner word.



"And" doesn't ask the ampersand to pitch in when it's tired. "The cafeteria serves three kinds of sandwiches: ham, tuna and peanut butter & jelly." Over and over, I see this in my editing work: Writers — too many to count over the years — will whip out an ampersand anytime they want to show a closer relationship than some previous "and" in the sentence shows. Every one of these writers just comes up with this idea on their own. There's no rule that says ampersands work in concert with "and." There's no credible editing style that allows ampersands in running text at all. Yet these writers pop them in anyway.

"And" can begin a sentence. I don't know the origin of the myth that you can't start a sentence with "and." Perhaps some long-ago teacher got fed up with students incorrectly breaking sentences into fragments at the point of an "and." Or perhaps some overconfident observer decided that "and" joins things within sentences and not sentences themselves. In fact, "and" can be grammatical and logical at the start of a sentence. But in that spot, it's usually unnecessary, which is why it's unpopular with editors who favor tight prose.

"As well as" can't do the job of "and." The coordinating conjunctions "and" and "or" have a special power: They can cue the last item in a list. "We invited Tony, Maya, Caleb and Jasmine." It doesn't matter how many people or items are in the list — three or 300 — the last one always gets introduced by "and" or "or." Without one of these conjunctions, the structure isn't grammatical.

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MAILBAG



File Photo

NEWPORT PIER and the surrounding beach were nearly empty on March 24, 2020, during early closures at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Newport Beach officials joined those in other cities to fight the state-mandated closures.

Newport Beach leadership's view on housing seems suspect

Since when has the Newport Beach City Council fallen hook line and sinker with mandates from the state? I can remember at the beginning of the pandemic how Newport Beach along with a few other coastal Orange County cities fought Gov. Newsom over COVID-19 mandates, particularly when the governor closed the beaches temporarily. This closure took place before the vaccine was available and the deadly potential of the pandemic was just becoming known. The governor in his actions cited the failure of the beach cities to enforce "social distancing." And the closures became a major issue leading to

lawsuits that challenged the governor's decision. "Threading the needle," which was the quote highlighted in the July 25 Daily Pilot article "Newport Beach City Council skips ballot initiative, approves steps required to implement housing element," as used in the context of Tuesday's council meeting means to strike a balance between conflicting forces, interests. But the decision made by the City Council more than meets a mandate by the state to address local housing needs as defined by RHNA. According to the Greenlight Initiative passed in the early 2000s, the decision was one that should have been put up to vote by

residents. The initiative gives residents the right to vote on all developments that have a significant effect on Newport Beach. The majority of the people who addressed the council said residents should have the opportunity to make the decision regarding growth related to RHNA because the plan being worked on by planning officials would increase the required number of units from 4,865 to 8,174, nearly doubling the number. The planners contend that the excessive number of units would make up for the lack of potential affordable housing. But as one resident who seemed to speak for many

in the audience noted, "The city's proposed housing plan is nothing more than a developer giveaway that allows large developers to flood Newport Beach with overcrowded high density like the kind we see in Irvine and Anaheim." Thus the reference to "threading the needle" seems to leave out the role that Newport Beach residents play in making such monumental decisions.

Lynn Lorenz
Newport Beach

In the Daily Pilot story about the Newport Beach City Council's move to exceed RHNA numbers, the reporter failed to state the vote was not unanimous — with Mayor Will O'Neil abstaining. Abstentions by the Newport City Council are extremely rare and as such call for an explanation. Did the reporter ask the mayor for an explanation as to why he abstained?

Dennis Baker
Corona del Mar

Differences of opinion on air show settlement

As a resident of Huntington Beach, I want to address the criticisms regarding the Pacific Air-

See *Mailbag*, page A10

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



James Carbone

A FAMILY GETS a close look at a reptiles at the Reptile Zoo in Fountain Valley on Monday.

REPTILE

Continued from page A4

him and knew everything about him. I said, he's not here in Orange County, and they said, 'No, no, this is his Instagram. He's at Prehistoric Pets!'

"It's fascinating to me. I mean, I've lived in Orange County all my life and it's my first time here."

Brewer, a lifelong Orange County resident who survived a rough childhood, first opened what was then called Pet Country in 1988. Two expansions later, the Reptile Zoo is now a 13,000-square-foot space.

Brewer is used to being a social media star but has also fit in well with the television medium. The TV show was first announced in early 2023 and debuted last summer.

He said the second season of "Reptile Royalty" flowed more smoothly than the first.

"I tell everyone to go and watch the TV show because I feel like it has a more rounded view of what we

do," Brewer said. "They did a really good job in showing the reality of what goes on. Social media has a tendency of showing a shocking moment, and that goes viral, then they think that's all you do, these viral moments."

"There's just so many cool things that we really do. I get to impact little kids, I get to impact adults. I am shocked how much of an impact you can have on humanity, being just somebody that's a lot online and a lot on videos and TV. It's kind of wild."

Brewer does have what he calls his "haters," which he said comes with the territory of having a following online. He doesn't mind, however.

He said he will soon release a children's book titled "Jay's Reptile Zoo: Loved as You Are."

"Everybody told me this would never work, and they weren't right," Brewer said. "That's because this is my dream, not theirs."

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APODACA

Continued from page A6

adults felt very connected to others emotionally.

The American Psychiatric Assn. earlier this year reported that about one-third of U.S. adults said they feel lonely at least once a week. One in 10 Americans say they feel lonely every day.

And while we have traditionally characterized loneliness as a condition that largely afflicts older people, the APA's research found that younger Americans were quite susceptible. About 30% of study respondents aged 18 to 34 reported feeling lonely every day or several times a week.

Studies have also shown that over the past 20 years or so, the amount of time that people spend alone has ratcheted up, while the time spent on in-person social engagements and

the number of close friendships that people maintain have both declined.

The biggest alarm bell was sounded last year when U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy issued a lengthy, detailed report in which he acknowledged that he had initially been skeptical about the depth of the problem, but after delving into the issue he had become convinced that we are experiencing a public health crisis of loneliness, isolation and lack of connection.

In the report, Murthy warned that loneliness increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, dementia, stroke, depression, anxiety and premature death. The health risks are so dire, he said, that they are comparable to smoking up to 15 cigarettes daily.

There are other costs as well, he noted. Loneliness exacts a heavy toll on the healthcare system, work performance, economic

growth and academic achievement.

Many mental-health professionals reacted to the Surgeon General's report with relief and feelings of validation, saying that it was an important step toward recognizing a serious problem that they have been witnessing in their own work.

"We definitely have a significant problem with loneliness going on in society, both kids and their parents," said Dr. Jerry Weichman a clinical psychologist and adolescent health specialist at Hoag Hospital's Pickup Family Neurosciences Institute in Newport Beach.

Our social circles and socialization skills diminished during the COVID-19 pandemic, and they still haven't recovered, Weichman noted. He has observed many people suffering what can loosely be described as a low-grade depression stemming from

a chronic lack of connect-

edness. But even without COVID in the mix, he said, the loneliness problem would still be significant, due to a host of other contributing factors, including less family time, greater political and social polarization and stress over existential issues such as climate change.

Possibly the biggest causal factor, experts say, is technology and social media.

"What you have is a society that has grown up that is distracted and not connected," Weichman said. "Teens are not looking at each other. They're looking at their phones. They're missing interpersonal connectedness."

"COVID only exacerbated these symptoms," said Dr. Sina Safahieh, a psychiatrist and director of the ASPIRE and Young Adult Mental Health Programs at Hoag. "Now, in post-

COVID some of those teens are stuck behind those screens more than ever."

What can we do?

Weichman said that with growing awareness should come an effort to refocus on basic social skills such as greeting others in a friendly manner, smiling and making eye contact, and to recognize that true purpose and meaning in life comes from connecting with and being of service to other people.

There are also larger, societal changes that should be encouraged, said Safahieh.

"We're going to have to strengthen social infrastructure," he said. This would include creating more physical spaces and developing organizations and programs that promote healthy, in-person social interaction.

Safahieh also favors increased regulation of technology companies to address the addictive fea-

tures of online networks and social media, which are intentionally designed to keep users hooked and inhibit people from relating to each other in more meaningful, positive ways.

On an individual level, we can recognize that we need each other. Parents can prioritize family time and model positive social relationships for their children. We can learn to spot the signs of too much isolation, in ourselves and others. And we can put down our phones, get out of our silos and look for healthy ways to connect with others.

Loneliness isn't good for anyone. The better news is that, with some effort, it can be cured.

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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“TOP CHEF” alumnus Jackson Kalb brings his Italian restaurant concept Ospi to Paseo 17 this fall.

Courtesy of Ospi

‘Top Chef’ alum to open restaurant at Paseo 17

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

On July 31, Greenleaf Kitchen & Cocktails at Paseo 17 on the corner of East 17th Street and Westminster Avenue in Costa Mesa will close its doors to make way for an Italian restaurant from “Top Chef” alumnus Jackson Kalb.

Ospi, an abbreviation of “ospitante,” the Italian word for “host,” hails from the restaurant group Kalb runs with his wife, Melissa, called Memento Mori Hospitality, which also owns Los Angeles-based Jame, Gemma di Mare,

Jemma Hollywood, Gemma Pizzeria and the first Ospi location in El Segundo.

Kalb appeared on season 19 of “Top Chef” and began his career in kitchens as a teenager, working at Melisse Restaurant in Santa Monica. He graduated from Cornell University’s School of Hotel Administration and honed his craft in places like Chicago’s three-Michelin-starred Alinea and Danny Meyer’s Union Square Café in New York. The Los Angeles native opened Jame in 2018 and the first Ospi in 2020. Ospi at Paseo 17 will be the restaurant

group’s first venture into Orange County.

Paseo 17 is a former medical plaza previously known as Plaza Serano remodeled by owner Burnham-Ward Properties into a dining and shopping destination, now home to tenants like Mama Bijoux and Milligram Coffee + Kitchen.

“We have been eager to bring chef Jackson’s culinary talent and vision to Orange County, and we feel confident Paseo 17 is the perfect home for Ospi,” Bryon Ward, said president of Burnham-Ward Properties in a statement.

Ospi is intended to pay homage to “Brooklyn red sauce joints” but also incorporates elements of modern Southern Italian cuisine with a menu that includes scratch-made pastas, thin Roman-style pizzas and innovative dishes like mozzarella-stick-inspired crispy provolone. Ospi will open at Paseo 17 for lunch and dinner every day and brunch on the weekends this fall.

“Ospi will continue to elevate the caliber of dining on our popular 17th Street corridor, raising the bar and further defining this area for sophisticated

culinary experiences,” Ward said.

Greenleaf, which has made its home at Paseo 17 since 2012, will remain open until July 31 with plans to open a temporary spot at Costa Mesa Kitchens while Burnham-Ward Properties works to establish a new 17th Street location. Diners can also visit Greenleaf’s other Costa Mesa locations at SOCO on Harbor Boulevard and Sunflower Avenue or at John Wayne Airport.

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Legal Notices

Legal Notices

CITY OF COSTA MESA NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING DATE CHANGE NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the public hearing originally scheduled for Tuesday, July 16, 2024 will now be held by the Costa Mesa City Council at its regular meeting at City Hall Council Chambers, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa, California on **Tuesday, August 6, 2024 at 7:00 P.M.**, or as soon as possible thereafter, to consider:

ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE NO. 2024-02 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COSTA MESA AMENDING TITLE 13 (PLANNING, ZONING, AND DEVELOPMENT) OF THE COSTA MESA MUNICIPAL CODE TO ESTABLISH AFFORDABLE HOUSING REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS

OR MAKE CHANGES TO ORDINANCE NO. 2024-02 AND GIVE A NEW FIRST READING

AND A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING AND ADOPTING FEES RELATED TO THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN-LIEU FEES FOR THE PROPOSED AFFORDABLE HOUSING ORDINANCE (ORDINANCE NO. 2024-02)

Pursuant to Government Code Section 66016, data and analysis indicating the estimated fees required to comply with the Affordable Housing Ordinance have been made available on or before May 20, 2024. Copies of the in-lieu fees data and analysis can be obtained during normal business hours at City Hall, 1st Floor, City Clerk’s Office, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa and on the City’s website at: <https://www.costamesaca.gov/trending/affordable-housing-ordinance>.

Public Comments: Members of the public wishing to participate in the meeting may find instructions to participate on the agenda. Members of the public may also submit written comments via email to the City Clerk at cityclerk@costamesaca.gov and they will be provided to the City Council, made available to the public, and will be part of the meeting record. Any written communications, photos, or other materials for copying and distribution to the City Council that are 10 pages or less, can be e-mailed to cityclerk@costamesaca.gov, submitted to the City Clerk’s Office on a flash drive, or mailed to the City Clerk’s Office. Kindly submit materials to the City Clerk **AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE, BUT NO LATER THAN 12:00 p.m.** on the day of the hearing, **August 6, 2024**. All materials, pictures, PowerPoints, and videos submitted for display at a public meeting must be previously reviewed by staff to verify appropriateness for general audiences. No links to YouTube videos or other streaming services will be accepted, a direct video file will need to be emailed to staff prior to each meeting in order to minimize complications and to play the video without delay. The video must be one of the following formats, .mp4, .mov or .wmv. Only one file may be included per speaker for public comments. Please note that materials submitted by the public that are deemed appropriate for general audiences will not be redacted in any way and will be posted online as submitted, including any personal contact information. For further assistance, contact the City Clerk’s Office at (714) 754-5225. The City Council agenda and related documents may also be viewed on the City’s website at <http://costamesaca.gov>, 72 hours prior to the public hearing date. **IF THE AFOREMENTIONED ACTION IS CHALLENGED IN COURT**, the challenge may be limited to only those issues raised at the public hearing described in the notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City Council at, or prior to, the public hearing. Brenda Green, City Clerk, City of Costa Mesa
Published July 21 and July 28, 2024

THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Stella Zawistowski

ACROSS

- 1 Fire-__ prices
- 5 Poses for a portrait
- 9 Financial portfolio item
- 14 Gunk
- 15 Sour-tasting
- 16 Barrel part
- 17 Brazilian berry
- 18 Actor Epps
- 19 Person on a trail
- 20 Veggie-based dessert: 2 wds.
- 23 Hair-curling treatment
- 24 On the __ (fleeing)
- 25 Plumbing duct
- 27 Lovingly touched
- 32 Stealthy warriors
- 36 Have to repay
- 37 One claimed at tax time
- 39 Molten rock
- 42 Bearded animal
- 43 Nail polish brand
- 44 Lacking in intelligence
- 46 Draw upon
- 47 Mail: 2 wds.
- 48 Adopted, as a cause
- 52 Frisbee shape
- 54 Our star
- 55 Punxsutawney
- 58 Extended work leave
- 64 Accounting review
- 66 Playwright Coward
- 67 Scotch and __
- 68 Gain traction online
- 69 Actor Driver
- 70 Probability
- 71 Deer with antlers

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71								72					73	

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.

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

For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A6.

- 72 Permits
- 73 Termites’ home

DOWN

- 1 “The Lion King” villain
- 2 Gateway __ (St. Louis landmark)
- 3 Hawaiian party
- 4 Safe to eat
- 5 Nasty weather
- 6 Poetic foot
- 7 Ensnare
- 8 Vegas area

- 9 Light blonde shade
- 10 Regular payments
- 11 “For Pete’s _!”
- 12 At any time
- 13 Semester, e.g.
- 21 Smallish batteries
- 22 German number
- 26 Evergreen tree
- 27 Haircare tools

- 28 Clued in
- 29 “King Lear” daughter
- 30 Slight advantage
- 31 Slow on the uptake
- 33 “_ Christ Superstar”
- 34 Five-spice ingredient
- 35 Noble horse
- 38 “_ in Boots”
- 40 So-so
- 41 Prefix meaning “against”
- 45 Sports defeat
- 49 Biblical book of poems
- 50 Not at home
- 51 Synchronized action
- 53 Manmade waterway
- 55 Gentle touches
- 56 Injured
- 57 Notion
- 59 Predict
- 60 Dead tired
- 61 Programmer’s output
- 62 Contributes
- 63 Endure
- 65 Six-point plays: Abbr.

Tribune Media Services

A new spot offers more than just pizza

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Restaurant owner Russ Bendel's latest venture, Parlor Woodfire Kitchen & Cocktails in San Clemente, opened on Monday right across from his first restaurant, Vine.

"We had been toying with a pizza and pasta concept for a while and then the location became available," Bendel said. "It felt right to create synergy in this part of town near Vine."

RJB Restaurant Group restaurants, like Bloom in San Juan Capistrano and Ironwood in Laguna Hills, all have similar tones, but each is its own experience, said Parlor managing partner Joe Guillena.

"These guys have opened six restaurants in 10 years ... they really know what they are doing," Guillena said.

The staff of Vine Restaurant & Bar stood outside and applauded as Parlor opened its doors for a friends-and-family preview over the weekend, welcoming the new eatery to the RJB Restaurant Group and the neighborhood.

The 5,000-square-foot restaurant takes over the space formerly occupied by David Pratt's Brick, with a 6-foot stone hearth oven at its heart. The U.S.-made oven uses both gas flame and wood-fired cooking, fueled by almond and white oak logs.

While the oven will be used to fire pizzas, chef Jared Cook maintains that Parlor isn't so much an Italian restaurant as it is a modern American pizza parlor.

"Jared really wanted to make a distinction that we are not an Italian restaurant at all, without a doubt," said Guillena. "You can see the American flag out front."

Instead, Parlor focuses on what it has deemed "pizza Americana."

"My vision of the perfect pizza is sourdough crust,



Sarah Mosqueda

PARLOR WOODFIRE Kitchen & Cocktails in San Clemente serves a rotisserie half chicken with roasted cauliflower.

big puff bubbles from cold fermentation, crispy, chewy outside with soft tender interior," said Cook. "No flop when you pick it up."

The menu offers eight pizzas, like a classic Margherita and an elevated pie with truffle-roasted maitake mushrooms. While the pizzas are notable in their own right, the menu also features dishes from

chef-partner Nate Overstreet, who O.C. foodies might remember from Wheat & Sons Butcher, one of the original tenants at the Anaheim Packing House.

At the now-shuttered Wheat & Sons, Overstreet was known for porchetta sandwiches made with impossibly tender pork, chicken and duck with

crackling skin from his rotisserie. Diners can look forward to versions of those long-missed dishes on the Parlor menu, like "Nate's porchetta" and a "rotisserie half chicken" served with roasted cauliflower, drippings potatoes and Calabrian chile dressing.

Like with Bendel's other concepts, the beverage program is locally focused,

headed up by Gabe Whorley. The drink selection features beer from San Clemente-based breweries like Left Coast and Docent as well as cocktails named for San Clemente landmarks like "El Camino Real" (a tequila-based cocktail) or the "Spicy Tina" (a vodka and limoncello drink) which references Tina & Vince's Italian Deli.

Parlor is the seventh restaurant for Bendel and his partners, and Guillena said they are happy to bring another RJB Restaurant Group eatery to the San Clemente area.

"A high tide makes all boats rise," said Guillena.

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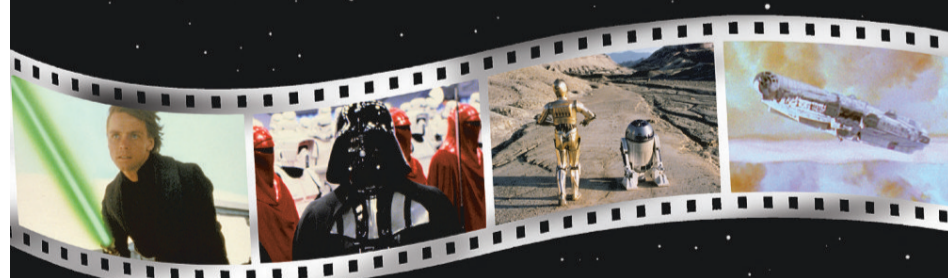


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Allen J. Schaben | Los Angeles Times

DISNEY WORKERS raise their fists at a Disneyland drop-off area during a July 17 rally.

CONTRACT

Continued from page A2

erator at Disney's California Adventure, helped hand count ballots on July 19 when 99% of voting union members authorized an unfair labor practice strike.

"Workers that have been around since the '84 strike are saying we are more engaged than we ever have been," Showkeir said. "The energy that I saw at the July 17 worker rally outside of Disneyland was great."

The four-union coalition is comprised of Service Employees International Union-United Service Workers West, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 324, Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers, and Grain Millers International Union Local 83 and Teamsters Automotive, Industrial, Theme Park, Service Sector, and Allied Workers Local 495.

Together they represent ride operators, candy makers, custodians and cashiers at the Anaheim theme parks and Downtown Disney.

Ahead of the Disneyland contract expiring on June 16, union members mounted a solidarity button campaign that ran afoul with management over the "Disney Look" dress code.

The union claimed that more than 500 workers have faced unlawful intimidation, surveillance and disciplinary threats, all for

wearing the button with a Mickey Mouse-styled glove raised in a clenched fist.

Labor charges were filed with the National Labor Relations Board in June. Board agents are currently investigating the alleged violations, which formed the basis of the unfair labor practice strike authorization vote.

The prospects of a Disneyland strike have sparked questions, but not cancellations, from prospective guests planning trips during the theme park's peak summer tourist season.

Len Testa is the co-author of "The Unofficial Guide to Disneyland" and the president of Touringplans.com, which works to help people save time and money on their vacations and offers a download for its Disney lines app.

Even though Disneyland appears to be having a slower summer than usual, he doesn't believe that labor unrest is a probable reason why.

"The easiest way to measure how busy a park is looking at how long people wait in lines," he said. "Wait times are down 20 to 40%. There are larger macro-trends that people are paying more attention to like inflation."

Testa also didn't think a potential strike would dramatically alter the park's operations, even when it comes to attractions running in an orderly manner.

"So many people in exe-

cutive and management positions have performed the roles in the past because they've been with the company for years," he said. "I don't think you would see a drop-off in quality or performance."

Showkeir, who is represented by the Teamsters Local 495, spoke to hundreds of workers who cast their strike authorization votes earlier this month and got a different impression.

"Each themed land has a management team," he said. "But given the amount of time they have left, there will be a lot of difficulty that the company would face staffing attractions properly to operate the park."

Any potential strike would impact about 9,500 Disneyland workers represented by the union coalition.

The labor contract for Disney's California Adventure and Downtown Disney doesn't expire until Sept. 30.

All 14,000 members of the coalition, though, are eligible to vote tomorrow whether to ratify or reject the newly proposed contract.

If passed by a majority of union members on Monday, a new three-year agreement will be secured.

But if rejected, a strike at the so-called "happiest place on earth" remains a possibility.

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WORD

Continued from page A6

"As well as" is not a coordinating conjunction. So it's not grammatical to say, "We invited Tony, Maya, Caleb as well as Jasmine." If you must use "as well as," you have to work in the "and" before it: "We invited Tony, Maya and Caleb, as well as Jasmine."

"And" can't be replaced by a dash to team up with "between." I see this a lot: Children between the ages of 3-16 are admitted for free." Nope. "Between" in this structure necessitates an "and." If you're married to that dash, ditch "between": Children ages 3-16 are admitted for free.

In lists of three or more things, "and" can follow a serial comma — or not. A serial comma, also called an Oxford comma, is the comma before that "and" at the end of a list: Tony, Maya, and Caleb. But it's optional. So "and" can be preceded by this comma but it doesn't have to be.

"And" is usually preceded by a comma when it connects independent clauses. "I know what you're thinking, and I have



Evan Amos

THE CLASSIC peanut butter and jelly sandwich doesn't need an ampersand.

a lot of questions." In this sentence, you have two independent clauses — grammatical structures that could stand alone as sentences — connected by "and." Compare that to "I know what you're thinking and have a lot of questions," in which the second part doesn't have its own subject and must share the "I" with the first part. So without an "I" in the second clause, the "and" isn't joining two independent clauses, which means no comma. But when the two clauses could stand alone, put a

comma before "and." "And" can team up with "also," but it probably shouldn't. There's nothing grammatically wrong with saying "He works Mondays and also Tuesdays." But if you agree with 99% of professional editors that unnecessary words are in fact unnecessary, just cut the "also" out.

JUNE CASAGRANDE is the author of "The Joy of Syntax: A Simple Guide for All the Grammar You Know You Should Know." She can be reached at JuneTCN@aol.com.

MAILBAG

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show and the settlement agreement with the city. The air show is a major event that brings substantial economic benefits to our city, including \$3.5 million annually for the general fund and over \$120 million in total economic impact, supporting hotels and small businesses.

Contrary to recent allegations, the air show operates without costing taxpayers and significantly contributes to our local economy. The settlement agreement aims to secure long-term benefits for both the air show and Huntington Beach, ensuring continued revenue and promotional value.

We believe in the pos-

itive impact of the Pacific Airshow on our community and are committed to supporting this event that has become a hallmark of our city.

Ed Laird
Huntington Beach

The July 21 Daily Pilot Mailbag ("Air show and hot air in H.B.") presented half a dozen angry letters attacking the Huntington Beach City Council majority and City Atty. Michael Gates over the terms of the Pacific Airshow settlement, recently made public. As is usual with scandals, the attempt to cover up the misdeeds was equally odious. There is no defense or explanation possible for the gross giveaway of public funds and local control of our beach operations. The

revelations in the settlement details are damning. No amount of "hot air" will save those responsible. In catering to a political ally, partisan city officials got caught with their hands in the cookie jar. Our cookie jar. Consequently, there is no redeeming the trust lost in these actions which were hidden from the public. The culprits and their feckless and reckless allies must be held to account. As if Surf City did not have enough investigative problems with the state, this scandal could ground the air show as well. That's the way the cookie crumbles. It looks like the council majority could crash and burn on this one.

Tim Geddes
Huntington Beach

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