

# Daily Pilot

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2020 /// Now including Coastline Pilot and Huntington Beach Independent /// dailypilot.com

## Move into next tier to reopen delayed

The recent rise of COVID-19 cases stalls Orange County's hopes to advance to the next level for at least two weeks.

BY LILLY NGUYEN

Orange County won't be moving into the next California reopening tier for at least another two weeks as the average new daily COVID-19 case rate climbed.

Dr. Clayton Chau, the Orange County Health Care Agency director, said during an Orange County Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday that the county was within the parameters to meet the next tier last week, but that data now shows that the county will remain within the red, "substantial transmission" tier, which is the second-worst tier in the state's reopening guidelines.

The healthcare agency reported Tuesday that the county's new adjusted case rate was 4.4 cases per every 100,000 residents, though its average testing positivity rate remained at 3.1%.

To move into the next tier of "moderate transmission," the county would have needed to keep its case rate be-

See **Tier**, page A4

## 2 elementary schools in Laguna Beach set to reopen

BY ANDREW TURNER

The Laguna Beach Unified School District plans to reopen its two elementary schools — El Morro and Top of the World — for in-person learning on Monday, following board approval.

In a special meeting on Friday, the board approved a return to the classroom for transitional kindergarten to fifth-grade students by a 4-1 vote. Board Clerk Carol Normandin was the lone dissenter, citing concerns over a need for coronavirus testing before students and staff return to campus.

The pandemic forced the elementary schools to close in March.

"Staff have been offered two opportunities for testing so far in early Septem-

See **Laguna**, page A2

### ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



Photo by Spencer Grant

**SEASONAL FESTIVALS SET FOR THIS FALL AND WINTER IN LAGUNA BEACH** PAGE A2



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

**DANIELLE HODGE**, left, takes a picture of her daughter, Isla, 6, and her first-grade teacher, Shari Gaeta, during the first day of in-person learning at Mariners Elementary School in Newport Beach on Tuesday. The teachers union has filed for an injunction to halt the reopening.

## NMUSD students return to class as union seeks to halt reopening

BY SARA CARDINE AND LILLY NGUYEN

The scene at Newport Beach's Mariners Elementary School Tuesday had all the makings of a homecoming — bundles of red, white and blue balloons at the school's front gate greeted onlookers while a banner reading "Welcome" flapped in the breeze.

Students lined up on the blacktop, hands tightly clutching backpack straps, faces bearing masks of many patterns as they waved to waiting parents on the other side of the gate. After just one half-day of school, their first time on campus since March, they were bursting with energy.

"Nash!" 4-year-old Emery Downing called out to her older brother from behind a shiny, scaled mermaid mask.

See **Return**, page A3



**STUDENTS AND PARENTS** walk to Rea Elementary School in Costa Mesa on Tuesday morning as the campus has reopened for fall classes.

Kevin Chang  
Staff  
Photographer

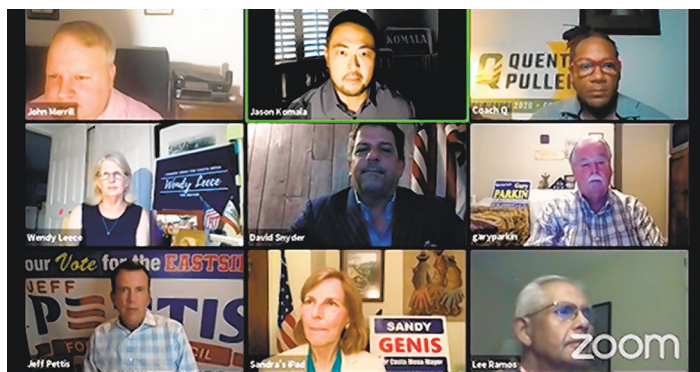
## Some, not all, of Costa Mesa's 15 candidates for City Council, mayor square off in forum

BY SARA CARDINE

With Costa Mesa City Hall closed to the public — and no in-person candidate forums planned before the Nov. 3 election — a handful of hopefuls shared their views before a virtual audience in a Sept. 23 candidates forum held via Facebook.

The event was hosted by "Costa Mesa Public Square," a Facebook group that encourages conversations on citywide issues that occasionally trigger political debates. In the span of about 90 minutes, more than 1,800 visitors tuned in to the livestreamed discussion.

Group administrator Julie Mercurio said organizers extended an invitation to all 15



Screenshot by Sara Cardine

**COSTA MESA** City Council candidates share views in a Sept. 23 Facebook forum held by the group "Costa Mesa Public Square."

candidates who have been qualified to run for the office of mayor and three open seats on the City Council.

"I told them it wasn't going to be a 'gotcha' moment, that we're just here so you can share your platforms and your views,"

Mercurio said Monday, explaining the page moderators' desire to create a public forum in the absence of traditional events.

Despite assurances of an even playing field, only eight contenders participated.

Mayoral candidates included contender Quentin "Q" Pullen, current Councilwoman Sandy Genis and Wendy Leece, who served on the council from 2006 to 2014. Mayoral challenger Al Melone initially joined in via audio but later blinked out, due to apparent computer issues.

They were joined by Jason Komala (District 1), Gary Parkin (District 2) and Jeff Pettis and Lee Ramos, both running for a

See **Council**, page A2

## Costa Mesa 'multipreneur' Kara Duffy thriving by keeping busy

BY MATT SZABO

Costa Mesa resident Kara Duffy calls herself a "multipreneur," someone who is able to juggle several projects at once.

What that has meant during the coronavirus pandemic is that Duffy, an entrepreneur, business consultant and coach, has not had a lack of things to do.

"When people are talking about being bored during COVID, I tell them they can call me and I will happily outsource some of my work," Duffy said with a laugh.

Duffy, 38, has continued to use the resources available to her to help her clients. During the quarantine, she offered free business Q&A sessions on Monday mornings. She also still hosts her weekly podcast, interviewing female leaders through the Power-

ful Ladies community that she founded six years ago.

"These are women who are not only chefs or artists or entrepreneurs, but they care about making an impact," she said. "They want to pay it forward. They're doing work in areas that matter to them. I'm not partial to where they are on the political spectrum, but are they doing more and are they taking an extra step? That's been a really incredible experience."

Duffy was used to Zoom before the pandemic, as she said more than half of her clients are outside of California. So after the death of George Floyd in May, she also quickly launched a free Zoom series — "A Powerful Conversation About America." Her sister, Jordan, a Los Angeles-based audio engineer, has aided in that.

The first topic of the Powerful Conversation series is racism, and the third event is set for Friday. Registration is available online.

"I just said, 'I can't be the owner of Powerful Ladies and I can't run a business called Powerful Ladies if we're not going to be powerful about every situation that's happening,'" Kara Duffy said. "So I called up some of the [powerful] women I know who are women of color, and I said, 'We need to talk about this.' Obviously, I'm [white and] privileged up the wazoo, so I can't be the authority, but I can make a space for other people to share their ideas and open dialogue."

Duffy, who has a bachelor's degree and MBA in marketing and entrepreneurship from Clark Uni-

See **Duffy**, page A4



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

**COSTA MESA** resident Kara Duffy is a "multipreneur," business coach and founder of "The Powerful Ladies" online community.





Photo by Spencer Grant

MIRANDA COX, right, greets a young cookie decorator at Hospitality Night in 2019.

# Seasonal celebrations scheduled this fall and winter in Laguna Beach

BY LILLY NGUYEN

As with most events this year that have shifted gears in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, city-sponsored events in Laguna Beach for the rest of the year will look a little different.

So will the Promenade on Forest.

Instead of its typical holiday celebrations with Hospitality Night or the annual trick-or-treat at the Community and Susi Q Senior Center, the city will hold two seasonal festivals on lower Forest Avenue, dubbed the “Fall Festival at the Promenade” and “Holidays at the Promenade.” The festivals will run from Oct. 5 to Nov. 29 and Nov. 30 to Jan. 3, respectively.

Plans for the festivals were unanimously approved by the City Council on Sept. 22. The city had to cancel its annual fireworks show earlier this year because of COVID-19.

As part of the fall festival, the Promenade on Forest

will be decorated with hay bales, flowers and pumpkins. Other fixtures will include a “Thanksgiving Thankful Wall,” where people will be able to write what they’re thankful for this year, and an area to drop off letters to be sent to active service members.

The festival will start with a pumpkin-carving contest.

Participants will carve their pumpkins at home before bringing them to the Susi Q, where they will be judged. Chosen pumpkins will be displayed at the promenade throughout the festival.

Adam Gufarotti, a senior public works analyst, said the city would partner with the city’s chamber of commerce to encourage businesses to develop special fall merchandise and menu specials.

The winter festival will include a virtual Santa Claus, where children will be able to talk directly to the jolly gift-giver. The dates of his online appearance will be announced lat-

er. The festival will offer a place for children to drop off letters to Santa, and the mayor will assist in answering them on his behalf.

There will also be a Christmas tree that residents will be able to decorate and a tree-lighting ceremony on Dec. 6 at 7 p.m.

“Santa will be coming to town,” Gufarotti joked, adding that Mr. Claus would be traveling around the city in a marine safety Jeep and that there would also be a menorah at the promenade to mark Hanukkah.

The festival will also include the city’s first window-decorating contest, which will be open to all businesses.

City staff said event organizers for the Laguna Beach Rotary Club’s annual Classic Car Show canceled the event this year, and plans for the city’s Patriot’s Day parade in March will be revisited in December, pending state guidance.

lilly.nguyen@latimes.com  
Twitter: @lillibirds

## THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Jacqueline E. Mathews

- ACROSS**
- 1 Biblical book  
5 Sylvester Stallone film  
10 \_ machines; Vegas attractions  
14 Arthur of tennis  
15 Means of communication  
16 No longer wild  
17 Harbor bird  
18 Harassed  
20 Hullabaloo  
21 Loaned  
22 \_ up; admits one’s feelings  
23 Manhandles  
25 “\_ goes there?”; sentry’s shout  
26 Oft-repeated actions  
28 William Randolph or Patty  
31 Put on a pedestal  
32 Actor Keith  
34 Collie’s foot  
36 Profit’s opposite  
37 Vestibule  
38 Letter from Greece  
39 TV series for Jeremy Sisto  
40 “Grimms’ Fairy”  
41 Kinder  
42 Chaperone  
44 Come back  
45 Feasted on  
46 Spaghetti sauce ingredient  
47 “\_ Have All the Flowers Gone?”  
50 Hearts or spades  
51 Roker’s namesakes  
54 Those worthy of imitation  
57 Two-\_; ballroom dance  
58 Up in \_; irate  
59 Sudden forward rush  
60 Listen  
61 Go by  
62 Also said  
63 Catch sight of
- DOWN**
- 1 \_-tat-tat  
2 Secondhand

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## 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).

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		8	2		3	6		
		9		6				

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

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|------------------------|--------------------|
| 3 Blood clot in a vein | Olsen              |
| 4 Egg layer            | 10 Daze            |
| 5 Fends off            | 11 Overdue         |
| 6 Prayer closings      | 12 Foreboding sign |
| 7 Word with Wal or K   | 13 Mack & Kennedy  |
| 8 Twice, in music      | 19 Composer        |
| 9 Vaudevillian         | George M. _        |
|                        | 21 Stringed        |

- instrument  
24 Put on \_; act  
25 TV’s “What Not to”  
26 Fifty percent  
27 Clay building brick  
28 Hurries  
29 Hazards a guess  
30 Spud  
32 Leave suddenly  
33 Bread variety  
35 Give a heads-up to  
37 Rider’s cost  
38 Tubular pasta  
40 \_ pole; tribal carving  
41 Home of twigs  
43 Sign of affection  
44 Reared  
46 Hernia, e.g.  
47 Envelop  
48 Group dance  
49 American \_; MA’s state trees  
50 “\_ in the Clowns”  
52 Jump  
53 Nimble  
55 Pay stub?  
56 Milk \_; caramel candy  
57 Feminine pronoun

Tribune Media Services

# Truck crash in Westminster closes 405 Freeway for about three hours

A section of the 405 Freeway was closed for hours Monday morning after a truck crashed into wooden supports under the Bolsa Chica bridge in Westminster, California Highway Patrol spokesman Duane Graham said.

The truck had a tractor trailer carrying a forklift, Graham said, and was going north on the freeway at about 7:30 a.m. when the

forklift collided with the Bolsa Avenue overcrossing. The bridge is currently under construction.

“There was some damage caused, so therefore [there was] full freeway closure on the northbound side for a couple of hours,” Graham said. “They had to close everything for them to make it safe.”

The northbound free-

way was closed at Beach Boulevard in Huntington Beach and reopened by 11 a.m. No injuries were reported, Graham said.

The Bolsa Avenue bridge is one of several being widened or replaced as part of the Orange County Transportation Authority’s I-405 Improvement Project, which is expected to be completed in 2023.

— Matt Szabo



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

THE PLAYGROUND area at Top of the World school in Laguna Beach in 2017.

## LAGUNA

Continued from page A1

ber,” District Deputy Supt. Leisa Winston said in an email. “Laguna Beach Unified School District will hold another two dates for staff testing on Oct. 7 and 8. The district cannot make testing mandatory but does encourage staff to participate.

“At the time of the meeting, it was unclear as to whether or not the district’s testing contractor would have availability to test students in the week before school resumes for in-person learning. We have since confirmed their availability, and students who are returning to school at both the elementary level and those in the self-contained programs that are scheduled to return to school beginning Oct. 5, will be provided with an option for testing this Thursday, Oct. 1.”

With the district’s planned staggered starts, transitional kindergarten through second-grade students would begin hybrid learning on Monday or Tuesday, and third- to fifth-grade students would come back to campus on Wednesday or Thursday. Elementary students would remain with their cohorts, and all elementary students would participate in distance learning

on Fridays.

Winston added that desk shields have been ordered for every elementary school student.

As Orange County transitioned into the second, red tier labeled “substantial transmission” and was able to maintain that status for two weeks, county schools have been allowed to reopen physically.

Previously, the district applied for an elementary school waiver for El Morro and Top of the World. Its application was approved by the state on Sept. 16. Data available on the Orange County Health Care Agency website indicates the district waiver would affect 915 students in 39 classes in the event county schools close again.

The Laguna Beach school district entered the academic year with a play-book that called for a three-phased reopening plan. Regarding middle schools and high schools, the board does not look to be prepared to deviate from its plan to keep secondary schools in virtual academy through the first trimester.

Winston said that the board will discuss the reopening of secondary schools in its scheduled meeting on Oct. 22, but based on current decision-making, those students would project to return to the classroom on Nov. 23.

The board had sought the opinion of secondary school students through a survey. Nearly 60% of the 279 Thurston Middle School students that answered said they wanted to reopen shortly after the county could do so. Conversely, 54% of the 489 students to respond from Laguna Beach High School said they would want to continue distance learning until the end of the first trimester.

The county had been on pace to advance into the third, orange tier of “moderate transmission” on Tuesday. The county will remain in the more-restrictive red tier this week after a rise in the new cases it is seeing per day.

For a county to make the orange tier, it must maintain an average of between one and 3.9 new daily cases per 100,000 residents and a testing positivity rate of between 2% and 4.9%.

The county maintained its 3.1% testing positivity rate from the weekend, but the daily new cases per 100,000 residents rose to 4.4, a number that stood at 3.6 as of Monday. Those are seven-day averages with a seven-day lag.

If a county’s reopening metrics sit in two different tiers, it will be assigned to the more restrictive tier.

andrewturner@latimes.com  
Twitter: @ProfessorTurner

## COUNCIL

Continued from page A1

seat representing District 6.

Notably absent from the discussion were Mayor Katrina Foley, who seeks a second mayoral term, and Mayor Pro Tem John Stephens, running against Komala and contender Don Harper in the District 1 race.

Foley did not comment Monday on why she declined to appear in the forum. Stephens said the Facebook group is not always civil and that he left the group years ago after commenters made disparaging remarks about his daughter.

“I quit the page. I just deleted it and I’ve never gone back,” he said. “So, when I was invited to come to the Public Square, for various reasons I said I wasn’t going to do it.”

Other no-shows included Don Harper from District 1, Ben Chapman and Loren Gameros in District 2 and Hengameh Abraham and Jeffrey Harlan in District 6.

Those who attended shared introductory remarks before diving into a round-robin-style Q&A discussion covering a breadth of civic issues, including city finances, homelessness and crime, among others.

Moderator David Snyder asked candidates how they’d help Costa Mesa recover from sales tax revenue losses sustained as more customers shop online — Leece recommended the city might

look to bolster revenue from tourism and conferences, while Genis said she was for more belt-tightening and smart accounting to realize more savings.

Pullen suggested the city might look at passage of a ballot measure that would allow for retail marijuana sales and delivery as a new revenue source, and also ponder bringing new attractions and family fun centers to town.

Asked how they would address homelessness, Parkin, a veteran, said it was crucial to get tougher with policing when crimes were committed but to also help individuals seek drug treatment and mental health counseling to address the underlying causes of homelessness.

Ramos said homelessness was a problem the city chooses to have by not doing enough to take advantage of agencies that already exist, while Komala said a one-size-fits-all approach would not work. “Everybody is an individual and has individual challenges,” he said. “We need to connect with them first, then we need to provide the resources.”

Candidates largely supported Measure Y — a 2016 growth-control initiative requiring voter approval of projects exceeding certain zoning and impact thresholds. Leece, who gathered signatures to place Y on the ballot, said it was important for residents to weigh in on developments that could affect city services and infrastructure.

But when it came to

positing how the city might meet a projected Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) from the state calling on officials to zone for 11,727 residential units, opinions varied.

Pullen said he was torn between the obvious need for more housing options in the city and the potential negative impacts the project may have on traffic. Pettis suggested Costa Mesa challenge the “ridiculously unattainable” allocation.

“If we got together with Newport, Huntington, Santa Ana as a group and said, ‘Hey listen, guys, this is not going to happen’ — there would be power in numbers in rebutting that,” he said.

Genis agreed, saying if other cities got their allocations cut, a surplus might go to Costa Mesa.

“We need to save our R-1 neighborhoods,” she said. “There’s stuff coming out of Sacramento constantly, and it seems like our council majority is only too willing to bend to that.”

Mercurio said the response to last week’s event was so positive, “Costa Mesa Public Square” is planning a second council forum on Oct. 14 at 6:30 p.m.

Another, for utility candidates running for Mesa Water District, Costa Mesa Sanitary District and Municipal Water District of Orange County is scheduled for Oct. 13 at 6:30 p.m.

sara.cardine@latimes.com  
Twitter: @SaraCardine



RETURN

Continued from page A1

Nash Downing, 6, who wore a shark mask, waved back through the gate.

Culminating months of planning and conversations about safety, readiness and the implementation of coronavirus precautions, Newport-Mesa Unified School District elementary schools on Tuesday welcomed 3,500 students in transitional kindergarten through second grade back to the classroom in half-day sessions.

Many Newport-Mesa parents and teachers have expressed fears about children and staff returning to campuses during a pandemic.

And, while Orange County has recently experienced a lull in new cases and deaths, a recent spike this week has caused state officials to hold off on loosening restrictions further.

Orange County Health Care Agency officials reported Tuesday 109 new cases and 33 deaths, the highest daily death rate reported, amounting to 53,557 cases and 1,249 fatalities.

Still, for Mariners Elementary mom Alicia Downing — Nash and Emery's mom — the decision to return was an easy one.

"It was really hard, at their age, to focus online for long periods of time," Downing said of the rigors and isolation of distance learning. "Bringing them back, having other kids and having a teacher that knows what she's doing really made us decide to bring them in for in-person [classes]."

According to initial reports from the district, the transition to in-person learning seemed to go smoothly and without incident across 22 elementary campuses.

But members of the Newport-Mesa Federation of Teachers, still negotiating with the district over how hybrid in-person learning will operate, maintain it's unsafe to reopen schools when so much remains to be worked out.

On Sept. 23, the union issued a cease and desist letter to the district calling for the halt of its "unilateral implementation of new instructional models" and claiming leaders engaged in an unfair labor practice when they predetermined three elementary school teacher preparation days without an agreement.

"The district's failure to provide NMFT with sufficient notice on these decisions has deprived us of any meaningful opportunity to negotiate for the safety and the well-being of our unit members," the letter read. "We demand that he district provide the requested information and maintain the status quo on instructional schedules until we have reached an agreement."

NMFT President Tamara Fairbanks said Monday the organization had filed for an injunction through the California Public Employment Relations Board to halt the reopening. A ruling in the teachers' favor could potentially result in the district's having to re-close campuses.

"It's concerning our district would ignore the negotiations process and start anyway," Fairbanks said. "Our goal is to delay the school reopening until everything is in place."

NMUSD spokeswoman Annette Franco said earlier this week she could not comment on matters regarding the union, but indicated negotiations were ongoing. On Tuesday, she de-



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

**PARENTS WALK** their children to Rea Elementary School in Costa Mesa on Tuesday morning as the campus reopened for in-person instruction.



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

**OLIVIA BYER**, left, 5, hugs her brother, Nolan, 2, as their mom, Meredith, looks on during the first day of in-person learning at Mariners Elementary School on Tuesday.

scribed the reopening plan as even more cautious than what state guidelines are allowing.

The district will take a staggered approach to returning some 17,500 students to schools in Costa Mesa and Newport Beach one full week after Orange County got the green light to reopen TK-12 schools on a modified basis.

Tuesday saw the return of lower grade classes with smaller student groups split into morning and afternoon cohorts, as well as special education students districtwide. Third- through sixth-grade students are anticipated to return Thursday, with middle and high school students coming back Oct. 12.

About 2,000 students

enrolled in a 100% virtual Cloud Campus will stay there through the school year.

Sabrina Ericastilla, a second-grade teacher at Harbor View Elementary School, said the first day back was a success. With the precautions in place, students did better than expected.

"We were all a little nervous about little kids not being able to pull it off, but it was fine," Ericastilla said. "They wore their masks. They kept their distance. And they were so happy. They were so pleased to kind of be back of some form of getting close to normalcy."

Reopening is also a lifeline for parents like Mariners Elementary mom Katie Holst, who waited to pick up her 5-year-old son, Emerson, from his kindergarten class Tuesday.

"I work full time, so trying to work full time, take care of my other two kids and do Zoom four times a day sometimes was near impossible," she said. "My work productivity was suffering a little bit and just trying to manage it all was nearly impossible to do it all."

To help families prepare for the new rules of on-campus learning during a pandemic, school principals have been busy holding meetings and answering questions from parents and staff.

"There's been an incredible amount of preparing and communicating to teachers, students and parents — it's been busy," said Duane Cox, principal of Rea Elementary School in Costa Mesa. "I'm just thrilled for my students to be back."

On Tuesday morning, Rea Elementary mom Karla

Mora grabbed cellphone pictures of her 4-year-old son, Kayden, outside before securing his face mask and walking him to the transitional kindergarten entry gate.

"I'm very happy but a little nostalgic — he's never been away from me," Mora said in Spanish translated by Franco. "It's a big step for him. He was very happy to come to school, even though he seemed a little anxious to be away from me."

While she understood parents' concerns about reopening, Mora said she trusted her school's readiness.

"I'm at ease, because I think this is the best they can do," she said. "I'm very hopeful all will work out well."

dailypilot@latimes.com  
Twitter: @TheDailyPilot



SPOKEN FROM THE HEART.

Kind words go a long way. As Atria employees work harder than ever to help the people we serve experience peace of mind, residents and families are reaching out to share their appreciation.

Thank you, Team Atria, for every thoughtful, heroic, caring, above-and-beyond thing you do, every day, to inspire such heartfelt gratitude.

Learn more about how Atria is helping residents stay safe, connected and engaged during the COVID-19 pandemic at **AtriaSafeTogether.com**.

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Schedule a virtual tour at **AtriaSeniorLiving.com/OrangeCounty**.

NEWPORT BEACH - Coming Soon | LAGUNA NIGUEL  
MISSION VIEJO | SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO | IRVINE



\*Residency agreement and terms apply. Valid for new residents who sign a lease by November 30, 2020. See Community Sales Director for complete details. Offer expires November 30, 2020.

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS

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5	6	7	9	1	4	3	2	8
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# Tyler Padua of Huntington Beach High commits to UC Irvine for men's water polo

BY MATT SZABO

Tyler Padua is aware of the talent that the Huntington Beach High boys' water polo team brings back this year, after an appearance in the CIF Southern Section Division 1 semifinals last year.

Padua's backhand goal gave the Oilers a one-goal lead over eventual champion Studio City Harvard-Westlake late in the third quarter of that semifinal match. They weren't able to hold the lead in a 10-7 loss, and they also lost to the Wolverines in the semifinals of the CIF State Southern California Regional Division I playoffs. Still, they served notice that they were a team on the rise.

"This year, it's all out for us," Padua said. "We really want that title. When was the last time you saw a public school win the Division I championship?"

The answer is El Toro in 2009, when Padua, now a senior center for the Oilers, was just 6 years old.

Regardless of a possible



Courtesy of Tyler Padua

**HUNTINGTON BEACH** High School senior Tyler Padua is staying close to home, and will play college water polo at UC Irvine.

big finish to his high school career, Padua recently also made plans for his future. He has verbally committed to play men's water polo at UC Irvine, he said Tuesday. Padua becomes the second player from the Oilers' class of 2021 to commit, joining left-hander Ethan Crooks (UCLA).

Padua said he chose UC Irvine over Air Force and Loyola Marymount University.

"With the whole global pandemic going on, I really wanted to stay kind of close to home," he said. "The water polo program there is phenomenal, too. Also, their business school is

great, which I plan on attending. Everything about that school, I just love."

The Anteaters, coached by Marc Hunt, have other local talent on their roster. Huntington Beach graduate Jacob Pyle is a freshman goalkeeper for UCI, while Newport Harbor alumnus Jake Liechty is a sophomore attacker.

Padua, who is young for his grade as he just turned 17 in August, hopes to help Huntington Beach earn a ring this year. Coach Sasa Branislavjevic's Oilers will have to replace Pyle in goal, but they return other top talent if the season starts in December as scheduled.

Attacker Chase Dodd and defenders Ryan Elkhouri and Graham Cope are other top rising seniors for Huntington Beach, which has made one CIF final in program history, in 2016.

"The expectation level this year is very high," Padua said. "Last year, I think the bar was at 100%, we needed to leave everything out there. This year, I think honestly we've raised the bar from that. Now we're at 110% ... Sasa is just a phenomenal coach, and I think we really have a good shot this year."

matthew.szabo@latimes.com  
Twitter: @mjszabo



Photos by Allen J. Schaben | Los Angeles Times

**A SHOPPER** pushes a stroller past a store in South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa on Monday. If the county moved into the state's next reopening tier, shopping centers like South Coast would have been able to open at full capacity, but would have had to close common areas and limit capacity at food courts.

## TIER

Continued from page A1

tween one and 3.9 cases and its testing positivity rate between 2% and 4.9% for two consecutive weeks.

The county was first placed in the "substantial transmission" tier on Sept. 8.

Counties are required to stay within their tier for a minimum of three weeks before moving into the next.

"We did have a few days of uptick in numbers. Small, but significant to affect our tier system and those numbers, we believe, is the effect of the Labor Day weekend," Chau said.

"We did have a couple days of high numbers for the week of Sept. 13 to 19, and that's what kept our numbers to be in the red tier this week."

Moving into the next tier would have meant that shopping centers like South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa and Fashion Island in Newport Beach could reopen at full capacity, though it would have had to close all common areas and reduce capacity at food courts.

Places of worship, movie theaters and restaurants could have been open for indoor operations at 50% capacity or 200 people,

whichever number was fewer.

Museums, zoos and aquariums could have been open for indoor at 50% capacity and gyms and fitness centers, including those at hotels, would be able to open at 25% capacity.

It would have also meant that wineries would be able to reopen indoors at 25% capacity or 100 people, whichever number was fewer, and bars, breweries and distilleries where food is not served would be able to reopen outdoors. They are currently unable to operate.

Just a day after reporting no deaths, the county agency also reported a new high of 33 deaths on Tuesday, reaching a total of 1,249 COVID-19 deaths in Orange County. Another 109 cases were also reported. The total number of cases are 53,557.

This does not include positive antigen cases, which is 1,465.

The county agency also reported that 162 cases are currently hospitalized and 46 are in intensive care units.

It estimates about 48,146 cases have recovered.

Here are the latest cumulative coronavirus case counts and COVID-19 deaths for select cities in Orange County:

• Santa Ana: 10,329

cases; 277 deaths  
• Anaheim: 9,172 cases; 269 deaths

• Huntington Beach: 2,401 cases; 71 deaths

• Costa Mesa: 1,808 cases; 31 deaths

• Irvine: 1,683 cases; 13 deaths

• Newport Beach: 1,127 cases; 25 deaths

• Fountain Valley: 509 cases; 17 deaths

• Laguna Beach: 225 cases; fewer than five deaths

Here are the case counts by age group, followed by deaths:

• 0 to 17: 3,800 cases; one death

• 18 to 24: 8,070 cases; four deaths

• 25 to 34: 11,543 cases; 18 deaths

• 35 to 44: 8,555 cases; 36 deaths

• 45 to 54: 8,638 cases; 107 deaths

• 55 to 64: 6,420 cases; 176 deaths

• 65 to 74: 3,215 cases; 255 deaths

• 75 to 84: 1,820 cases; 264 deaths

• 85 and older: 1,446 cases; 388 deaths

Updated figures are posted daily at [occovid19.ocaliforniahealthinfo.org/coronavirus-in-oc](https://occovid19.ocaliforniahealthinfo.org/coronavirus-in-oc). For information on getting tested, visit [occovid19.ocaliforniahealthinfo.org/covid-19-testing](https://occovid19.ocaliforniahealthinfo.org/covid-19-testing).

lilly.nguyen@latimes.com  
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## DUFFY

Continued from page A1

versity in Massachusetts, is all about the discussions. She said she values the community she has created, especially during the pandemic. As she pointed out, being an entrepreneur can be lonely at times.

While the word "pivot" has been perhaps overused during the pandemic, Duffy just smiles when it's brought up. She doesn't mind the word, but she sees it as the last step in a four-step process.

"We just need to first pause, reprioritize what we're doing, prune and then pivot," she said. "We can't jump to pivoting until we know why. I had to do that, times 20 for every client, for my own businesses. It was constant working, trying to make sure that everything was staying afloat."

"I don't remember who said it, but what's really stuck with me for this whole experience is that everyone's freaking out about the life they used to have. But what if you didn't even want it? How do you get to reinvent whatever you want to be or be doing? It's a great excuse right now to throw everything out the window that didn't suit you before."

Duffy's approach seems to be working for her clients. One of them is Nancy Eaton, a Newport Beach resident who is a Marie Kondo organizational consultant. The coronavirus also changed that occupation in March, since Eaton wasn't comfortable going into people's homes after that. But Duffy has been working with her on other aspects of her Inspired Living business, like marketing and photos.

"The world's your oyster, as far as Kara is concerned," Eaton said. "Anything you want to do, whatever you're passionate about, we make it happen."

"It's great ... [the coronavirus] wasn't like a problem. It was more of an opportunity, to take advantage of the things that you need to get done or new markets or ways of doing your business. I know a lot of her clients from being online in Zoom calls with a lot of them, and everybody's just pumped and ready to go. Nobody's sitting around going, 'Oh my God, I'm dying.'"

Duffy's message during COVID-19 is one of perseverance and community. She said she has another business she's planning to launch soon, though she declined to give details.

**"I just said, 'I can't be the owner of Powerful Ladies and I can't run a business called Powerful Ladies if we're not going to be powerful about every situation that's happening,'"**  
**— Kara Duffy**

"Who can you be around that's going to help you get to that next step, keep you motivated, keep you inspired?" she said. "If you're left to your own devices, it's so easy to give up way earlier than you need to. So often, the thing you need, the one thing that's missing, somebody has it. They say that one person's trash is another person's treasure. One person's breakdown is somebody else's obvious answer and solution."

matthew.szabo@latimes.com  
Twitter: @mjszabo