



Photos by Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

CHEF JONATHAN GELMAN, left, checks on a dish as Kailey Proctor looks on at Leonard Cancer Institute's McDermott Family Kitchen.

'IT'S ALL ABOUT THE HEALING FROM WITHIN'

Cooking for recovery at Leonard Cancer Institute

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Jonathan Gelman, executive chef at Mission Viejo's Providence Mission Hospital, believes in the power of food.

"It's kind of our motto," Gelman said. "It's all about the healing from within."

Gelman spent years as corporate chef with exclusive resorts like the Ritz-Carlton. He joined the staff at the hospital a year ago to challenge existing notions surrounding "hospital food."

"I was brought in to create something healthier, that would present better and give more variety," Gelman said.

Now he's teamed up with Kailey Proctor, oncology dietitian at the Leonard Cancer Institute in Mission Viejo, to launch a brand-new cooking series filmed at the Leonard Cancer Institute's McDermott Family Kitchen. The two aim to make healthy eating easier, especially for pa-



See **Cooking**, page R4 **LEONARD CANCER INSTITUTE** oncology dietitian Proctor inside Nadyne's Kitchen.

Santa Ana moves forward on rent control

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

During a Santa Ana City Council meeting that began on Tuesday and stretched into the early morning hours, elected officials took a firm step toward curbing future rent hikes for many tenants and providing stricter eviction protections.

Council members had the option to make the rent control and just-cause eviction measures effective immediately but fell shy of the five votes needed to adopt them as urgency ordinances.

Instead, a slim 4-3 majority decided to bring both proposals back for a second reading and vote, which is slated to occur after Gov. Gavin Newsom's pandemic-related statewide eviction moratorium is set to expire on Sept. 30.

"This isn't a new issue," Mayor Vicente Sarmiento said. "This isn't something that was a result of the pandemic. This predates that."

For decades, the city has seen a history of grassroots organizing surrounding renters' rights, from a 1985 rent strike in several of its neighborhoods to failed bids by Tenants United Santa Ana to put rent control on the ballot twice in the past three years.

Tenants form the majority of the densely populated city, many of whom are rent burdened, meaning they dedicate at least 30% of their income to rent, according to a 2014 city of Santa Ana general plan.

The rent control ordinance considered by council members seeks to impose a 3% annual rent increase cap on apartment complexes and mobile home parks. In accordance with existing state laws, such caps are limited to apartment structures built before Feb. 1, 1995, and mobile home parks that began renting spaces before 1990.

A landlord may ask to be exempt from the cap if they can

See **Control**, page R4

New tribal leader pursuing a long-awaited goal

For more than 30 years, the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians in Orange County have been fighting to gain federal recognition. But with chairwoman Heidi Lucero now at the helm, that may become a reality.

BY BEN BRAZIL

For more than 30 years, the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians in Orange County have been fighting to gain federal recognition.

For a tribe with limited resources, the pursuit has been difficult. But with a new leader at the helm, the goal may be within reach.

Heidi Lucero, the new chairwoman of the Juaneño tribal council, believes she has the skills to lead the tribe forward. Lucero was chosen by tribal members along with the rest of the council as part of its election process, which occurs every four years.

Council members took their seats in July.

Lucero said gaining federal recognition is one of the tribe's primary goals, but it is an intensive, years-long process. Thousands of pages of research need to be compiled and submitted to the government for evaluation.

In 2011, the tribe was denied federal recognition. Lucero said the government acknowledged the tribe as historic and that most but not all of the tribal members were descendants of the historic tribe.

Lucero said because the tribe doesn't have federal recognition, the tribe doesn't have any legal hold to anything it discovers at sa-

cred sites. Federal recognition would empower the tribe to gain control of those artifacts and would give children the right to apply for federal grants. It would also give the tribe a land allotment that members could live on and use for sacred ceremonies.

"For a lot of our elders, what it means is that the government is actually acknowledging that we exist," Lucero said.

The tribe is currently appealing the denial and putting together a whole new petition. It will take years to compile all the information that it will need to file with the government.



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

HEIDI LUCERO, the new chairwoman of the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, hopes to gain federal recognition for the tribe.

See **Goal**, page R5

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IRVINE MAY CONSIDER REGULATING PLANT THAT CONCERNS RESIDENTS

BY BEN BRAZIL

North Irvine residents have been complaining for years of potentially toxic fumes and foul smells coming from an asphalt facility near their homes.

They've claimed that the All American Asphalt plant, located near Orchard Hills, harms their health, causing troubling respiratory symptoms and possibly contributing to future chronic illnesses.

For a long time, they felt that their voices were falling on deaf ears.

The city responded last year by filing a lawsuit against the asphalt plant, claiming it's in violation of air quality regulations and local public nuisance provisions. Then in response to pressure from residents, the South Coast Air Quality Management District, a regional air quality regulator, chose to conduct further testing of the site, and the city of Irvine hired contractors for further testing.

But to the dismay of residents, the investigations found no toxic health concerns from the asphalt plant. Meanwhile, they still report bad smells and health issues.

Earlier this year, residents filed a separate lawsuit against All American Asphalt and have criticized the SCAQMD and contractors for using faulty testing methods during their air quality investigations.

After years of advocacy for the cause, calling out the

city for inaction and pressing for a public airing of the issue, residents may be making some headway. The issue was finally heard in a public venue last week at a City Council meeting, and the discussion caught the attention of a powerful voice in state and local politics, state Sen. Dave Min.

Min sent a letter to the city, conveying to local leaders that he is looking to work with Irvine "to take all necessary actions to mitigate this problem that is so detrimentally impacting the quality of life of so many Irvine residents."

"As we know, there are two separate issues when it comes to noxious fumes such as the kind created by All American Asphalt," Min said in his letter.

"First, there is the concern that these fumes may be tied to toxic emissions that negatively impact air quality to the point where there is a public health concern. Second, there is concern that such fumes, simply by virtue of their strong and noxious odors, may create an unacceptable nuisance to those impacted by them, negatively impacting their mental health and well-being.

"I would note that these concerns are independent of one another. That is to say that whether or not a particular polluter is violating the state's air quality standards is not the same questions as whether that polluter is creating an odor nuisance that harms the

well-being of its neighbors."

The council seems willing to work with Min.

"We could certainly use the senator's help in a lot of this," Vice Mayor Tammy Kim said during the meeting.

Council members discussed a few ways to regulate the asphalt plant's trucks, which have been seen uncovered and driving through neighborhoods, spreading fumes in residential areas.

Mayor Farrah Khan said she would like the council to revisit at its next meeting on Sept. 28 the idea of setting a policy to enforce the covering of trucks and to have ongoing monitoring so trucks are not traveling through residential neighborhoods.

Khan also said she would like the current air quality reporting system to be modified.

"The current process of reporting definitely seems to be very cumbersome on the part of the residents," Khan said. "Six people have to call in and complain before the issue is registered, and then someone has to be home for an inspector to actually test the air. How do we move away from this archaic system into something where a person calls and says that they're smelling something, and you have monitors out there that can automatically be turned on and capture data in real time?"

A representative of SCAQMD said having mul-



Courtesy of Kim Konte

IRVINE RESIDENTS SAY the All American Asphalt plant spreads toxic fumes into the air.

iple people report one episode before responding to a scene of an odor is required under state law. Kim said she hopes Min can help advocate for a change to that law.

Those changes aren't enough for Councilman Larry Agran, who said the All American Asphalt plant needs to be shut down.

"I think we have to face up to the fact that one way or another, this plant sooner rather than later, has to be shut down and re-moved to an appropriate place where production of asphalt can take place safely," Agran said. "That's a heavy lift."

In response to a question from Kim, City Atty. Jeffrey Melching said the city doesn't have any regulatory power to close the plant or

move it to another location.

Councilman Mike Carroll expressed interest at the meeting in collaborating with retired UC Irvine professor Dean Baker, who has worked with residents and Non-Toxic Neighborhoods, a community group that has been leading the effort against All American Asphalt.

Baker has been critical of the methods used in the air quality studies. During his presentation at the council meeting, Baker said that the investigations had their limitations, including not enough sampling, the use of low-cost sensors and a failure to test for all volatile organic compounds, or VOCs.

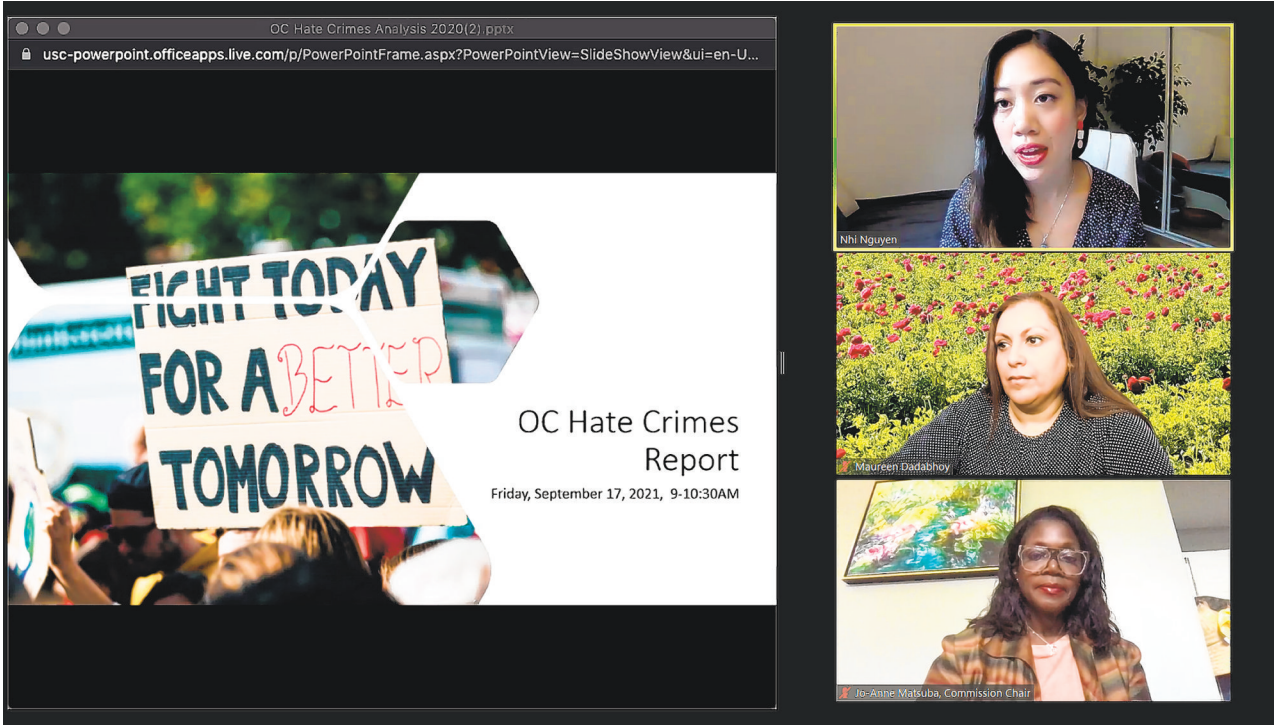
"But the bottom line is, the problems, the odors, the symptoms continue," Baker said.

Kim Konte, founder of Non-Toxic Neighborhoods, spoke out against the city during the meeting. Konte has mentioned in the past that she fears for the health of her children, like many neighbors who live near the asphalt plant.

"We can't open our windows at night, and the noxious asphalt and chemical odors constantly flood North Irvine," Konte said. "... The city of Irvine is the last line of defense for its residents, and the city is failing our children. Our elected officials need to take ownership of this public health crisis."

All American Asphalt did not respond to a request for comment.

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Screenshot by Gabriel San Román

ZOOM SCREENSHOT taken from the Orange County Human Relations Commission Sept. 17 presentation of the report.

Report: Orange County hate crimes, incidents reach record highs in 2020

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

Hate crimes and incidents in Orange County rose to historic levels in 2020 amid a pandemic, according to an annual report by the Orange County Human Relations Commission.

Since 1991, the commission has compiled such statistics for the county and released its latest findings during a remote presentation on Friday. Speakers included O.C. Human Relations staff and Orange County Dist. Atty. Todd Spitzer.

"I'm very upset about [the report]," Spitzer said. "Hate crime is up. It's been up now for several years in a row and it's completely unacceptable."

A hate crime, as defined by the California attorney general, is a criminal act motivated "in whole or in part" by a victim's actual or perceived identity, such as race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or disability. It can constitute prosecutable offenses like assault, vandalism and murder.

Spitzer touted the creation of a hate crimes unit within his office in May and noted there have been more prosecutions of such criminal offenses in the last two years than in the past 25 years.

Nhi Nguyen, a hate crime coordinator for the O.C. Human Relations nonprofit, presented the report's data following Spitzer's comments and described the findings as a "snap-

shot."

The vast majority of hate crimes tallied were motivated by race, ethnicity or national origin. In all, 112 hate crimes were reported in O.C. in 2020, a 35% increase over the previous year. The rise continues a disturbing trend over the past five years.

Even though Black residents comprise just 2% of the county's population, anti-Black hate crimes accounted for the most commonly reported offenses, followed by anti-Semitic and anti-Latino motivated acts.

"Each incident limits our capacity to truly become that national model of a diverse county," said Dr. Douglas Haynes, vice chancellor for equity, diversity and inclusion at UC Irvine, during a panel discussion on the report. "It's just distressing to see year over year, the Black community in Orange County is disproportionately among the victims of hate incidents and certainly crimes."

A hate incident, as defined in the report, is behavior motivated by hate or bias that isn't necessarily criminal in nature, such as verbal abuse or bullying.

Prior to the pandemic, four hate incidents against Asian Americans were reported in 2019. Last year, that number rose dramatically to 76, an 1,800% increase. As part of the commission's methodology, data collected by the Stop AAPI Hate nonprofit were incorporated into the re-

port, a move welcomed by community members.

"It's good that O.C. Human Relations included Stop AAPI Hate because the data from them can be reported in any language, anonymously as well as online," said Mary Anne Foo, executive director of the Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA). "It allows for people to feel comfortable reporting."

Hate incidents, in all, spiked in March 2020, the same month that initial stay-at-home orders in California sought to flatten the curve of rising coronavirus infections. As the Asian American community faced blame for the pandemic, they braced for a wave of hate.

"There was so much media attention at the time that I think it raised awareness to report," Foo said. "Politicians blaming and calling it the 'China virus' did drive up an increase in hate crimes and incidents."

Foo cautioned that lower numbers reported after the onset of the pandemic doesn't necessarily mean the situation is improving for Asian Americans in O.C.

In 2021, a "toxic stew" of anti-Asian racism has continued to rail O.C. and has even targeted Asian American politicians and county officials. County Supervisor Andrew Do, a Vietnamese American, couldn't join the hate crime report presentation as scheduled as he's ill with COVID-19, but faced vitriol during a July 27 Or-

ange County Board of Supervisors meeting when a speaker used an expletive and told him to go back to Vietnam.

Anti-Semitic hate incidents also rose by 114% last year, according to the report.

As policies surrounding the vaccine campaign have been discussed, considered and carried out this year, anti-vaccine activists have also arrived at civic meetings in O.C. using yellow stars and other historical imagery from the Holocaust that killed 6 million Jews.

"It sets a foundation for anti-Semitism," said Rabbi Peter Levi, the Anti-Defamation League's Regional Director for Orange County and Long Beach. "It distorts what the Holocaust was and does little to serve Holocaust remembrance and education."

The presentation of the hate crime report ended on a hopeful note and a call to action, as the combined number of hate crimes and incidents in 2020 outpaced the year before by 136.

"Real change is possible," Nguyen said. "As a community in Orange County, we can come together to not only advocate for change but to work together to effect change so that we can get closer to a county and a world that is intolerant of violence, of hate and bigotry."

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Irvine seeks \$1M in funding for battle vs. climate change

BY BEN BRAZIL

Irvine is moving forward in a statewide competition for \$1 million worth of funding to help the city achieve its ambitious goal to have a zero-carbon economy by 2030.

The competition, the Cool City Challenge, was started by the Empowerment Institute, an international consulting and training organization specializing in empowering cities to meet their carbon reduction goals. As part of this initiative, three California cities will receive \$1 million each to roll out their climate programs. The three recipients of the grants will also share the Carbon Neutral City Prize, which includes \$25 million in funding.

The winners of the challenge will be announced in mid-October, said Irvine spokeswoman Kristina Perrigoue.

"For Irvine in particular, the community has been really supportive around sustainability issues and climate awareness for the last several years," said Sona Coffee, Irvine's environmental programs administrator. "Now it's an opportunity for the city as a local government to show that we are supportive and understand the seriousness of these issues and know that we can do something about it as a local government."

"Irvine is really well positioned with the community resources we have, the standing of the city and the innovative nature of this community, to be able to take on a challenge like this and serve as a model for others to follow."

Irvine is able to move forward because, as of Wednesday, it recruited more than 200 volunteers to serve as Cool Block leaders, who will work with a team in their neighborhoods to host workshops in sustainability, emergency preparedness and climate action.

Coffee said that under the program, neighbors will commit to making certain changes to reduce their carbon footprint and will report back to the

team so community members will hold each other accountable. Team members will be able to input their sustainability choices in a website portal, such as changing out light bulbs, and then their reduced carbon footprint will be measured for each action.

Anybody in the community can be a Cool Block leader. No science background is required.

"So the idea is that we'll be working from the bottom up with the community members and their neighborhoods, while we're also working top down to set the policies in place," Coffee said.

The first phase that the city needed to complete before taking part in the Cool City Challenge was approving an aggressive climate resolution in early August. With the unanimous decision by the City Council, Irvine became the first city in Orange County, and the third in the state, to make a pledge of carbon neutrality.

Coffee said the next phase of the challenge for the city is designing its climate strategy. She said it could take about 18 months to finish the plan. The Cool City Challenge gives cities two years to finish the climate strategy.

As California begins exploring ways to become carbon neutral by 2035, cities are faced with quickly adopting their own climate action plans to help the state achieve its goal.

A few other Orange County cities are working on curbing greenhouse gas emissions. Santa Ana recently approved a sweeping climate resolution, committing to 100% clean and renewable energy usage by 2045.

The issue has become all the more crucial following the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's alarming report calling climate change a "code red for humanity" that is already being felt across the world and will only continue to accelerate.

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- \$300 million to 100 equity funds to provide capital to diverse entrepreneurs and small business owners
- \$10 million grant to fund the Center for Black Entrepreneurship (CBE), in partnership with Spelman and Morehouse colleges
- \$25 million to 21 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) and community colleges in support of job skilling and placement
- Establishing new partnerships and coalitions focused on building skills and creating job opportunities for people of color
- \$60 million to increase access to capital and career opportunities for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) affordable housing developers
- 33 million+ masks, more than 272,000 bottles of hand sanitizer and 8 million gloves to communities in need
- \$1.35 million in grants to support mental health initiatives for young people of color
- \$25 million founding partnership in the Smithsonian’s new initiative on race, Our Shared Future: Reckoning with Our Racial Past

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Area director of Planned Parenthood says Texas abortion law impacts California

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

According to Dr. Janet Jacobson, reproductive rights in California still need protection.

“California is a leader in reproductive rights and healthcare, and we really impact the rest of the country,” said the medical director and senior vice president of clinical services at Planned Parenthood of Orange & San Bernardino Counties in an interview with TimesOC. “If we start to lose access here, the rest of the country is going to follow.”

Access to abortion care was brought to the forefront earlier this month when the Supreme Court declined to block a Texas law enacting a near-complete ban on abortion.

Texas Senate Bill 8 bans most abortions after six weeks and doesn’t make exceptions for cases involving rape or incest.

S.B. 8 also invites lawsuits against any individual who “knowingly engages in conduct that aids or abets the performance or inducement of an abortion, including paying for or reimbursing the costs of an abortion through insurance or otherwise.”

The law not only targets clinics and their staff but also health insurers that approve a claim, a ride-share driver who drives a patient to care and even friends and family who discuss abortion options with a patient.

“It is difficult for people to talk about it with friends and family because

of the stigma,” said Jacobson, a board certified OB/Gyn and former Navy FA-18 fighter pilot. “And in Texas it is going to be illegal to talk about it with friends and family.”

The Department of Justice has since filed a lawsuit against the state of Texas, alleging the state “enacted S.B. 8 in open defiance of the Constitution.”

Jacobson, who has worked with Planned Parenthood for eight years and trained in the complex family planning fellowship after her residency, said that while California currently has no such ban, inequities exist with abortion care in California.

“California is one of the states that spent the last several years working to protect abortion access through a series of legislation,” Jacobson said. “So you would think that abortion access in California would be secure.”

However, Jacobson said data suggest care is not secure for all.

“What we know about abortion is people who are in rural areas of California or people who have lower income or people of color have difficulty accessing abortion care for a number of reasons.”

Abortion care tends to be centralized in urban areas, Jacobson said, and childcare, work and transportation issues can also limit access.

“One of my patients recently traveled by bus from Barstow with her kids to get to our clinic,”



Courtesy of Planned Parenthood

DR. JANET JACOBSON, MD, MS, is medical director and Senior Vice President of Clinical Services at Planned Parenthood of Orange & San Bernardino Counties.

Jacobson said.

Texas’ law could further exasperate inequities when reproductive freedom states like California are forced to absorb the impact, Jacobson said.

“We saw about 7,000 people from outside California coming here for abortion services, and we know that number is only going to increase now,” Jacobson said, “which is only going to further limit the vulnerable populations here.”

The law could also contribute to the economic gap between the poor and wealthy, Jacobson said.

“Even before Roe v. Wade made abortion legal, people who are wealthy and have the means to travel will always be able to get abortions,” Jacobson said. “But as those restric-



Courtesy of Danielle Cohen

PLANNED PARENTHOOD supporters rally at the Orange County Women's March.

tions become more significant ... people are disproportionately affected ... We have the wealthy people and we have the people that are the 99% who cannot access healthcare in general and certainly not abortion care.”

Jacobson notes limited access to abortion care affects more individuals than people may think.

“About one in four people that have a uterus will get an abortion by the time they are 45,” Jacobson said, citing data from the Guttmacher Institute, a leading reproductive health research organization.

“When people think of who is seeking abortions, they often think of very young people who are be-

ing manipulated or being taken advantage of, and that’s just not true,” she said. “The most common abortion patient is a 20-something that already has kids.”

If federal courts allow the Texas law to stand, it makes it possible for other conservative states to pass similar laws, Jacobson said. There are 561 laws in other states that limit abortion, according to the Guttmacher Institute.

Besides the efforts of the U.S. Department of Justice, reproductive rights advocates, like Planned Parenthood, are working to protect abortion access in Texas and other states.

The Community Action Fund of Planned Parenthood of Orange & San Ber-

nardino Counties directly supports local candidates who value access to reproductive health services and education.

Jacobson advocates for voting out elected officials at all levels who do not support access to safe, legal abortion.

“We have to also look to our local elections, our assembly and senate and working locally is incredibly important to protect access,” Jacobson said. “And then on the federal level ... it is not time for us to vote for our next president, but there will be a lot of emphasis on that when the time comes.”

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Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

PROVIDENCE MISSION HOSPITAL executive chef Jonathan Gelman and Leonard Cancer Institute oncology dietitian Kailey Proctor have launched a new cooking series where they teach cancer patients healthy recipes.

A BUTTERNUT squash soup with some sliced avocado created for the “Taste of Fall” video made at the Leonard Cancer Institute.



Sarah Mosqueda

COOKING

Continued from page R1

tients undergoing cancer treatments.

“I just love working with patients and using food to help manage the side effects from treatment,” Proctor said. She has worked as dietitian for six years and spent the last two working in patient oncology. In November, she became board certified in oncology nutrition.

The Leonard Cancer Institute offers radiation oncology, imaging services and medical oncology. The institute emphasizes the role nutrition plays in the

treatment of cancer, as the disease places extra nutritional demands on the body.

The McDermott Family Kitchen — sometimes referred to as Nadyne’s Kitchen for the McDermott family member the kitchen was dedicated to — is where registered dietitians provide patients with nutrition-rich meals that help achieve lasting remissions.

Nadyne’s Kitchen also provides a space for dietitians to provide cooking demonstrations and educational programs, like Gelman and Proctor’s series, that can be live-streamed.

“We often come up for a theme for the episode and

then Chef works on some recipes and then I come in and kind of put an oncology spin on it,” Proctor said. “So we focus on symptoms that patients have and help manage that with the recipes.”

The team films a new video each month and most recently put together an episode featuring a “Taste of Fall” menu.

“These recipes that we’re doing are very simple,” Gelman said in the episode. “A butternut squash soup that is very easy and can be frozen in portions for future use. And then we are doing a braised short rib with some cannelloni beans and some Swiss chard. So really healthy, lots of good fiber and lots of good protein.”

The two blend roasted garlic, onions and butternut squash into a smooth soup that Gelman ladles into a bowl. They talk about what to do if food tastes bland or metallic and how to find ways to increase calories or add protein.

“You could add a spoonful of olive oil, butter or even some sliced avocado to add some heart-healthy fats and about a 100 extra calories to this soup,” Proctor suggested.

“Crab would be good too,” Gelman quipped.

“Crab would also add protein,” Proctor added.

They decide to top the soup with diced avocado before taking a taste.

“This is my favorite part,” Proctor said into the camera.

Proctor said talking about good nutrition habits with patients is effective, but demonstrating good nutrition habits can be even more powerful.

“It is one thing for me to

go tell a patient, “This is what you should be eating, this is how you do it,” she said. “But for them to actually see it and how it is prepared and get different ideas or examples of how to cook certain meals, what tools to use, what is going to help benefit them while they are on treatment, is a really great thing.”

Making the recipes manageable and simple is part of their objective as well, Gelman said.

“Part of the focus on every series that we do is the ease of it,” Gelman said. “Being able to do things when you may not have the strength or the stamina to do it. Maybe show some batch cooking, where they can meal-prep a bit for the week and make it as simple as possible.”

Gelman and Proctor have hosted six classes so far, and the filmed episodes can be viewed on the Providence Mission Hospital’s website and LinkedIn profile.

“We will probably be doing a “Taste of Fall Desserts” next month,” Gelman said, “and eventually when we get through COVID, there will be more live classes.”

Proctor said feedback on the series has been positive, and she’s happy to help patients regain a sense of autonomy through cooking.

“Patients often feel that a lot is out of their control while they are in treatment, and I love that we are focusing on them and what they have control over,” Proctor said. “They can still enjoy food while in treatment.”

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CONTROL

Continued from page R1

show that it’s preventing a reasonable return on their property; Santa Ana City Manager Kristine Ridge would have the authority to deny or approve such petitions.

The just-cause eviction ordinance would strengthen renters’ rights beyond the state’s Tenant Protection Act by drawing down the prior occupancy requirement from 12 months to just 30 days.

It would also mandate that eviction notices be delivered in the same language as the lease was negotiated in.

Both measures appearing on the council agenda

brought advocates, tenants and opponents out for a lengthy period of public comments.

Ahead of the meeting, the Apartment Assn. of Orange County put out a “red alert” in opposition to the measures.

Chip Ahlswede, a representative of the association, approached the podium with a “no rent control” strike-through sticker on his shirt.

“The proposal you have before you seeks to find a good common ground, a good solution for both parties,” Ahlswede said.

“However, it was not done with the input of the industry. It is rushed through. The research does not exist behind it. We have an opportunity to come up

with a solution by not passing here tonight.”

Opponents criticized an ad hoc committee comprised of three council members on the issues as “secretive,” though the city attorney assured that the process complied with the Brown Act.

Others claimed that “loopholes” within the just-cause eviction ordinance would prevent the eviction of gang members.

Wearing a Tenants United Santa Ana shirt, Elsa Ayala, spoke in favor of rent control as an 18-year resident of the city.

“Regrettably, my husband suffered a stroke five years ago,” Ayala said in Spanish. “I’m the only one who works. I have two children, 18 and 15. If my rent is

raised, I won’t be able to pay it. I’m going to have to take my children out of school to work. I don’t want to.”

The debate turned next to council after midnight.

“The struggles of Santa Ana renters are too big to continue to ignore,” Councilwoman Jessie Lopez said in favor of the measures. “Low wages and high rents are the clamps that squeeze the working class of its earnings.”

Councilman Phil Bacerra complained on more than one occasion about the meeting having carried on past midnight on such a critical issue and suggested it gave credence to those who criticized the council for attempting to ram rent control through.

“We’re not talking about, as we did during COVID, the city of Santa Ana invoking its own moratorium on evictions,” Bacerra added. “We’ve basically have said we’re going to dovetail off of that and pivot toward rent control. I think that also is very disingenuous.”

He seconded a motion made by Councilwoman Nelida Mendoza to direct city staff to further study the policy and added an amendment to hold stakeholder meetings as part of the process.

But a substitute motion by Councilman Johnathan Hernandez won a majority of votes.

Backed by the mayor, council members Lopez and Thai Viet Phan, it would also authorize the re-

allocation of up to \$300,000 from the Revive Santa Ana Plan to develop an eviction defense fund. An Irvine-based consultant would be contracted in order to help the city administer, manage and implement the ordinances on a temporary basis.

Council members are expected to consider a second reading and vote on both ordinances during their Oct. 5 meeting.

If the ordinances pass, Santa Ana will become the only city in Orange County to adopt local rent control measures for tenants living in both apartments and mobile home parks.

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6 O.C. restaurants earn Bib Gourmand awards

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

When it comes to restaurant accolades, the Michelin Guide is among the most prestigious. Yet as the experience of dining out has evolved, so has the guide.

Wednesday morning, the guide announced 45 new restaurants in the Bib Gourmand category in California, which denotes an establishment with “excellent food and moderate prices.”

Thirty-seven types of cuisine, from Indonesian to Pakistani, are represented on a list that is decidedly diverse. Among the restaurants honored, six in Orange County are identified as eateries that “offer a full menu of a starter, main course and dessert, making it possible to order two courses and a glass of wine or dessert for around \$40 or less (tax and gratuity not included).”

Chaak Kitchen (Tustin), Fable & Spirit (Newport Beach), Heritage Barbecue (San Juan Capistrano), Khan Saab Desi Craft Kitchen (Fullerton), Oliver’s Osteria (Laguna Beach) and Pho 79 (Garden Grove) were all awarded Bib Gourmand recognition.

Due to the pandemic, it has been a tough year and a half for restaurants, and being recognized reminds owners and staff their extraordinary work hasn’t gone unnoticed.

“Everybody in the restaurant industry has been on quite a ride the last two years,” said Gabbi Patrick, chef/owner at Chaak Kitchen. “And we all know that it takes hard work and a great team.



Courtesy of Khan Saab Desi Craft Kitchen

WOODFIRED BONE-IN TOMAHAWK at Khan Saab Desi Craft Kitchen in Fullerton was among the O.C. restaurants to earn Bib Gourmand awards.

We are just so thrilled that Chaak can be a part this recognition.”

Chaak, a Yucatan-influenced restaurant that utilizes fire and

smoke to achieve unique flavors, faced challenges this year, and Patrick said this recognition was hard earned.

“We really worked harder than ever before in the many years we have been in business,” Patrick said, “We had everybody pull to-

gether, we never gave up and we worked harder and longer hours

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GOAL

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The process doesn’t favor tribes. The federal government has used the Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood to determine tribe enrollment and any eligibility for government benefits. That certificate is determined through blood quantum, which is a measure of the amount of Native American blood in a person. It’s a controversial system some claim is a way for the federal government to rid itself of its responsibilities to the Native American community, as more people mate with people of other races.

“Throughout history, blood quantum was used to define a point at which responsibilities to tribes, entitlement programs, treaty rights and reservations would end,” Maya Harmon wrote in a legal article in the California Law Review. “The government hoped that using blood quantum would eventually eliminate Native peoples — that intermarriage would ‘dilute’ the amount of ‘Indian blood’ in the population, causing descendants of Native peoples to become indistinguishable from the rest of the population.”

Some tribes adopted the same system as the government, but others have chosen to use different methods to determine tribal enrollment. Instead of using the blood quantum certificate, Lucero said her tribe is moving toward using lineal descent to prove members’ place in the tribe. It requires that members link to a historic village and ancestor genealogically. So members have to comb through historic records such as birth certificates, death records or marriage certificates.

“The whole idea of blood quantum, it’s a tool of the government to say you don’t have enough Indian blood to be considered Indian,” Lucero said. “Besides being very inaccurate, that’s one of the reasons that we decided to move away from that.”

Lucero’s experience as a researcher primes her for leading the effort. She is a phlebotomist with Kaiser Permanente and has a master’s degree in anthropology, with an emphasis on cultural anthropology and California archaeology, and another master’s degree in cultural sustainability.

“I think that my background would be a plus in really being able to research all that and find all that material,” Lucero said. “Because I have a good deal of knowledge about the tribe — the ceremonies of the tribe, language and everything that makes us unique as a tribe — I think that is what makes me qualified.”

Lucero served in 2013 as a member-at-large on the tribal council and later as a cultural resource director for the tribe. This is her first



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

HEIDI LUCERO served in 2013 as a member-at-large on the tribal council and later as cultural resource director for the tribe.

time as chairwoman.

As a cultural resource director she monitored construction sites for any artifacts or human remains that could be important to the tribe. The 405 Freeway widening project was paused in 2019 after Native American remains were found during excavations.

“We just make sure that if something is discovered we stop the project in order to make sure we take care of our ancestors,” she said.

Another major focus for Lucero will be regaining the nonprofit status of the tribe, which was suspended about a decade ago after the prior leadership failed to file taxes. It’s crucial for the tribe to have nonprofit status to receive grants.

The tribe also can’t bring in money through donations and fundraising until the suspension is lifted. Lucero said they have about six months in reserves, but she would like to have at least a year’s worth.

Lucero also hopes to reestablish the tribe’s relationship with the city and with other neighboring tribes, including the Tongva, the Chumash and the Kumeyaay, among others. Lucero said the tribe isolated under past leadership.

“Tribes want to help each other,” Lucero said. “The more of us that are recognized, the more of us stand to say, ‘We are the first people of California... It’s about working together as indigenous people.’”

Lucero is also excited for the upcoming opening of the Putuidem Village in San Juan Capistrano, where the Juaneño are headquartered. For many years, the Juaneño have fought for this sliver of land dedicated to their history and tradition.

The sacred sites and lands of the Acjachemen descendants, whose history traces back thousands of years, have been plundered, desecrated and devoured by development. The tribe became known as the Juaneños after Spanish colonialists built Mission San Juan Capistrano in 1776. Today it has about 1,800 members.

The Putuidem Village was seen as a long-sought tribal victory when the San Juan Capistrano City Council first approved the educa-

“The whole idea of blood quantum, it’s a tool of the government to say you don’t have enough Indian blood to be considered Indian.”

— **Heidi Lucero**
Chairwoman of the Juaneño tribal council

tional park in 2016. The Northwest Open Space, a 65-acre natural area near the 5 Freeway where the 1.5-acre municipal park is being built, is considered one of the first Native American settlements in what became Orange County.

But in ensuing years, the city delayed the project, and tribal leadership questioned whether the park would ever be completed.

Though it was expected to open as early as 2019, the Putuidem Village was stalled by various financial obstacles. It is now expected to open this fall.

Tribal leaders have said the park could be an important tool for educating the public and a vital gathering place for tribal members, where they could perform ancient rituals important to them. Some tribal members have been waiting for a piece of dedicated land like the park for decades. The humble 1.5-acre passive park will include an amphitheater area with boulders and log seats, a trail and various depictions of the Juaneño way of life, including ramadas, kiichas — a thatch home — and manos, a ground stone tool. The surrounding areas of the park have native plant habitat.

“It was really important for us to make sure that our community still had a piece of that village left that we can go to hold ceremony and pray for those people that lived in that village and had died before we came,” Lucero said. “It’s really important that we always acknowledge that they were there and we’re still here protecting their land.”

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