

## A renewed spirit of Navidad



Courtesy of Matt Gush

**THERE'S NO SUCH** thing as too many tamales in Placentia. The Placentia Tamale Festival returns Thursday in Old Town.

## 'Tis the season as Placentia Tamale Festival preps return

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

Every December, Old Town Placentia transforms into the tamale capital of Orange County.

For the past 27 years, the city's small, historic district has welcomed the *masa*-loving masses to Santa Fe Avenue for the Placentia Tamale Festival, a community gathering celebrating the Mexican meal that especially whets appetites during the Christmas season.

The annual event celebrated

**"It grew organically. It wasn't something that was handed down by the city. It just came out of the kindness and gratitude we had for our community."**

— Rosalina Davis

Chair of the Placentia Tamale Festival

its 25th anniversary in 2019, which also served as the festival's finest hour. A crowd tallying close to 20,000 arrived to Old Town throughout the day where food vendors, musical

entertainers and even Santa Claus greeted them.

"That was probably the biggest tamale festival that we've had in its history," said Rosalina Davis, chair of the festival. "We

typically close one street down but closed a lot more streets that year, so it was huge."

The tamale fest triumph marked the evolution of the event dating to the 1980s when it began with *las posadas*, a Catholic religious tradition, along Santa Fe Avenue. The faithful dressed up as Mary and Joseph while leading processions that reenacted the Holy Family's Biblical trek to Bethlehem in search of refuge for the

See *Tamale*, page R4

## Latino population represented in mariachi holiday shows across O.C.

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Popular Mexican Christmas traditions like tamales and midnight mass are widely known and celebrated, even outside the Latino community.

Festive live mariachi might be added to the list this year, as venues present holiday mariachi shows throughout Orange County.

On Dec. 11, Orange's Musco Center for the Arts presents "Nochebuena: Christmas Eve in Mexico." The show, which will feature Mariachi Garibaldi de Jamie Cuéllar and Ballet Folklórico de Los Angeles, is part of Musco's mission to celebrate and engage the diverse cultures in its surrounding community.

"Musco Center is honored to work with these two distinguished performing en-



Courtesy of AR Photography

**MARIACHI GARIBALDI** de Jaime Cuellar performs during "Nochebuena: Christmas Eve in Mexico" at the Musco Center in 2019.

sembles," said Musco Center Executive Director Richard T. Bryant, "Nochebuena is a cultural celebration that beautifully

captures Mexican-American holiday traditions in a way that

See *Mariachi*, page R6

## Anaheim police who killed councilman's cousin have a history of fatal shootings

BY BEN BRAZIL

When Anaheim police officers fatally shot a Santa Ana city councilman's cousin in September, it wasn't the first time some of them have been involved in deadly shootings.

Anaheim officers Catalin Panov, Paul Delgado, Brett Heitmann and Kenneth Weber fired the fatal shots at Brandon Lopez on Sept. 28, following a car chase and hours-long standoff at a construction area in Santa Ana.

Lopez, 33, was suspected of driving a stolen vehicle and had warrants for armed robberies, domestic violence and driving on a suspended license.

Body camera footage revealed

that the officers mistook an empty water bottle in a black bag for a gun when they shot and killed Lopez.

The incident has drawn criticism from Santa Ana Councilman Johnathan Hernandez, who said police unnecessarily escalated the situation when they shot his cousin, who was suffering from a mental health crisis. Santa Ana Mayor Vicente Sarmiento compared Anaheim police to "a firing squad" and questioned the officers' "provocative decision" to fire a flash bang into Lopez's car.

The California Department of Justice is investigating the shooting under Assembly Bill 1506, which requires the department to investigate all police shootings re-

sulting in the death of an unarmed civilian in the state.

**A HISTORY OF FATALITIES**

For two of the officers, Panov and Delgado, this wasn't the first time they've been involved in a fatal shooting.

Delgado has been involved in at least three other shootings, according to district attorney's records and a 2017 report on Anaheim police use of force incidents from the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California.

In 2018, Delgado was involved in a shooting that left Kenneth Yamashita-Magarro paralyzed from the waist down.

While conducting surveillance on another individual, police mis-

takenly started tailing Yamashita-Magarro, wrongly believing him to be the suspect.

Following a car chase that ended with Yamashita-Magarro crashing a car and a foot pursuit, he was shot in the chest, left leg and lower back. According to a district attorney's report, police believed Yamashita-Magarro was reaching into his waistband for a gun. However, no gun was found on him. The district attorney's office cleared Delgado and another officer last year.

Delgado was also involved in the fatal shooting of Robert Moreno in 2014. Moreno was shot 23 times after allegedly shooting a

See *Shootings*, page R2

## Lawsuit targets Newsom second time

The Orange County Board of Education is challenging the COVID-19 state of emergency declaration.

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

For the second time in recent months, the Orange County Board of Education is mounting a legal challenge to Gov. Gavin Newsom's pandemic-related state of emergency declaration.

In August, the California Supreme Court declined to hear the board's previous petition seeking to overturn Newsom's emergency rule-making authorities that included allowing state officials to issue a mask mandate for K-12 students this summer ahead of the new school year.

But that setback didn't deter a renewed legal effort.

This time, attorneys for the board filed a Nov. 23 complaint with the Orange County Superior Court, which doesn't share the state Supreme Court's discretionary authority to decline cases.

And unlike the August petition, no news release about the suit was released before its filing two days before the Thanksgiving holiday.

After the state Supreme Court declined to hear the original case, the board did send a formal letter to New-

**"This case is not about vaccine or mask mandates, or any other specific policy measures. It seeks to restore the normal process of governance and to ensure transparency and accountability..."**

— Scott Street

Attorney for the board

som asking him to voluntarily end the state of emergency by Sept. 13 to avoid future litigation.

The framing of the filing that followed is similar to the previous petition.

"This case is not about vaccine or mask mandates, or any other specific policy measures," Scott Street, an attorney for the board, told TimesOC. "It seeks to restore the normal process of governance and to ensure transparency and accountability in the political process, things that have been lacking during the past two years."

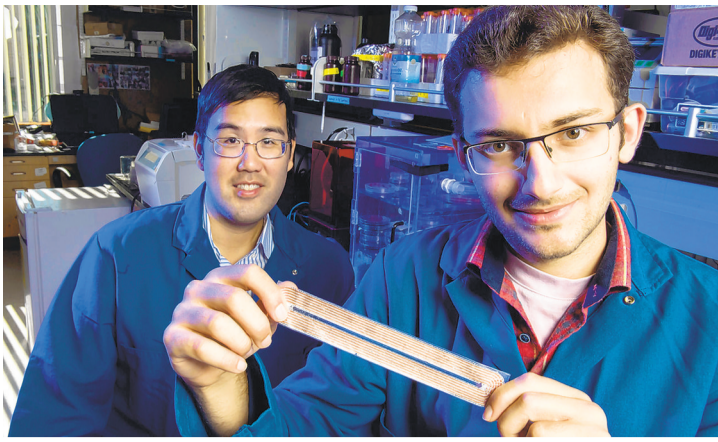
Street previously served as an attorney with the California Fitness Alliance, a coalition of gym owners who sued the governor in 2020 over pandemic restrictions on their business operations but dropped the case when the state planned to fully reopen in June amid declining COVID-19 infections.

In the board's suit, Street argued that Newsom violated the California Emergency Services Act when he reopened the state in June but kept the state of emergency declaration from March 2020 in play. The complaint acknowledged that the statute has been seldom used in the past with little in the way of case law interpretation, but it argued that the law was on its side.

"One thing is clear," the suit claimed, "the governor has a duty to terminate the state of

See *Lawsuit*, page R2





Courtesy of UC Irvine

**UC IRVINE** researchers have discovered how to pay for items with clothing. Pictured are Peter Tseng, left, and Amirhossein Hajiaghajani.

## Soon you may be able to pay with your sleeve

BY BEN BRAZIL

Instead of having to dig through your wallet to find your credit card, in the very near future you may be able to pay for items just by brushing your sleeve near a card reader.

In a recently published paper, UC Irvine researchers detailed how they developed a flexible textile that allows clothing to communicate with nearby devices. The technology advances near-field technology.

"If you've held your smartphone or charge card close to a reader to pay for a purchase, you have taken advantage of near-field signaling technologies," said co-author Peter Tseng, UCI assistant professor of electrical engineering and computer science. "Our fabrics work on the same principle, but we've extended the range significantly."

"This means you could potentially keep your phone in your pocket, and just by brushing your body against other textiles or readers, power and information can be transferred to and from your device."

Tseng said in a phone interview that the major problem with near-field technology has been its short range, to the point of where you have to be right next to the reader. But the researchers' textile system acts as an intermediary between a phone and reader, extending the range to more than 4 feet. Tseng said the "relay" is flexible and can crisscross the body.

For the fashionable folks among us, clothing style doesn't have to suffer with the integration of the new technology. Tseng said that any number of

unique designs can be placed over it.

"So that's the idea, is that you embed these underneath existing designs, or alongside existing designs, and it acts to kind of mediate or drive the signal across your body," Tseng said, adding that he envisions clothing companies integrating the technology into their products.

Lead author Amirhossein Hajiaghajani, a UCI PhD student in electrical engineering and computer science, said the textiles are meant to be integrated into interesting designs.

"We want to create designs that not only are cool and inexpensive but can reduce the burden that modern electronics can bring to our lives," Hajiaghajani said.

Aside from no-touch payments, the new technology could have a number of applications. People could no longer need a key or separate device to unlock their cars. Employees could also use their clothes rather than a badge to unlock facility gates.

Tseng said there a lot of near-field technology medical devices that this new application could also improve. Patients may no longer need so many sensors attached to their bodies. Instead, a hospital gown outfitted with the textile could keep track of a patient's vitals.

Another benefit to the textile is it's inexpensive to make, using etched foils of copper and aluminum.

"The way we built it was so cheap," Tseng said. "You can build it at home."

benjamin.brazil@latimes.com  
Twitter: @benbrazil

# Fishing ban is lifted on Orange County coastline 2 months after oil spill

BY LILLY NGUYEN

Nearly two months after the closure of Orange County's coast in the aftermath of the estimated 25,000-gallon oil spill off of Huntington Beach, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife made an announcement Monday — let them fish.

The order was lifted Tuesday afternoon to the relief of business owners impacted by the closure of the fisheries in addition to local politicians, including state Sen. Dave Min (D-Irvine) and Orange County Supervisor Katrina Foley.

"I am relieved to see that our fisheries will finally be able to reopen," Foley said in a statement.

"This oil spill immediately put a halt to the operations of many small businesses in our community whose livelihoods depend on the ability to fish off our Southern California coast. The business owners I have had the privilege to hear from in the last few months are resilient and my hope is that overcoming this final hurdle will finally help them get back on their feet."

The order was initially implemented in October, prohibiting the taking of all fish and shellfish from Huntington Beach to Dana Point.

That closure was later extended to an estimated 650 square miles of marine waters and about 45 miles of shoreline, according to the state agency. Boundaries included all bays and harbors from Seal Beach to San Onofre State Beach in San Diego County.

That meant while the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment was testing seafood in the area, businesses like Newport Landing and Davey's Locker Sportfishing & Whale Watching had to pass up good fishing in nearby spots to keep fishers safe and follow state guidelines.

Authorities announced Monday there was no further risk to public health from consumption of seafood in the affected area.

Education manager Jessica Roame said the business saw the greatest impact in the first five days following the oil spill, which included the temporary closure of Newport Harbor.

Once the closures lifted, the company was able to resume its whale-watching tours, but its



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

**NAIM MOSA** of Irvine holds up a mackerel he caught on Tuesday.

sportfishing tours had to stay on hold for at least three weeks before operators could figure out a way to take people out farther beyond the impacted region.

"Fishing is so nice on the coast of Orange County, but the whole of that area was blocked off. Thankfully, our crew and captains were ... able to strategize a Plan B, but they had been telling me that [they] were driving past really good fishing areas and having to tell customers that [they] couldn't anchor up there," Roame said.

"We can't fish there, but we're seeing all these fish here," Roame said. "We have to go 15 miles this way. It's been a big pain, but thankfully that's over now."

Pipeline operator Amplify Energy is currently facing a number of lawsuits — including two from a bait and tackle store in Costa Mesa and a Newport Harbor fuel dock — that allege the company acted negligently for failing to maintain its aging infrastructure and that the businesses themselves faced financial losses as a result of it.

But Roame said that at least for Newport Landing and Davey's Locker, the biggest impact has not necessarily been the closures but public perception.

She said she didn't want to understate the environmental impacts of the spill, which has killed a number of birds, sea lions and a bottlenose dolphin, according to the Oiled Wildlife Care Network at UC Davis.

Officials said Tuesday that the Unified Command, responsible for coastline cleanup, has signed off on 69 shoreline segments out of a total of 107 — about 190 miles of coast.

But beaches, in addition to Newport Harbor, reopened about a week after the oil spill, which meant business for much of the harbor could return to some normalcy. However, Roame said she canceled trips early on due to the circumstances and fielded a number of cancellations and calls from people concerned about their potential impacts on the waters.

She's gotten fewer calls these days, but business is slower compared to this same period last year.

"We're very excited and we're happy to hear there's no risk to public health to seafood consumption," Roame said.

"We were very hopeful that was going to be the case. We're back to business as usual, moving back to the holiday season ... COVID was the first issue, then the oil spill. It's one hit after another. It's really hard for local businesses to bounce back after really traumatic events like that," she added.

"We're hoping with the fisheries opening back up that people will get back out, get back on the water and do more of our fishing in the local area."

lilly.nguyen@latimes.com  
Twitter: @lilibirds

## LAWSUIT

Continued from page R1

emergency at the 'earliest possible moment that conditions warrant."

For Street and the plaintiffs, that moment arrived in June when Newsom rescinded the state's stay-at-home order and proceeded to roll back nearly 90% of his pandemic executive orders by October — except the state of emergency declaration.

In November, the governor extended certain provisions of his emergency proclamation through March 2022 citing possible surges in COVID-19 cases

and understaffed hospitals.

The California Department of Public Health vehemently disagrees any violation has taken place.

"Numerous courts have recognized that state law authorizes the continued state of emergency, which remains necessary to ensure hospitals are equipped to handle a surge in COVID-19 cases and to support the state's ongoing vaccination and booster programs," the department told TimesOC.

"California will continue to lead with science and public health to keep Californians safe."

On Dec. 1, the department helped confirm the

first Omicron variant case in the United States in San Francisco. Omicron is classified as a "variant of concern" by the World Health Organization.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that Omicron's presence reinforces the importance of vaccination, booster shots and general prevention strategies.

Scientists predict it will be weeks and months before Omicron's impact is more fully known.

Children's Health Defense, an anti-vaccination group founded by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., has joined the board as co-plaintiffs in the board's case, as it did in Au-

gust.

The complaint described the nonprofit's mission as one that seeks "to educate the public about the risks and harmful effects of chemical exposures upon prenatal and children's health."

In late September, YouTube removed Children's Health Defense's page as part of a wider effort to crack down on vaccine misinformation.

Concerns about school vaccine and mask mandates appeared in court documents as attorneys argue that the board is adversely impacted by the ongoing state of emergency and has standing in court.

"They're related," says Robert Tyler, an attorney for the board and Children's Health Defense.

"These are definitely issues. All of these things are relevant to a school board. But it doesn't mean that's what this case is about. Under no circumstances does a governor have the right to end our form of government to maintain 'flexibility.'"

Board members serve in an advisory role when overseeing the county's 28 local school districts.

They lack the authority to impose or rescind public health mandates over them.

In August, the board

voted 4-0 during closed session to approve a contract with outside counsel for legal services before filing a petition with the state Supreme Court.

Tyler's firm was retained for that effort and confirms that the contract continues to cover its latest legal effort in O.C. Superior Court, one that attorneys expect to go to trial.

The board also sued Newsom in 2020 in an effort to reopen schools that year, but the state Supreme Court declined to hear the case.

gabriel.sanroman@latimes.com  
Twitter: @gsanroman2

## SHOOTINGS

Continued from page R1

police dog and firing at police. Delgado and two other officers were cleared by the district attorney's office.

In 2008, Delgado was also involved in the non-fatal shooting of Jose Francisco Rodriguez, according to district attorney's records clearing him of any wrongdoing.

Rodriguez led police on a chase through Garden Grove and Anaheim before being boxed in by Anaheim SWAT armored vehicles in a parking lot. According to a district attorney's report of the incident, he exited the vehicle suddenly with a shotgun and pointed it at officers before he was shot.

Rodriguez's brother-in-law, Joel Martinez, told the Orange County Register at the time that Rodriguez was suffering from a mental episode.

"He seemed really depressed," Martinez told the Register. "He was going through a lot — I was actually surprised how much he's going through, that he was handling it. This is a crisis situation here."

Panov has been involved in at least two other shootings.

In 2008, he and another officer shot and killed David Abrams on the 91 Freeway following a car



Anaheim Police Department

**BODY CAM** footage of the fatal police shooting of Brandon Lopez in Santa Ana.

chase. Police said Abrams had shot an officer in the leg, spurring the pursuit.

During the freeway incident, Norma Alicia Cortez-Gomez and Tereza Cortez ended up in the line of fire of police officers.

The two women filed a lawsuit, claiming that Cortez-Gomez was shot in the abdomen, hand, back and shoulder by bullets from police as they fired at Abrams, who was taking cover behind their car. Cortez-Gomez was treated at a hospital and recovered. The city of Anaheim settled the case with the women for \$300,000.

The lawsuit claimed that

police officers placed the women "in a position of great danger" and risked "imminent severe injuries to their personal safety and well being that they would not have otherwise faced" in apprehending Abrams.

In 2014, Panov and five other officers shot and killed Steen Parker, who allegedly robbed a Fry's Electronics store at Gunpoint.

Leading up to the shooting, Parker was holed up in a car for a few hours as police tried to get him to surrender, including firing pepper balls and gas into the car. About three hours into the standoff, Parker appeared to fire a single

round through the top of the car. In a district attorney's report that cleared the officers of wrongdoing, an officer believed that Parker was trying to make it seem like he had committed suicide.

After an officer hit Parker with a beanbag round requested by Panov, Parker raised his gun and fired at Panov and another officer. Several officers opened fire, including Panov, who fired an entire magazine, the district attorney's report says.

Heitmann has been present during two police shootings, though he didn't fire his gun in either instance.

Heitmann was partners with Officer Nick Bennalack when Bennalack fatally shot Manuel Angel Diaz in 2012.

A federal jury concluded in 2017 that Bennalack used excessive force when he killed Diaz, who was unarmed and running away from him in an apartment building courtyard. Protests erupted in Anaheim in response to the killing of Diaz and Joel Acevedo, who was killed a day after Diaz.

Heitmann was also partners with Bennalack when Bennalack shot and killed Bernie Villegas in 2012, mistaking a Daisy Red Ryder BB gun for an actual shotgun.

Bennalack has been involved in four fatal shootings in eight years, including the Parker shooting with Panov.

In seeking comment from the officers involved in the Lopez shooting, Anaheim police spokesman Shane Carringer declined due to pending litigation from the Lopez family.

Anaheim city spokesman Mike Lyster said in an emailed comment this week that the Lopez shooting is unique and should be analyzed on its own.

"We never want to see loss of life involving our police, but we take issue with the narrative," Lyster said. "Each incident involving our police is unique and

needs to be looked at on its own. Seeking to draw conclusions from different incidents does a disservice to all involved."

## SANTA ANA STANDOFF

According to a video released by Anaheim police last month, police chased Lopez for 35 minutes through Tustin, Irvine and Santa Ana until his car became stuck on tracks being constructed for the O.C. Streetcar in the 1200 block of West Santa Ana Boulevard in Santa Ana. Lopez was in the car for several hours as police commanded him to exit.

Sgt. Jacob Gallacher said in the video that a Santa Ana police officer who was monitoring Lopez's movements in the car reported to other officers that Lopez was reaching under car seats and had a gun.

Less than an hour before the fatal shooting, Anaheim police took command of the incident from Santa Ana.

The video shows that about 30 minutes before Lopez was killed, a Santa Ana officer reports that he spoke with a member of the Lopez family, and they said he intended to commit suicide by cop.

Gallacher explains in the video that Anaheim police decided to shoot a "chemi-

See *Shootings*, page R4



“ I chose to fight,  
so I came to Hoag.”

SARAH'S STORY



## An ER Doctor Fights — and Defeats — Breast Cancer During Pandemic

Sarah worked on the front lines as an emergency room physician in the height of the COVID pandemic. Her world came to a halt when the mother of three found out she had an aggressive form of breast cancer. At Hoag, Sarah never felt like a number. Hoag saw her as a person, a mother and a fellow physician. Daily, she felt the support of a team fighting hard to get her back to being healthy for her family. Today, cancer-free, Sarah credits the care and support she received at Hoag for helping her defeat breast cancer once and for all.



**hoag**

Hoag Family  
Cancer Institute

[hoag.org/fight](https://hoag.org/fight)



# Brazilian churros now at South Coast Plaza



Photos by Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

**AN ASSORTMENT** of the ChurroLover, three-bite sized churros, from Churriño at Collage at South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa.



**THE SMORE** red velvet, right, and the build your own churros.

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

**W**hat exactly is the difference between a Brazilian churro and churro from say, Mexico or Cuba?

"That's a question we get a lot at the store," said Nicolas Silva, a Brazilian native and co-founder of Churriño Gourmet Churros & Gelato, "and, I usually say, 'The Brazilian churros are the best churros.'"

Churriño opened its first Orange County location on Saturday at Collage Culinary Experience located in the Bloomingdale's wing at South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa.

Silva and his business partner Kelvin Tan started Churriño in 2017, with the intention of bringing the authentic flavors of Brazilian and Latin desserts to America.

"I grew up with churros back in Brazil, but I couldn't find the Brazilian churro that I grew up with and was used to," Silva said.

Brazilian churros are crunchy on the outside, and the dough is little more cakey in the middle, Silva explained.

"And we stuff them," Silva said. In Brazil, churros are usually filled with a rich caramel called *doce de leite*, though other fillings like chocolate are a favorite as well.

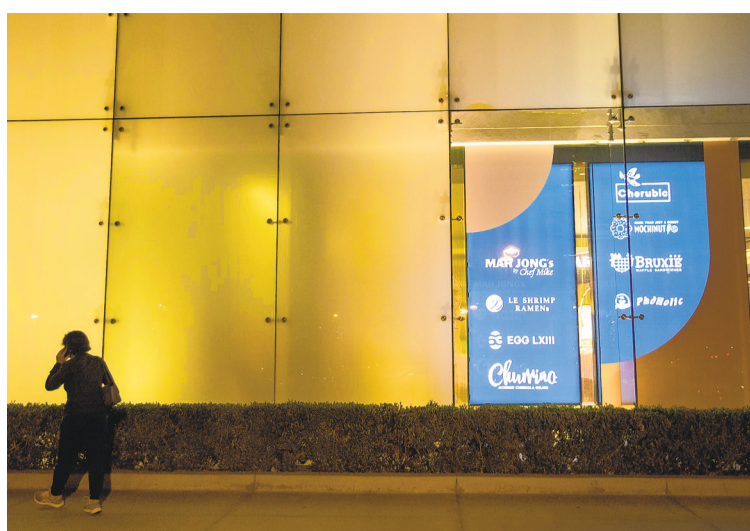
The origin of the churro is difficult to trace with many cultures claiming a version of the fried-dough stick. Some credit Portuguese explorers with bringing a Chinese pastry called *youtiao* back to the Iberian Peninsula where it evolved and spread to Spain and Rio de Janeiro.

Churriño churros are bite-sized and vegan, and for Silva, the *doce de leite*-filled churro is the standard. He has a churro on the Churriño menu that is based on that memory.

"My signature churro, the super nuts churro, is inspired by my Brazilian heritage," Silva said.

Super nuts is filled with caramel *leche*, drizzled with almond butter and topped with honey-roasted peanuts and coconut flakes.

The treats at Churriño are customizable, with guests choosing their churro fillings and toppings, in three sizes: ChurroLover (three churros), ChurroAddict (seven churros) and ChurroManiac (seven churros served with gelato.)



**OUTSIDE COLLAGE** Culinary Experience at South Coast Plaza.



**NICOLAS SILVA**, left, and Kelvin Tan are the owners of Churriño at Collage at South Coast Plaza.

"I hope our guests really get to taste a different take on what a street food churro can taste like," Silva said.

Besides churros, guests will find fruit-flavored gelato, lattes and hot chocolate.

Silva and Tan opened their flagship location in Long Beach in 2019, but Silva said they always had an interest in entering the Orange County market.

"Being around this area was always a dream of mine that I thought was going to be impossible," Silva said, "but never say never, that is what I have learned through this process."

Churriño isn't the only vendor that Collage has helped enter into South Coast Plaza's affluent market.

Paradise Dynasty, a soup dumpling concept from Singapore known for its rainbow soup dumplings opened at Collage this summer after initially being passed over for a space at South Coast Plaza.

"I tried to connect to landlords," said CEO of Paradise Group Eldwin Chua, "but we always got rejected."

Chua said his attempts to get Paradise Dynasty into American malls were challenged by concerns Paradise Dynasty was too similar to competitors like Din Tai Fung, which has a location at South Coast.

"All the prominent and good shopping mall already have Din Tai Fung," Chua said. "It is very difficult for us to go in."

Morgan Zhang, the Irvine developer who leased the space to create Collage offered Paradise Dynasty a sublease and the restaurant has found success, drawing crowds and long waits since opening.

Churriño is one of several concepts opening at Collage. Le Shrimp Ramen, Egg LXIII and Mah Jong's by Chef Mike are all currently open. Bruxie, a waffle sandwich concept and Mochinut, which serves mochi donuts, are also coming soon.

"Being able to partner with Collage and things working out, we just couldn't be more excited," Silva said, "and we are looking forward to what will coming next."

sarahmosqueda  
@latimes.com  
Twitter: @SarahNMos




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## TAMALE

Continued from page R1

birth of baby Jesus.

Old Town businesses, including the Tlaquepaque Restaurant that Davis co-owns, began putting out tables with *pan dulce*, *champurado* and coffee for free on the sidewalk.

Every year, more residents, and even out-of-towners, turned out for *las posadas*.

Soon the tradition came to include tamale vendors and Placentia's first official tamale festival began back in 1994.

"It grew organically," Davis said. "It wasn't something that was handed down by the city. It

just came out of the kindness and gratitude we had for our community."

Inspired by India's tamale festival, Placentia's take is the first and longest-standing event of its kind in O.C. Other cities — like La Habra and Santa Ana — have followed its lead with their own tamale festival in recent years.

But nothing could prepare event organizers or *tamaleros* for the coronavirus pandemic to come.

The Placentia Tamale Festival didn't take 2020 off; people preordered tamales by the dozens from Old Town restaurants — like El Farolito, 301 Café, Mi Casita, El Cantarito and

Tlaquepaque — instead, and picked them up over the span of a few days in December.

"It was the first lapse that we had," Davis said. "We did offer curbside pickup, but it wasn't the same feeling. One of the reasons why people enjoy our tamale festival is because it's a big reunion, a big get-together. We didn't have that same feeling of celebration. It was a small-scale event."

With the tamale festival slated to return in-person on Thursday, the excitement this season is palpable. Tlaquepaque's assembly line of workers started

See **Tamale**, page R6

## SHOOTINGS

Continued from page R2

cal agent" into the car "with the hopes that it would encourage him to surrender." After a nearly four-hour standoff, police deployed gas and a flash bang at the car.

Body camera footage of the shooting shows Lopez leaving the car after the flash bang was fired and the car filled with gas.

Within a few seconds, police shout "Hands up!" and "Gun!" Several shots ring out and Lopez falls to the ground.

Gallacher said Lopez had a "black object in his right hand," and officers were still concerned about a potential gun after he was shot because he was lying on his hands. A nonlethal projectile was fired at his body, but he was unresponsive. He was dead at the scene.

Gallacher said that a gun was not found. Instead, police found an empty plastic water bottle inside a black Guess bag underneath Lopez's body. A note from Lopez was found in the car, along with a knife and drug paraphernalia.

## POTENTIAL LAWSUIT ON THE HORIZON

The Lopez family filed a claim last week seeking \$20 million in damages from the city of Anaheim, contending that the officers used "excessive and unrea-

sonable force" against Lopez. The family is being represented by well-known civil rights attorneys Vicki Sarmiento, who is the sister of Vicente Sarmiento, and Dale Galipo, who represented the Diaz family in the case that found Bannalack used excessive force.

The claim is a precursor to a lawsuit.

During a phone interview this week, Vicki Sarmiento said that the Lopez shooting exemplifies that the Anaheim Police Department lacks sufficient de-escalation training for its officers.

She specifically questioned the deployment of the flash bang, which can cause temporary blindness and hearing loss, according to the American Journal of Operations Research. "What was the plan once he exited, given the fact that it does cause temporary hearing loss and disorientation?" she said. "So I think the very use of that flash grenade ... and then to shoot him within seconds, was catastrophic in terms of training."

Vicki Sarmiento also said that the officers had time on their hands and could have used Lopez's family to help get him out of the car rather than resorting to the flash bang.

"I don't really understand where the breakdown took place, why they wouldn't let them communicate or have a mental health person there communicate with

Brandon," she said.

The attorney also mentioned that the legal team will be looking into the Santa Ana police officer who announced that Lopez had a gun.

Jennifer Rojas, policy advocate and organizer with the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, said over the phone that the killing of Lopez illustrates why there needs to be police reform in Orange County and that officers are not adept at responding to mental health crises. Rojas co-wrote the 2017 ACLU report on Anaheim use of force.

"The Anaheim Police Department has an unacceptably long history of killing Black and Latino residents, low-income residents and people in behavioral health crises," Rojas said.

"The fact that the officers who were involved in killing Brandon Lopez are repeat shooters raises questions about the effectiveness of the reforms that Anaheim PD has put in place since the back-to-back shootings of Joel Acevedo and Manuel Diaz back in 2012.

"Having a police review board and independent auditor, strengthened training, body cameras — that has not prevented police officers from killing community members who are in a behavioral health crisis."

benjamin.brazil@latimes.com  
Twitter: @benbrazil





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# Irvine Fine Arts Center presents 'Manos,' an exhibition on the hands that feed

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

The hands that feed us in Southern California are often hands of color, from immigrant labor picking produce in the fields to the kitchens of our favorite establishments. Hands can feed us in other ways too, a loving touch or a soft caress.

Irvine Fine Arts Center's exhibition, "Manos," makes space for the hands that feed.

Featuring sculpture by Santa Ana-based artist, José Flores Nava and paintings by San Gabriel-based artist, Kiara Aileen Machado, the exhibition reflects on what we do with our hands that nourishes us.

Virginia Arce, exhibitions program coordinator at Irvine Fine Arts Center, has been doing studio visits with both Nava and Machado for over a year and said she was surprised the two Southern California artists didn't know of each other.

"I really felt like they were

both humanizing their subjects in a very intimate and personal way," Arce said. "I felt like there were a lot of similarities in their work."

Nava is a DACA recipient and an educator, who was born in Mexico and moved to California at 12 years old. He earned a bachelor of fine arts and a master of fine arts from CSU Fullerton. He uses the medium of ceramics and sculpture to examine connections between the undocumented community and the products of their labor.

For "Manos," Nava has slip-cast fruits and vegetables native to the Americas, and colored them in electric vibrancy.

"Jose was really interested in kind of pushing the idea of farm to table and discussions about migrant work and labor," Arce said. "All of the fruits are native to the Americas and that was really important to him, in terms of their history. They are things of sustenance, but they are also things that we



Courtesy of OfStudio

**INSTALLATION VIEW** of the "Manos" exhibition at Irvine Fine Arts Center. It is showing in Gallery 1 through Dec. 18.

just have on our tables and maybe don't think too much about where they come from."

Machado also explores hidden figures through her bold and striking paintings. Her culture is central to her art, which studies the facets of intersecting identities.

"Half of her family is from Guatemala and the other half is from El Salvador, and oftentimes she paints members of her family or people who are close to her," Arce

said.

Machado was born in Lynwood and received her BFA with honors in Painting and Drawing from CSU Long Beach. Machado works with oil paints, generously applied to canvas, making for paintings that feel ripe with texture. Figures are often obscured in their colorful surroundings, underscoring how they might be marginalized in their communities.

"She renders the figures

kind of in between the plants and these decorative elements, being very symbolic of people who are hidden," Arce said.

The seams of "Manos" are apparent, like the unfinished wood tables Nava's work rests on, with visible lumber stamps that intentionally expose the viewer to the work that makes beauty possible.

"Even if you don't have that background of knowing someone has worked in the

field or worked in the kitchen, we are becoming hyper aware of the fact that the world we live in doesn't so much run on magic and technology," Arce said, "but on all kinds of labor."

"Manos" is showing in Gallery 1 at the Irvine Fine Arts Center at Heritage Community Park in Irvine until Dec. 18.

sarah.mosqueda  
@latimes.com  
Twitter: @SarahNMos

## TimesOC

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### CONTACT US

**Erik Haugli**  
Deputy Editor  
erik.haugli@latimes.com

**Raymond Arroyo**  
Advertising Director  
(714) 966-4608  
ray.arroyo@latimes.com

**Online**  
timesoc.com  
**Social Media**  
@timesocofficial

**Address**  
10540 Talbert Ave.,  
Suite 300 West,  
Fountain Valley, CA 92708

**Business Office**  
(714) 966-4600

**Newsroom**  
(714) 966-4699

**Email**  
dailypilot@latimes.com

**TCN Classifieds**  
800-234-4444

**TCN Legal Phone**  
888-881-6181

**TCN Legal Email**  
LAlegal@tribune.com

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## TAMALE

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making tamales in the first week of October for the event.

Festivalgoers can expect the same local staples from Placentia setting up. Event organizers also invited a number of food trucks like Anaheim's ultra-popular Don Churros, which dishes out the dessert with a homemade Jalisco, Mexico recipe.

A craft beer garden with selections from local breweries returns to help wash down the tamales.

The Grammy-award winning Mariachi Divas will also be reprising their longtime role as musical headliners after missing last year.

"We are so excited to be back," said Cindy Shea, the founder and musical director of the all-women mariachi group. "This show is something special for us because it's tradition. When you throw holiday music into that and tamales, it doesn't get any better."

Even though the Placentia tamale festival is looking to resemble its pre-pandemic form, the hit restaurants have taken is still having an impact.

"I do have to say that it's been tougher this year to get everybody to come back and sell," Davis admitted.

"Businesses, right now, are hurting tremendously



Courtesy of Matt Gush

**A WORKER** stuffs the tin with tamales at Tlaquepaque.

with a lack of staffing. Some vendors couldn't come back because they just didn't have the people to do a production like this. Making tamales is very difficult and expensive. It's a big investment for the business doing it."

Tamale enthusiasts need not fret. There will still be plenty of local vendors on hand, and tamales won't run out as in olden days.

The festival, which is an outdoor event, is following O.C. Health Care Agency regulations.

Dining al fresco isn't new to Old Town; Placentia shut down a block along Santa Fe Avenue during the pandemic to establish an outdoor dining area to help out local restaurants.

Booths will be spaced out as much as possible to prevent crowding. And if festivalgoers

## TAMALE FESTIVAL

**What:** 27th annual Placentia Tamale Festival  
**Where:** Old Town Placentia, Santa Fe Avenue and Bradford Avenue.  
**When:** Thursday, 4 to 10 p.m.

choose to wear a mask, they can still have their appetites aroused by the aroma of tamales.

"It's a cherished food that we have and it's pretty seasonal," Davis said.

"It carries the tradition of familia, culture and having something delicious."

gabriel.sanroman  
@latimes.com  
Twitter: @gsanroman2

## MARIACHI

Continued from page R1

will resonate with many cultures within our north Orange County community."

Mariachi Garibaldi de Jaime Cuéllar was founded in 1994 by Jaime Cuéllar. Today, Mariachi Garibaldi de Jaime Cuéllar is led by his son, three-time Grammy Award-winner Jimmy K. Cuéllar.

Ballet Folklórico de Los Angeles is directed by Karelí Montoya and has performed on "Dancing With the Stars" and at the 90th annual Academy Awards in celebration of the Pixar movie "Coco."

The dance company was founded by Montoya in 2011 and has shared the stage with legends such as Pepe Aguilar, Mariachi Divas and Mariachi Camperos.

In 2017, Ballet Folklórico de Los Angeles and Mariachi Garibaldi de Jaime Cuéllar went viral with a video recreating "Tale as Old as Time" from Disney's "Beauty and the Beast."

Bryant said he hopes the show will resonate with those familiar with the tradition of Nochebuena and also with those who aren't.

"Nochebuena promises to stir warm Christmas memories for our Mexican-American audience mem-

bers as it introduces others, whether their holiday heritage is from another Latin country or anywhere else in the world, to a rich new way to celebrate together," said Bryant.

The Musco isn't the only place to find the brass and sass of mariachi music this holiday season.

Casa Del Sol Cocina Mexicana recently opened at the District at Tustin Legacy, showcasing the music of Mariachi Sol de México de José Hernández. Hernández is an 11-time Grammy Award nominee and also a mariachi educator and the founder of Mariachi Sol de México and all-female professional mariachi ensemble, Mariachi Reyna de Los Angeles. His mariachi dinner show restaurant serves margaritas and classic dishes like birria tacos, with shows nightly.

"I am delighted to announce Casa Del Sol, our new home in Orange County," Hernández said, "and proud to offer our customers delicious and authentic Mexican cuisine ... as well as the passion of live mariachi entertainment."

Tuesday through Thursday, a Mariachi Quartet performs at 8 p.m. On Fridays and Saturdays Mariachi Sol de México de José Hernández performs at 7 and 9:30 p.m. On Sundays, four shows take place,

beginning with a brunch show at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. and dinner shows at 5 and 7 p.m.

Over in Anaheim, Disney's Festival of Holidays at Disney California Adventure Park is a seasonal celebration that explores the diverse cultural festivities of Christmas, Navidad, Hanukkah, Diwali, Kwanzaa and Three Kings Day.

The celebration features performances by the two-time Grammy Award-winning Mariachi Divas.

The all-female mariachi band, founded in 1999 by Cindy Shea, are part of "The Joyous Spirit of Navidad," performing 30-minute shows throughout the day at Pacific Wharf Stage with the group's signature songbook and holiday tunes through Jan. 9.

Tickets for "Nochebuena: Christmas Eve in Mexico" are available online at [muscocenter.org](http://muscocenter.org) or by calling Musco Center at (844) 626-8726.

Casa Del Sol's full dinner show schedule can be found at the restaurant's website, [casadelosol.com](http://casadelosol.com).

Visitors to Disney California Adventure Park must have a valid ticket and a theme park reservation. Reservations can be made at [disneyland.disney.go.com](http://disneyland.disney.go.com).

sarah.mosqueda  
@latimes.com  
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