



Photos by James Carbone

**THE GIO NAM** Mual Lan lion dance team practice at the Social Science Hall quad at the UC Irvine on Thursday. The team typically meets every Monday and Thursday to practice. The group was first formed 20 years ago.

## Good fortune: Lion dance team celebrates 20 years

Gió Nam Múa Lân, founded by Hung Le Couture, began at UC Irvine and now has 56 members.

BY LILLY NGUYEN

When most students were finishing up their classes and heading home for the day, the members of Gió Nam Múa Lân gathered in front of UC Irvine's Social Sciences building to prepare for what would be a two-hour practice.

Hung Le Couture, who founded the group in 2004, watched its members go through their paces on a recent Thursday evening with quiet fondness and pride.

In the hazy light afforded by the surrounding buildings and street lamps, instructors drummed and clacked their sticks against the rims of their instruments as they directed the lion dancers through their poses with little more than a word and the rhythm that echoed through the night.



**JACKY THAI**, 19, wearing the lion head and **Sasha Lin**, 19, holding the tail of the lion, rehearse with Gio Nam Múa Lan at the Social Science Hall quad at UC Irvine.

See **Dance**, page A3

See **Art**, page A2

## Contest winners' art will appear at the O.C. Fair

3 teens' works inspired by diversity, equity and inclusion will see their pieces displayed throughout fairgrounds.

BY SARA CARDINE

Three budding local artists will soon debut their work in grandiose fashion, taking their talents from the classroom to the fairgrounds to deliver a message of inclusion to more than 1 million visitors to the O.C. Fair.

An inaugural Plaza Pacifica Youth Diversity Art Competition sought visual art submissions from students ages 13 to 17 throughout the county focusing on themes of diversity, equity and inclusion with an Orange County flair.

Winners would receive \$500 and the chance to see their creations displayed throughout the duration of this year's county fair in a student art gallery, on buildings and larger-than-life digital screens and on the website and social media accounts of the OC Fair & Event Center.

Natalie Rubalcava-Garcia — an OCPEC board member and chair of the board's Community Affairs Committee, which organized the contest — said the idea was to explore themes related to diversity through the eyes of young people.

"It was really an opportunity to ask what they thought of diversity, equity and inclusion in Orange County," said Rubalcava-Garcia, who is also a member of the Anaheim City Council. "We want to be able to engage our youth and make sure their voices are being heard."

After receiving submissions from more than a dozen young artists, judges picked the top three entries, officially recognizing them in a board meeting Thursday with cash prizes and a certificate of recognition and al-

## Holy mackerel! 7 O.C. places to eat seafood during Lent

BY EDWIN GOEI

It's the Lenten season, and if you're like me, a non-Catholic married to a Catholic, you take this time of abstinence from consuming meat on Fridays as a very good excuse to go out for great seafood.

Here are seven of the best seafood restaurants in Orange County, where you can eat well every Friday all the way to Easter. Because, let's face it, cooking fish at home makes your whole house stink, and you can tolerate only so many Filet-O-Fish sandwiches.

### WHEN YOU WANT A GREAT MEXICAN MARISCOS MEAL AND CERVEZAS

**Ostioneria Bahia Mexican & Seafood**, 144 S. Tustin St., Orange, (714) 997-2010, [bahiamex.com](http://bahiamex.com)

The term "ostioneria" translates to "oyster bar" in English. And at Ostioneria Bahia in Orange, inside a colorful and festive

A-framed building, you can certainly slurp your oysters in the usual way, served on the half shell and showered with citrus. But why not gulp them from a regal-looking chalice where the quivering lobes swim in a refreshing *coctele* concocted from clam juice, tomato, cilantro and lime?

Or better yet, order the show-stopping platter eponymously called *Ostiones a la Bahia*, where a half or full dozen shucked oysters are embellished with spoonfuls of shrimp ceviche, each oyster then crowned with a slice of rich avocado — something that's definitely meant to be passed around the table, lest you eat them all by yourself.

As good as they are, the oyster dishes should be used as lead-ins to even more elaborate seafood entrées. This is, after all, a full-fledged *mariscos*, or seafood, restaurant, where even the humble shrimp is prepared in at least



Edwin Goei

See **Seafood**, page A2

**OSTIONES A** la Bahia: oysters, shrimp ceviche and avocado at Ostioneria Bahia Mexican & Seafood in Orange.



Photos by Austin Bauman

### ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:

#### MAVERICK THEATER BRINGS BACK 'AMADEUS' TO FULLERTON STAGE

Fans of the 1984 Academy Award winner will not be disappointed in the production, with period-inspired costumes and wigs and performers dedicated to their challenging roles.

PAGE A5

#### APODACA: A FORMER H.B. LIBRARIAN WEIGHS IN ON THE CITY'S NEW BOOK COMMITTEE

PAGE A6

#### MAILBAG: LOCAL SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE CONTINUES

PAGE A6

#### A WORD, PLEASE: 'ENORMITY' AND THE VASTNESS OF E.B. WHITE'S REACH

PAGE A6



James Carbone



**ART**

*Continued from page A1*

lowing them to speak on what inspired their art.

Taking first place was a digital drawing created by 13-year-old Seylah Bae, of Fullerton. An eighth-grader at Kraemer Middle School in Placentia, she said she heard about the contest from her art teacher, Tayler Perez.

“My teacher likes to introduce contests to us,” the teen said in an interview Thursday. “She’d post contests on her Google Classroom [page] and tell her art classes about them.”

So Seylah got to work. An advanced-level art student, she uses many different media but especially likes creating digital art on applications like Clip Studio Paint, which allows users to use a stylus and pixels to draw on the canvas of a screen instead of a sketchpad.

Working about two weeks ahead of the contest’s Dec. 31 deadline, the student created a delicate rendering of people of many races surrounded by visual touchstones of California and Orange County, including poppies, butterflies and, of course, oranges, set against a backdrop intended to signify the Pacific Ocean and the sky at sunset.

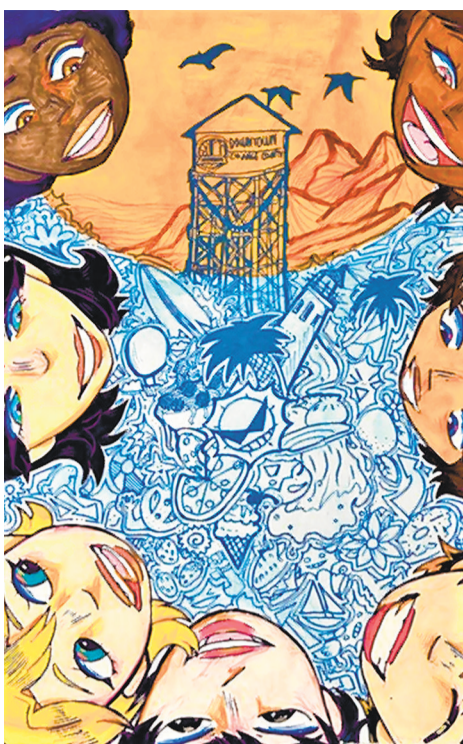
“I knew I wanted to do something with humans — I feel diversity is best represented by people,” Seylah said of her subject matter. “I also included the landscape of Orange County, because that’s something I really enjoy.”

Taking second place in the competition was 13-year-old Irvine resident Claire Chong, who attends eighth-grade at Jeffrey Trail Middle School. Her work shows people of different ethnicities surrounding depictions of local cultural touchstones, including food and landmarks like the Santa Ana water tower.

Third-place honors were awarded Thursday to Vincent Pham, a Fountain Valley High School freshman, who shared an artist’s statement about a peopled landscape scene with OCFEC board members.

“My painting represents a world where individuals

**CLAIRE CHONG**, an eighth-grader at Irvine’s Jeffrey Trail Middle School won second-place in an OCFEC youth art contest.



*Courtesy of OC Fair & Event Center*

coexist peacefully with one another,” he said. “It doesn’t matter what you look like, what your background is or your gender.”

Other initiatives spearheaded by the Community Affairs Committee — an amalgam of OC Fair & Event Center’s erstwhile Diversity and Community Engagement committees created in 2020 — include the flying of the Pan African flag marking February as Black History Month and declaring Women’s History Month in March.

Michele Richards, OCFEC general manager and chief executive, said the committee initially intended to commission a professional installation with a diversity theme to be displayed prominently at the fairgrounds’ Plaza Pacifica towers but had to pivot when the project became too unwieldy.

“The idea was to put art on the canvas of those light towers, but the costs were exorbitant and we thought that area doesn’t get used much during the year,” Richards said, adding that a youth art competition helps engage young people in the public programming being offered on the site.

“We can blast this all over the place — there are many applications.”

Seylah, for one, can’t wait to see how and where her own art will be displayed.

“I think it’s really amazing that my art will be shown to the public,” she

said. “It’ll be really cool to go to the O.C. Fair and see my art.”

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*Susan Hoffman*

**WINNERS OF THE OC Fair & Event Center Youth Diversity Art competition, from left, Claire Chong, Seylah Bae and Vincent Pham.**

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**SEAFOOD**

*Continued from page A1*

a dozen ways. Fish has just as many different permutations. There’s even a specialty called Filete “Bahia” Parmesano, where a tender cut of fish is pan-fried with a crispy veneer of Parmesan that’s both an homage and an indictment of McDonald’s cheese-on-seafood Lenten staple, the Filet-O-Fish.

But no dish at Ostioneria Bahía simultaneously honors and rebels against the spirit of Lent than the restaurant’s indulgent rendition of *caldo siete mares*, the seafood soup to rule all seafood soups.

There are, of course, other *mariscos* joints and *ostionerias* in Orange County that serve their own versions of this soup, but most can be too tomatoey, others can be fishy, and some don’t even have the seven types of seafood required for it to be called *siete mares*,

which amounts to false advertisement.

In Ostioneria Bahía’s soup, all seven kinds of seafood — shrimp, white fish, snow crab legs, mussels, oysters, octopus and abalone — are accounted for. And the broth is a balanced oceanic and tomatoey nectar that supplants the best bouillabaisse or cioppino you’ve ever had. At \$28, it’s one of the more expensive menu items, but it’s worth it. Besides, when was the last time you got to eat seven kinds of seafood in one sitting?

**WHEN YOU WANT A BIG BOISTEROUS ASIAN FAMILY-STYLE SEAFOOD FEAST**  
*Oc & Lau*  
10130 Garden Grove Blvd Suite 111-113, Garden Grove, (714) 636-2000  
[oclaurestaurant.com](http://oclaurestaurant.com)  
*Oc & Lau*  
9892 Westminster Ave., Unit R, Garden Grove,

See *Seafood*, page A3



*Edwin Goei*

**THE BRACING** and refreshing House Special Mango Salad with shrimp chips is a must order at Oc & Lau.



## DANCE

Continued from page A1

Le Couture said the group came about after he joined the campus' Vietnamese Student Assn., known as VSA. He said he was asked to do a lion dance and felt a connection with it.

"I've been doing marital arts since I was 7 ... and once I got [to UC Irvine], I said, 'I need to keep up on that progression year in and year out.' I said I was going to start my own martial arts team, but I didn't feel that I was worthy," Le Couture said. "So instead, I asked if I could start a lion dance team to spread the art because when I got to Irvine, there was nothing here," he continued. "Twenty years ago, there was nothing here. It was just so desolate and ... not a lot of culture and I just wanted to bring [culture] with me.

"Once I got permission,



**MEREDITH EDMONSTON, 19**, a freshman at UC Irvine, stretches in the "forward stance" as she rehearses with the Gio Nam Mua Lan lion dance team.

then we started the team with VSA."

As time went on, the team grew substantially. It started with a skeleton crew of just five people: Le Couture, the head of the lion and the percussionists. Now, the team has about 56 members. The majority are UCI students or alumni, though some members have come out from the community or heard about

the group and travel to Irvine from elsewhere to join in.

The lion dance group has performed at small events like weddings and for Lunar New Year, but also have bragging rights for participating in the Rose Parade and Hell's Kitchen. They're still in their busiest performance season, which begins in mid-January and ends in



Photos by James Carbone

**SASHA LIN, 19**, a student at the UC Irvine, right, takes a turn wearing the lion head as she rehearses with the Gio Nam Mua Lan at the Social Science Hall quad.

late February, though they get booked throughout the year. The team cycles through about 30 lion costumes for their per-

formances.

Bao-linh Nguyen, who graduated from UCI in 2018 but remains with the group as one of its senior-most members, said she got pulled in by one of her friends who was already on the team. Nguyen said she reluctantly agreed to come to the first practice and see what the group was about.

Now she's been with the team for nearly 15 years and said she stays largely in part because it's a family in its own right. She also noted it's like being in a mentorship program, where team members are more than just co-workers and performers.

"Some of these people are my closest friends. They're going to be at my wedding. I'm going to their weddings," she said with a smile. "I love lion dance itself and I think the art is beautiful, along with the craftsmanship that goes into every costume. Every school has its own unique style and when you meet somebody who does the art well — they're really good at drumming or they dance very well — you can tell they have passion. There's a few [of us] that you know, we're going to do it for the rest of our lives."

No one needs to be an expert when they join the group, Nguyen said.

All training begins with the assumption that people are new to the art, but they need to be versatile enough performers that they could swap into the head, tail or any other needed position for performances.

Ashwath Palavalli, a first-year mechanical engineering student at UCI, said he came from Sacramento, which he described as a diverse enclave where he was enriched by other cultures.

He said he wanted to stay involved in learning about other cultures when he came to Irvine and joined the team after seeing them perform at the campus club fair.

"I saw that and I was like, 'Wow, I really want to get involved,' and so that's why I joined lion dance. After my first day, it honestly is a really welcoming environment. They teach you a lot about the culture from Day 1 and it's not only about the dancing, but they teach you about certain practices, traditions with the dancing and it's a really

good experience," Palavalli said.

For Brandon Duong, a fourth year computer science major, said he also got involved in Gio Nam Mua Lan after seeing them at the club fair. He said he used to do lion dancing as a child, but stopped to focus on his academics.

Hearing the drums, he said, made him feel nostalgic.

"I felt like it was calling me. It was saying, 'Hey, come back. Do stuff. Spread your culture around. Spread good luck and fortune around. Have fun, do physical activity, all that stuff,'" Duong said. "It was difficult. I used to do sports in high school and middle school, but I stopped for my studies, right? So, when I came back, the lions are much bigger than you think. Because I was younger, the lions were smaller.

"I got as far as 'Oh, you move this way and this looks like that,' but the lions here are really big. They're fancy and long and ... so when you join this team, you have to have the physical strength to show you have energy and portray yourself as a lion. When I first joined, I had a lot of difficulty just moving the head. But over the years, the leaders teach you simple tips and tricks and simple strengthening skills. You just get way better and you're able to express yourself well."

All agreed they are willing to set aside time to practice and perform because they care about preserving the art and tradition.

Nguyen said that, as part of the 20th anniversary, they're planning a trip to Catalina Island for their annual retreat and are considering a digital yearbook for all members, past and present. They also purchased traditional war flags that typically accompany other martial arts schools and lion dance teams.

"We're hoping we can continue doing this into the future," Nguyen said. "We're looking forward to doing more and more crazy stuff — building new props, getting new lion heads and, hopefully, expanding our team."

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**Dr. Daniela A. Bota,**  
a neuro-oncologist  
at UCI Health

## SEAFOOD

Continued from page A2

(714) 583-8100  
oclaurestaurant.com

When the first Oc & Lau Restaurant opened in Garden Grove 10 years ago, it was a sensation. The parking lot was a mess, wait times were brutal and the then-inexperienced wait staff was overwhelmed.

Oc & Lau was different from anything anyone had ever seen in the States. It had a particular focus on escargots, clams, scallops and oysters. It served them grilled, boiled in soup or stir fried, but notably in small, shareable portions meant to be passed around a table full of family and friends. It functioned much like a traditional Vietnamese *quán ốc*, informal establishments that literally mean "snail restaurant" and whose raison d'être and vibe are more in line with Spanish tapas bars and Japanese

*izakayas*.

One of Oc & Lau's best bites is the grilled scallops. About half a dozen of them are fire-roasted in their own shells with garlic and butter. Once cooked, they're transferred onto hot plates and then garnished with crushed peanuts, crispy fried shallots and a fistful of herbs. They come to your table sputtering and billowing aromas you never knew you wanted to smell.

The same can be said when your order of clams in tom yum soup arrives perfumed with lemongrass and makrut leaves. It's so good you won't be able to decide whether you like the broth or the protein more.

For palate-cleansing, there's a refreshingly tart mango salad with squid and escargot that's to be consumed by scooping it up on rafts of crunchy shrimp crackers. For a communal family experience, the "lau" portion of the restaurant's name

means the option of shared hot pots overflowing with seafood. But for inspiring oohs-and-aahs at your table, the house special Dungeness crab for \$42 is actually a bargain. You get an entire disarticulated specimen that's flash-fried in oil and tossed in a glossy sweet-and-savory sauce dotted with onions and peppers. The dish is the best argument that Oc & Lau and its newer, bigger sister restaurant Oc & Lau 2, aren't just the traditional *quán ốc* Orange County's Vietnamese were waiting for, they're also the greatest restaurant in O.C. for feasting on Asian seafood.

**WHEN YOU WANT THE BEST FISH AND CHIPS THAT DON'T COST MORE THAN \$20**

*Simply Fish*  
1534 Adams Ave. Suite D  
Costa Mesa, (949) 393-7401  
simplyfishseafood.com

It's easy to get mediocre fish and chips for cheap at

See *Seafood*, page A4



**SIMPLY FISH'S**

fish and chips meal includes three generous pieces of fish, fresh fries, and a serving of cooling coleslaw.

Edwin Goei



## SEAFOOD

Continued from page A3

any diner chain like Norms. It's also easy to get excellent fish and chips that tick above the \$20 mark at a proper British pub. It is not, however, so easy to get great fish and chips for the reasonable price of \$15. Simply Fish in Costa Mesa offers exactly that.

The fish is creamy and soft, perfectly steamed inside its craggy cocoon of batter. The thinly coated fries are crispy and greaseless. And both fish and the fried potatoes are served so hot and fresh, they scald your palate if you tuck in too soon. Cooling coleslaw is included to serve as burn balm.

But Simply Fish's fish and chips isn't just great fish and chips; it's also generously portioned. Three pieces of generous size are included in an order—enough for two people to share.

Of course, if you bring someone to eat with you, it's unlikely that they'll be able to resist ordering something else from the menu. Simply Fish — by restaurateur Derek Taguchi who also owns Fishbonz in Torrance — casts a wide net with its menu. The entrées include salmon, mahi mahi and Pacific halibut among a dozen species of fish you can have grilled and brushed with sauces such as garlic lemon butter, blackened Cajun or teriyaki.

In fact, think of anything you expect from a high-tier full-service seafood restaurant — clam chowder, fried clams, poke, steamed shellfish, even lobster — and you'll find it's offered here at reasonable fast-casual restaurant rates.

### WHEN YOU WANT A SEAFOOD-FOCUSED ROMANTIC DATE SPOT THAT OPERATES SUSTAINABLY.

**O SEA**  
109 S Glassell St.,  
Orange, (714) 363-3309  
eatosea.com

Located in Old Town Orange, O SEA doesn't look like a seafood restaurant. It's got a dramatic exposed brick wall original to its century-old building on one side, clean lines, soft colors and strategic lighting everywhere else — the kind of restaurant space you presume could win design awards and has a killer brunch menu. But as evidenced by its founder Mike Flynn — whose previous gigs included being a general manager of Water Grill in Los Angeles — the restaurant's DNA is in seafood.

And furthermore, it's a seafood restaurant that has qualified to be designated as an "Ocean Friendly Restaurant" by the the Surfrider Foundation. It did so by maintaining sustainable choices in its operations. But looking at the menu, all you see are dishes that would be great to impress a date, who should already be swooning that you brought them to such a beautiful place.

The meal should make them swoon further. There are dishes like the crispy salmon skin *chicharron* hand rolls, which are fun to eat. And the grilled Spanish octopus, whose curly-cue spiral on the plate makes you ponder Fibonacci, while the white bean hummus, crispy potatoes and preserved lemon *chimichurri* makes you think "Where has this combination of flavors and textures been all my life?"

And is there a more perfect dish to share with your loved one than the steamed PEI mussels? It's served in a Thai green curry so bold and creamy you almost wish you had the option of ordering plain white rice instead of the fries that make it a Belgian-style *moule-frites*. Heck, you'd settle for crusty bread to sop up every precious drop.

### WHEN YOU WANT TO SPLURGE ON THE BEST SUSHI

**Sushi Noguchi**  
18507 Yorba Linda Blvd.  
Yorba Linda, (714) 777-6789, [sushinoguchi.com](http://sushinoguchi.com)

When you want the best sushi for your money, Hiro



Photos by Edwin Goei

**THE METICULOUSLY CRAFTED** sashimi platter is just one course you might see when you order Hiro's Omakase at Sushi Noguchi.

Noguchi's omakase is hard to top. When you sit in front of the master, he will acquaint you with fish species you've never heard of. One night it will be Japanese icefish. Another night, needle fish with its pointy nose as proof. For sure, you will experience how luscious premium *ootoro* feels on the tongue. But Noguchi's greatest masterpiece is the sashimi plate that he will sculpt, decorate and tweeze to a state that can't be just called food — it's a work of art.

Hiro's Omakase, as it is called, can be considered a splurge at between \$100 to \$160 per person, but it's still far from the most expensive in Orange County when you consider Nobu in Newport Beach charges \$200 and Ootoro in Irvine quotes a per person toll between \$300 to \$500. But there may be no better argument that Noguchi is more than fairly priced than its offering of a \$70 per person prix-fixe meal called Jun's Omakase

It's named after Hiro's lovely wife and doting hostess, Jun, and it's a balanced five-to-six course dinner which can start with a seared albacore salad, then a carpaccio of the day. Next will be a sampler plate with a trio of cooked items; among them may be fish-stuffed shishito tempura, perhaps braised pork belly with hot mustard, or if you're lucky, crispy-fried shrimp katsu on a stick. After that, expect another raw fish dish to precede a platter with four pieces of nigiri. This might then be followed by a baked blue-crab hand roll so sweet it could double as dessert.

What's served in the omakase meal varies according to the season. For that reason, you're almost guaranteed not to get the same dishes described above when you visit. But one thing is certain: Jun's Omakase shows not only that you don't have to pay a premium for a quality sushi experience but that a splurge can still feel like a bargain.

### WHEN YOU WANT A DEPENDABLE LOCAL AMERICAN SEAFOOD CHAIN

**King's Fish House**  
multiple locations  
[kingsfishhouse.com/locations](http://kingsfishhouse.com/locations)

If you haven't heard of the King's Seafood Co., you surely have heard of the restaurants they own, particularly Water Grill, which has seven locations in high-profile and high-rent real estate such as downtown L.A., San Diego's Gaslamp Quarter and the Forum Shops in Las Vegas.

But with prices that are commensurate, it's more likely that you've actually eaten at King's Seafood



**KING'S FISH HOUSE'S** cioppino is filled to the brim with seafood including Dungeness crab and jumbo shrimp.



**THE CRISP** hand rolls at O SEA are fun to eat, especially the one stuffed with salmon "chicharrones."

Co.'s more downmarket (and more affordable) sister restaurant chain, King's Fish House.

King's Fish House is to the Gap as Water Grill is to Banana Republic. And let's face it, for most of us these days, when you're happy with the basics, there's nothing at Banana Republic you can't find at the Gap for less.

At its 12 locations, (three in OC), there's a remarkable reliability in how King's Fish House cooks its seafood. You can almost set your watch to it. From the delicate yet rich trout amandine to the satisfying and robust *cioppino*, this chain knows how to handle its fish. The fact that its parent company is a

seafood distributor surely helps.

The operational consistency also extends to its front of the house staff, who are always Johnny-on-the-spot whenever you need a refill of their crusty, hot sourdough bread. Combined with the classic, leather-brass-and-brick ambiance, a dinner here always feels just classy enough to woo that potential client or romantic partner without having to drown in Water Grill-induced debt.

### WHEN YOU WANT CEVICHE FROM THE CULTURE THAT INVENTED IT

**Ceviche 19**  
1721 W. Katella Ave. G



### CEVICHE 19'S

Ceviche Mixto features fish, squid, and shrimp gently cooked in the citrus juice dressing called *leche de tigre*.

Anaheim, (714) 215-4030  
[ceviche19restaurant.com](http://ceviche19restaurant.com)

Orange County has a healthy share of great Peruvian restaurants that mostly focus on chifa dishes, such as *lomo saltado*, which has proven to be the gateway drug to a lifelong addiction with Peruvian cuisine. The group behind the Vox Kitchen practically created a restaurant empire by including *lomo saltado* in its mostly Asian menu. To this day, it's still one of its most popular dishes.

But what about the ceviche? Peru's actual national dish? Chances are the last ceviche you had in Orange County was either Mexican or tweaked through the lens of a Japanese sushi chef like Nobu Matsuhisa. Enter ceviche-centric Peruvian restaurants like Ceviche 19, which, yes, does a very serviceable *lomo saltado* but should actually be patronized for its faithful rendition of its titular dish.

There are seven different variations of ceviche on

the menu. Some involve raw white fish, shrimp, squid and fried fish nuggets called *chicharron de pescado*. All include an acidic *leche de tigre*, a lime juice-based dressing that lightly "cooks" the raw out of the fish and electrifies the dish. Per tradition, there will be a chunk of sweet potato, *cancha* (the Peruvian version of Corn-Nuts), and *choclo* (gigantic kernels of Peruvian corn) for balance and textural contrast.

The ceviches at Ceviche 19 can be a great meal on their own. Yet because of the way they stimulate the palate, you'll want to explore other seafood entrées here, such as the fish soup that also has a fried egg and cheese called *chupe de pescado*. And since seafood dishes outnumber the beef and chicken ones, it'll be easy. And that's a good thing. The *lomo saltado* can wait until after Lent.

Edwin Goei is a contributor to Times Community News.



# 'Amadeus' revisited on Fullerton stage

BY JESSICA PERALTA

Maverick Theater unleashes the fictionalized Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart on its Fullerton stage for the third time in its 21 years with Peter Shaffer's "Amadeus," running now through March 23.

The show, which opened Feb. 16, tells the story of the famous composer through the envious eyes of contemporary Antonio Salieri. Shaffer's play was first performed in 1979. The 1984 film was adapted from the play.

"What people are going to experience when they see the Maverick's production of 'Amadeus' is the essence of the writer's work and the historical elements of Mozart and the supposed conflict with Salieri," said Maverick Theater owner Brian Newell, who is the show's producer, director and light, sound and scenic designer. "A lot of this was created by Peter Shaffer. But that's what makes the story so juicy and fun. And you're gonna have that experience, that revengeful story is all here in its evilness and its delight and humor. All of those elements that you love about the movie, 'Amadeus,' are in it."

Fans of the film can experience Mozart's dramatic flair and characteristic giggle, Salieri's envious rage and many 18th-century wigs. Even those unfamiliar can experience the impact of Mozart as a one-of-a-kind composer of his time.

Jaycob Hunter, who has been performing at the Maverick Theater for 15 years, plays Mozart in the show. He said the film was a childhood favorite of his.

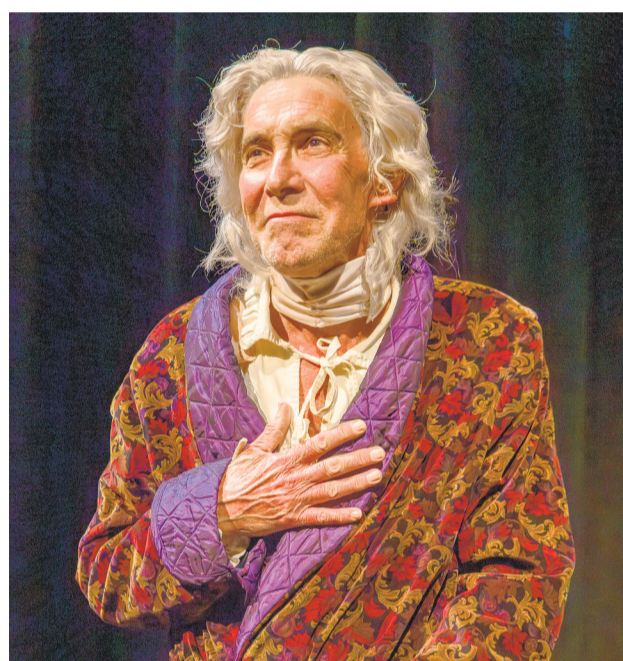
"I think it's the hardest thing I've ever done on stage," Hunter said. "I've done a lot of comedies, and those are really fun, and those can be physically exhausting because you're

See *Stage*, page A8



Photos by Austin Bauman

JAYCOB HUNTER plays Mozart in the Maverick Theater's production of playwright Peter Shaffer's "Amadeus."



**FAR LEFT:** Glenn Freeze portrays Antonio Salieri in "Amadeus" at the Maverick Theater and said the role has been "the most challenging thing I've ever done in my life."

**LEFT:** Maverick Theater owner Brian Newell, who directed the current production of "Amadeus," put particular focus on the costumes and wigs.



PRESENTING PARTNERS






## EXPERIENCE THE THRILL OF CHAMPIONS

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CHAMPIONS



forum

COLUMN | PATRICE APODACA

A former H.B. librarian weighs in on new book committee

So many alarming developments have transpired in Huntington Beach in the past year that it's hard to keep track of them all, much less zero in on which among them are most deserving of outrage.



ballot that would require voters to show identification at the polls.

There's more, but just for now I'd like to focus in on the apparent belief, stridently upheld by four of the seven sitting City Council members, that librarians simply cannot be trusted.

Included in this onslaught of extreme and potentially harmful acts are the following:

The City Council adopted an ordinance effectively banning the LGBTQ+ Pride flag on city property; dissolved a human relations task force that was formed in response to hate crimes in the 1990s; rewrote a declaration on human dignity that eliminated reference to hate crimes and added thinly veiled anti-trans language; removed an interfaith council's ability to select who delivers the invocation at council meetings; banned government mask and vaccine mandates; and placed a measure on the March

Librarians. Those benign book nerds. The dedicated professionals who love written words so much that they devote their lives to ensuring that everyone can partake in the pleasure and fulfillment they bring. Apparently they've all been part of some woke plot to corrupt our youth and spread — I don't know what exactly. Ideas? Diverse perspectives? Literacy?

The city officials leading the charge decided to form a citizen-review panel, consisting of members that they cherry pick, which will be empowered to usurp the judgment of trained

See Apodaca, page A7



James Carbone

HUNTINGTON BEACH residents protest and hold signs at an October 2023 City Council meeting protesting the proposal to screen children's books before they are shelved at the Huntington Beach Public Library.

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS

Grid of crossword and sudoku answers

Grid of sudoku numbers

MAILBAG

Local support for Ukraine continues as war drags on

Two years ago this weekend, Russia launched its brutal invasion of Ukraine. From the beginning, America has supported Ukraine's fight for freedom. Since the war began, an estimated 500,000 Ukrainians and Russians have been killed or injured. The plight of the Ukrainians hasn't been lost on my friends here in Laguna Beach. First, we protested in front of City Hall; second, there was a very successful fundraiser at the museum; third, neighbors found housing for refugees and more. As for me, I am grateful to LagunaTunes Community Chorus and Laguna's Eric Alcouloumre, an emergency room physician at Hoag, for recording my rewrite of the 1960s civil



File Photo

SUPPORTERS POSE for a "Laguna Stands with Ukraine" group photo outside Laguna Beach City Hall two years ago.

See Mailbag, page A8

A WORD, PLEASE | JUNE CASAGRANDE

'Enormity' and the vastness of E.B. White's reach

While on the glacier, it was impossible not to feel humbled and awe-struck by its enormity. "I stood outside the arena amazed by its enormity."

"When I look up at the night sky I am just overwhelmed by its enormity." If you were a student of William Strunk in the early

20th century carefully following the instructions laid out in his classroom guide "The Elements of Style," you would have had no problem using the word "enormity" to refer to size — as the writers of the passages above did.

But if you read a copy of Strunk and White's "The Elements of Style" in the late-1950s or later, you would think that it's a mistake to use "enormity" to mean bigness.

Yet if you open a dictionary today, you'll see it's not a mistake at all. What

gives?

Well, like a lot of words, "enormity" has gone through significant changes over the years, some stickler-approved, some not.

Team Stickler is best represented by E.B. White, a onetime student of William J. Strunk, who in the late 1950s added about 50 pages to his former professor's short classroom guide, transforming it into the bestseller that still rakes in the bucks today.

Among the many bits of information White inserted to make Strunk's classroom instructions sound like universal rules for every English speaker was this: "Enormity. Use only in the sense of 'monstrous wickedness.' Misleading, if not wrong, when used to express bigness."

If you're looking for the safest, most buttoned-down way to use "enormity," you can stop reading here. Just stick to the meaning about badness, not bigness, and no one can say you're wrong.

Of course, the folks who believe "badness" is the only meaning of "enormity" would have been wrong at previous points in

history. In the late 1400s, "enormity" meant a state of being abnormal or, as the Oxford Universal Dictionary put it, "deviation from a normal standard or type." The adjective "enormous" had the same root meaning around that time: "Deviating from ordinary rule or type."

English speakers at the time, apparently, believed that being out of the ordinary was necessarily bad, indicated with "hence" in the Oxford Universal Dictionary's etymology of "enormous": "abnormal, hence monstrous."

Slowly, "enormous" came to mean "exceedingly great, or monstrous," according to the Online Etymology Dictionary. And eventually the "great" meaning took over the "monstrous" meaning to give us the "enormous" we use today.

To recap: "enormous" meant "bad" long before it meant "big." And it meant "abnormal" even earlier than that.

That's just for the adjective. The noun "enormity" evolved on its own little journey. To traditionalists, the difference is night and day. Yes, "enormous"

See Word, page A7



Nancy L Collins

February 2, 1935 - February 10, 2024

Nancy Louise Collins (née Pilkington), 89, passed on 2/10/2024 surrounded by her loving family.

Originally from Kalama, Washington, Nancy moved to Costa Mesa in 1957. Nancy was Valedictorian in the class of 1952 at Kalama High School. She attended college for secretarial skills, and married Gilbert Collins in 1955. They soon started a family, and she devoted her life to the care and comfort of her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Once her children were grown, Nancy worked at the Coast Community College District Office. Nancy loved the outdoors, gardening, holidays, reading, puns, limericks, cooking magnificent dinners and making her family happy.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Gilbert, parents Louis Pilkington and Gerda Nelson, and sister Norma Moon.

She is survived by children Susan Migliore (David), David Collins (Kathy), Sally Eilenberg (Curt), and Steven Collins; Grandchildren Josh (Natasha), Lisa, Tom (Aileen), Adam (Melyna) and Great-grandchildren Sienna and Isla. Nancy is also survived by her cousin Kathy and numerous nieces and nephews.

Nancy was intelligent, a quick wit with a wry sense of humor, loving, generous, and beautiful inside and out. She shared a love of the ocean with Gilbert, and they spent many days on the water or on the beach. They provided a wonderful life for their family.

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# APODACA

Continued from page A6

librarians to decide what books are suitable for the public libraries or that should be transferred from the children to adult sections.

These types of book-banning crusades have been playing out in communities across the nation, as well as in other parts of Orange County. Yet Huntington Beach is a particularly egregious example of this noxious trend, in part because its initiative is one piece of a package of extreme measures, and due to the methodical, single-minded way certain council members have pursued this agenda.

The current climate has made life difficult for librarians, who by now would likely be more than happy to ditch their sudden notoriety and return to their previously overlooked and underappreciated status.

"I know a lot of librarians, who didn't get into the field to be called groomers and get death threats," said Stephanie Beverage, who retired in November 2020 after nearly 12 years serving as the director of library services for Huntington Beach.

"It's very stressful right now."

Beverage herself provides a sterling example of why, instead of undermining librarians, we should celebrate them for the hard-earned expertise and dedication they bring

to communities.

After graduating from El Dorado High School in Placentia, she earned a bachelor of arts in history at UCLA and a master's degree in history from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., where her exposure to the many excellent libraries in our nation's capital influenced her career choice. She returned to UCLA for a master's in library science.

Beverage worked at many public libraries throughout Southern California, and in 2009 she landed the top job in Huntington Beach, where she oversaw an expansion in programs and facilities throughout a challenging tenure that included a budget-straining recession and a pandemic. A sampling of the initiatives she championed: robust after-school and children's programs; authors festivals; a resource center for veterans; computer labs; and a "maker space" that provides a variety of resources, from 3D printing to sewing, that can be utilized by entrepreneurs and hobbyists alike.

Fueling this flurry of activity is a core belief in the power of libraries to enrich lives.

"Libraries are at the heart of educating the next generation of leaders," she said.

Beverage is so committed to this mission that she remains involved even in retirement, currently serving as an unpaid trustee for the Placentia Library District.

She is both mystified and alarmed by the con-

tinuing attacks on libraries, which strike at the heart of 1st Amendment free speech protections and the American tradition of intellectual freedom. Parents certainly have the right to guide their own children's learning, she acknowledged, but that right does not extend to other people's children.

Equally baffling is the idea that an untrained group of citizens would conduct the same kind of detailed, rigorous review and selection process involving the thousands of titles that are considered for inclusion in every library collection — a process that is both data-driven and tailored to the needs of the communities these institutions serve.

"I have absolutely no idea how any of what they proposed or suggested [in Huntington Beach] is going to work. It's an absolute logistical nightmare."

Logistics aside, Huntington Beach's plan is also just plain wrong. It's an affront to skilled professionals and an unwarranted restriction of residents' rights to make their own choices for themselves and their children.

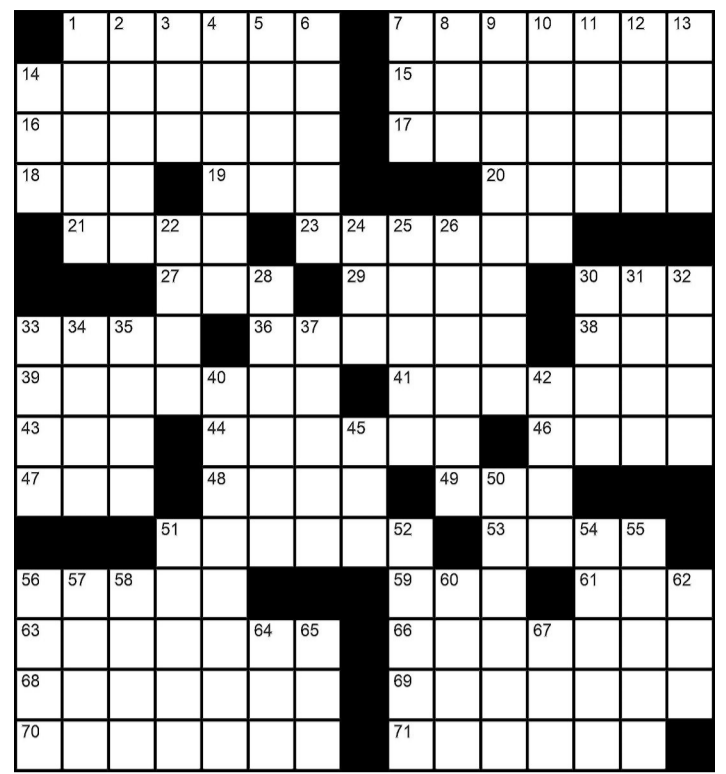
As Beverage likes to say, "free people read freely." Huntington Beach City Council, let the people you represent read freely.

**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.

# THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Jacqueline E. Mathews

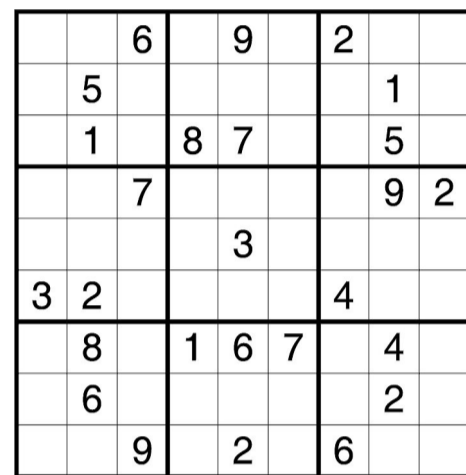
**ACROSS**  
 1 Ancient rival of Athens  
 7 Big name in file sharing, once  
 14 The T in ATV  
 15 How pie may be served  
 16 Circle in your pocket  
 17 Suitable for teens  
 18 The Thunder, on scoreboards  
 19 Artificially color  
 20 Statistical pattern  
 21 Very dry  
 23 Bemoan  
 27 Shelter sound  
 29 Adore  
 30 Obedience-school command  
 33 Refuse to deal with  
 36 Oblong pastry  
 38 Low digit  
 39 More yummy  
 41 Raleigh univ.  
 43 Resource in the ground  
 44 The Phillies' div.  
 46 Music player discontinued in 2022  
 47 Each  
 48 Top spot at a table  
 49 Male offspring  
 51 Goethe's language  
 53 Beehive State people  
 56 More unusual  
 59 Letters on an ambulance  
 61 Tear  
 63 Gold coins of the UK, once  
 66 Preordained occasion  
 68 Melodramatic motive  
 69 Liquid in a forest  
 70 Forgiving waistband type  
 71 Waitstaff member



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



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

- |                         |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 3 LAX listing           | 10 Brainy                  |
| 4 Las Vegas NFL player  | 11 Reusable bag            |
| 5 Itsy-bitsy            | 12 Biblical paradise       |
| 6 Virtuous person       | 13 "SNL" alum              |
| 7 Short sleep           | Chris                      |
| 8 Trig precursor: Abbr. | 14 End of some MMA matches |
| 9 Law firm bigwigs      | 22 Tirade                  |
|                         | 24 _ or nothing            |
|                         | 25 Complains               |

- loudly  
 26 Kicks out  
 28 Insect's antenna  
 30 Bar in the shower  
 31 Liking a lot  
 32 Ready to hit, as a golf ball  
 33 Word on a red octagon  
 34 Loser to the tortoise  
 35 Account holder, e.g.  
 37 Defeat badly  
 40 Innate  
 42 Windshield feature  
 45 Nabokov novel  
 50 Removal from office  
 51 Units of heredity  
 52 Hotbeds  
 54 Wipe off, as a whiteboard  
 55 Indian lute  
 56 Fearsome boss  
 57 Contest with swords or pistols  
 58 Opera star  
 60 Only  
 62 Word before "squad" or "rally" calc.  
 65 "Be with you in a \_!"  
 67 Partner of research: Abbr.

Tribune Media Services



European Space Agency via Associated Press

**THIS IMAGE** provided by the European Space Agency shows Euclid's view of on a globular cluster called NGC 6397. Grammar expert June Casagrande writes that some sticklers may object to the use of "enormity" in sentences such as "When I look up at the night sky I am just overwhelmed by its enormity."

# WORD

Continued from page A6

means big, they say, but "enormity" means bad.

If you like the idea of using "enormity" to mean "enormousness" and you don't mind certain people thinking you're wrong, you can. Says who? Modern dictionaries.

"Enormity," some people insist, is improperly used to denote large size," notes Merriam-Webster's online dictionary. "They insist on 'enormousness'

for this meaning, and would limit 'enormity' to the meaning 'great wickedness.' Those who urge such a limitation may not recognize the subtlety with which enormity is actually used. It regularly denotes a considerable departure from the expected or normal."

As an example, Merriam's cites John Steinbeck: "They awakened; they sat up; and then the enormity of their situation burst upon them. 'How did the fire start?'"

"Enormity" can also

mean huge in size, Merriam's says, citing this example from Paul Theroux: "Either the enormity of the desert or the sight of a tiny flower."

Personally, I don't use "enormity" to refer to size, mostly because I don't want to get scolded. But if you want to, do.

**JUNE CASAGRANDE** is the author of "The Joy of Syntax: A Simple Guide to All the Grammar You Know You Should Know." She can be reached at [JuneTCN@aol.com](mailto:JuneTCN@aol.com).

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**STAGE**

Continued from page A5

exerting so much energy. I've done a lot of dramatic stuff, and that can be emotionally exhausting because you're really putting yourself out there in front of everyone. But this was just a giant mashup of both of those things. He's so high energy, he's so extravagant and kind of rambunctious but then as the story goes on, he's driven into madness and despair and sickness, and then ultimately death. So to have to like go from the height of joy in your life all the way to the end in one show, and really in a rapid succession of scenes, like that second act is so fast. It's truly exhausting. But not in a negative way. ... It's very rewarding."

Glenn Freeze, who plays Salieri, also spoke to the challenge of his role. "This was by far, the most challenging thing I've ever done in my life," he said. "And I've done a lot of shows for about 50 years or thereabouts. I've never done anything that even closely approaches to this."

Salieri, who narrates the story, is a complex character with a lot of monologue.

"It's exercise," Freeze said. "I'm exercising my acting muscles. ... He is just full of hate and resentment ... and he's rather



Austin Bauman

**JAYCOB HUNTER** as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and **Samantha Green** as Constanze Mozart in the Maverick Theater production of "Amadeus." It plays at the Fullerton venue through March 23.

narcissistic."

In addition to the passionate character dynamic, costumes and wigs feature highly in the show. Newell said that the two other times he presented the show at the theater — in 2003 and 2013 — the costume rentals were in the

thousands of dollars. Since then, he purchased a costume warehouse and has plenty to choose from.

"That's what the show demands is just to be filled with this 18th-century fashion," he said. "You want to see the wigs, these outrageous wigs. ... You

just can't go out and buy a wig that's 18th century. You got to hire a professional wig stylist, and I hired three for this show."

Jeff Weeks, of Jeff Weeks Hair Design in Fullerton, made five wigs for the show — including both Mozart wigs and a Salieri wig. The

show has 13 wigs in total.

"The director really likes the movie, so it was important to him to have a wig similar to the pink wig in the movie," he said. "Historically Mozart didn't have a pink wig ... The movie was from the '80s, and we often feel he needs a rock

star approach."

Samantha Green, playing Constanze Mozart, uses two wigs in the show. She said she has six to seven hair and costume changes.

"The costumes have like six layers to them, so gets a little tricky," she said. "But I love them. I love the costumes and I love the wigs. They're so beautiful. And it's so fun to wear those clothes. I love costumes. That's half the reason why I like acting. I love playing dress-up. This is a really, really fun show."

Green said that to play Mozart's wife, she had to figure out their relationship.

"Since Mozart is essentially a child, he's got this child-like wonder, and that's what's great about him," she said. "But he's also a brat and a baby and he needs kind of a mother, he needs somebody who's gonna take care of him, and that's who Constanze is. And she loves him, and he brings a lot of joy and fun to her life, but it also puts her in a difficult position where now she's the only one who is really thinking about practical matters. So once I figured that out, it was pretty simple, because then I just got to sit back and listen to Jaycob and just play with him."

Jessica Peralta is a contributor to TimesOC.

**MAILBAG**

Continued from page A6

rights anthem "We Shall Overcome." I wish the members of Congress, who currently are holding up funds for Ukraine, could hear "Ukraine Shall Overcome." I think it has the potential to change their minds (and votes).

**Denny Freidenrich**  
Laguna Beach

**Exception to letter's praise**

I have read Lynn Lorenz's frequent letters to

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the Daily Pilot over the years and have been favorably impressed by her insightful opinions and her concern for local and statewide issues. In her praise of Rep. Adam Schiff in the contest for Senate between Rep. Katie Porter of coastal Orange County

and a number of other candidates, I was disappointed she failed to mention his support of eliminating the filibuster, adding four members to the supreme court and eliminating the electoral college, positions I strongly disagree with.

Porter may not accept corporate contributions, but she is an excellent fundraiser. Although she was critical of Schiff for running ads suggesting Steve Garvey was his main opponent, she is now doing the same with Eric Early. I am concerned by the drift of our state to a one party government; look at the budget deficit, homelessness, drug use, the bullet train and a tax structure highly dependent on upper income people who are leaving for more favorable locations.

**Peter S Bordas**  
Newport Beach

**Chaos in H.B.**

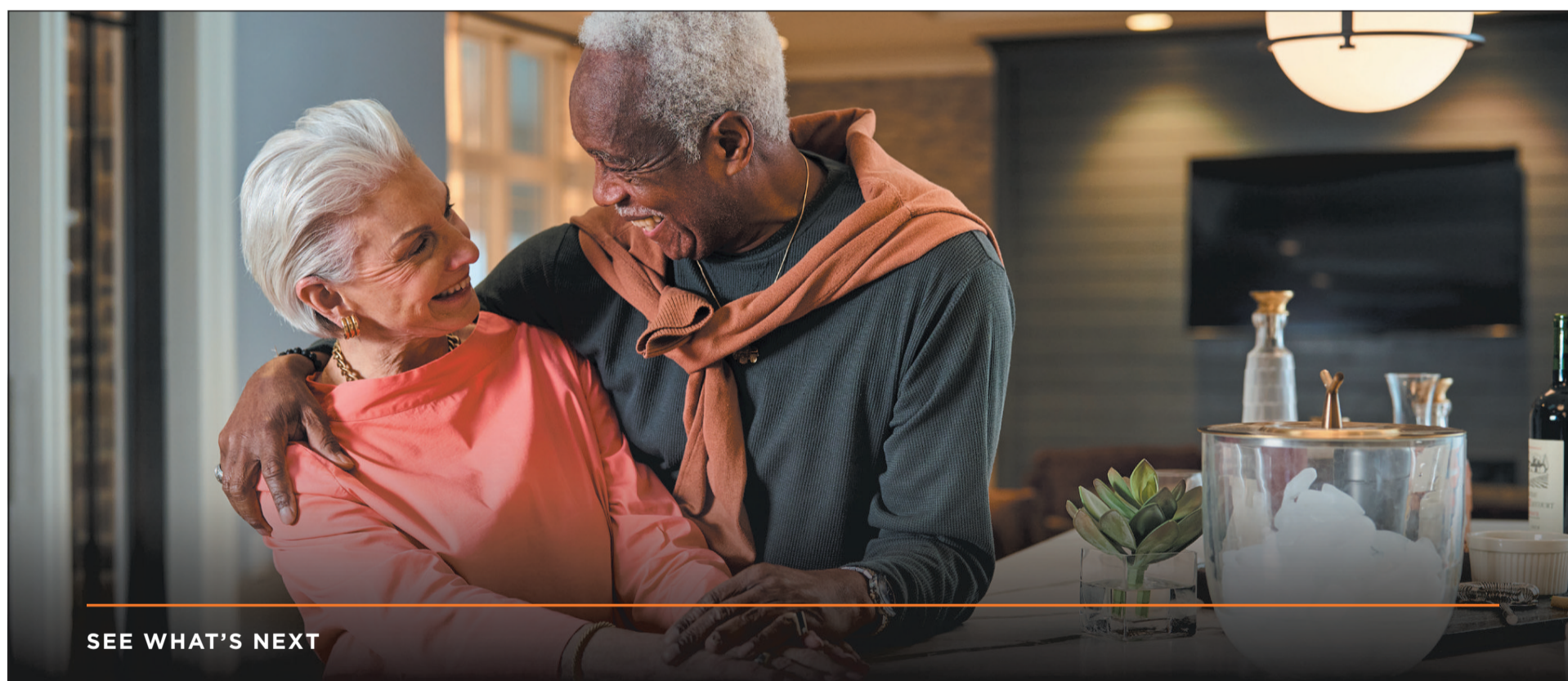
Any doubt that the Huntington Beach City Council majority has gone rogue on the residents was laid to rest at the Feb. 20 council meeting. First, multiple speakers in public comments conclusively proved that the proposed charter amendments on the March 5 ballot are not only unnecessary but deleterious to our local government and the welfare of its citizens. The majority continued to ignore all reason, rationality, fact and evidence in pushing its power grab legislation.

Then it came to light that

the majority had moved to carry out its intention to move books around in the library to deny young people of reading titles some have deemed deviant or detrimental.

Councilwoman Natalie Moser's call for transparency and accountability dealing with library system operations since moves were being made "behind the bookshelves" was blocked 3-3 by members of the majority, who had the upper hand to squash it. So much for open and honest governance!

**Tim Geddes**  
Huntington Beach



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