

For nearly 20 years, the Chakra Shack in Laguna Beach has served a community of locals who find themselves on a spiritual journey. On Wednesday, the shop celebrated the summer solstice.

A beacon for spiritual seekers

BY SARA CARDINE

If you're looking for Laguna Beach's Chakra Shack, a spiritual shop offering crystals, candles and meditative aids along with energy readings, clearings and aura photography, you could consult a map — or, better still, your own intuition.

For nearly 20 years, locals have been finding their way into the small shop owned by Jill Templin, a Laguna Beach resident with a penchant for the metaphysical.

Now in its third location in town, a storefront on South Coast Highway, the business has a way of attracting people on spiritual journeys who are looking for a sense of community.

"It's just such a love fest here, and I think everyone who comes in here feels that," Templin said of her humanity-focused business model. "They just feel it, I don't know how to explain it."

Templin on Wednesday rolled out the astral carpet, inviting Chakra Shack devotees, local residents and even passing tourists on summer vacation to participate in a summer solstice celebration.

Sunflower and butterfly decorations adorned the lively space, as artist and assistant manager Slade Finn played songs to a packed house. Area intuitives offered free readings on an outdoor patio with games ahead of a free sound bath, in which participants are bathed in sound waves and guided into a deep



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

TERRY GREGOR leads a sound bath ceremony during a summer solstice celebration at Chakra Shack.

meditative state.

The Chakra Shack started celebrating summer and winter solstice — the periods in which the sun is in its highest and lowest positions, respectively, in the sky — as a way of opening its doors even wider to the local community.

Employee Cyrena Guyot explains how summer ceremonies


deal with new life, activity and abundance, while winter rites focus on slowing down and moving inward. Both events attract a wide audience of attendees.

"It's a great community bonding activity, so many people come and connect with each other," she said. "It's a great opportunity to tap into yourself

spiritually as well."

Attending Wednesday's ceremony was Daniel Newberry, a personal trainer who recently moved to Laguna Beach from England after visiting the city during a trip last April and feeling a strange sense of belonging there. New to the area, he just

See **Beacon**, page A10



UCI Health

Choosing **UCI Health** for cancer care gave us mom back.

Visit ucihealth.org/cancer or call 714-500-7891 to schedule a next-day consultation.

Models used for illustrative purposes.



Photos by Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

AVA TANG, 11, presents her elevator pitch pamphlet to Gina Guerrucci, the lead educator with Smart Ups, a four-week summer program with Girls Inc., on Tuesday, June 20 at Santa Ana College.

Girls Inc. of O.C. helps girls boss up in a safe space

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Celeste Nunez-Jurado is only in third grade but she is already a budding entrepreneur.

"I really love business and everything about it," said Nunez-Jurado. "I have a podcast that relates to all things business."

Her interest in enterprise makes her an ideal candidate for Girls Inc. of Orange County's Smart Ups, a program designed for future CEOs.

"It is a program that teaches girls about entrepreneurship, and we take the approach about first teaching them about leadership and understanding that



PRIYA PAI, 8, smiles after presenting her elevator pitch at Smart Ups.

See **Boss**, page A2

Grand jury report looks at sex trade in Orange County

"Trauma-informed" approach improved support for survivors, but more funding is needed, report says.

BY ERIC LICAS

Law enforcement and groups who aid survivors of human sex trafficking made progress over the past decade by working to-

had been trafficked in Orange County. About 10% were labor trafficking victims, 88% were sex trafficking victims and 2% were both.

"Orange County is a high-demand area for sex trafficking due to its large population, affluence, thriving tourism, and convention industries," the grand jury wrote. "These conditions make Orange County fertile grounds for human sex traf-



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

A TILE MESSAGE. "Love & hope," adorning one of Waymakers' youth shelters, which provides support for sex trafficking victims.

gether and adopting a "trauma-informed" approach, but the network of support to help trafficked women, men and children rebuild their lives in Orange County needs more funding and development.

That's according to a report published by the Orange County Grand Jury Tuesday. It noted that between 2019 and 2020 just two nonprofit groups, Waymakers and the Salvation Army, helped 357 people who

ficking." Authorities used to tackle the issue by simply punishing both traffickers and the people they have coerced into the sex trade for breaking the law, according to the report. But a shift took place after the formation of the Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force in 2004, a multiagency organization that works closely with groups like

See **Report**, page A4



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

CARS ROLL DOWN South Coast Highway in Laguna Beach on Feb. 6. Officials have finalized the city's parking and transportation demand management report.

Laguna Beach weighs parking, traffic issues

BY ANDREW TURNER

Laguna Beach city officials introduced a long list of traffic mitigation measures recently in hopes that they will have a positive impact on overall mobility through town and quality of life for residents.

The City Council at its June 13 meeting accepted the parking and transportation demand management report, which detailed various avenues the city plans to explore to alleviate the congestion caused by heavy traffic.

In January 2022, Mayor Bob Whalen and Mayor Pro Tem Sue Kempf were appointed to serve on the ad hoc parking master plan subcommittee. The final report offered up 20 short-term actions to be taken, most of which should be completed by the end of 2026, according

to target dates provided in the report.

Priority measures include expanding available parking through partnerships with private lots, exploring seasonal valet parking in some city lots, and posting signage that will lead drivers to available parking.

The city also plans to employ dynamic pricing for parking based on demand, with the idea of funneling more visitors to the peripheral lots, then encouraging them to use the city's free transit service to travel to their destination.

The council appropriated \$130,000 from the parking fund to implement the short-term transportation demand management strategies.

City officials also proposed the city's parking

See *Issues*, page A4

No O.C. beaches included on Heal the Bay honor roll

One beach was on the environmental group's 'Beach Bummers' list for poor water quality.

BY LILLY NGUYEN

A sustained rainy season this year resulted in poorer water quality at local beaches, though officials at Heal the Bay say Orange County is far from the only part of the West Coast impacted by the winter and spring storms.

The Santa Monica-based environmentalist group earlier this month released its 2022-23 "Beach Report Card" report, which looks at roughly 500-plus beaches from Washington state to Tijuana and evaluates water quality on an A to F grade scale. Those grades are based on levels of fecal-indicator bacterial pollution in the ocean, which is not harmful to humans but an indicator of more dangerous bacteria.

And while from past reports it seemed that state and county beaches were on track for high marks this summer, the rainy season forced all but two beaches off of the group's honor roll.

In previous years at least 15 different Orange County beaches were included on the list, which tracks beaches that score perfect water quality all year, but this year that list only includes Point Loma near the lighthouse in San Diego and Bean Hollow State Beach in San Mateo.



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

TREASURE ISLAND COVE at the Montage Laguna Beach recently received high marks in the 2023 Heal the Bay Beach Report Card but was not included on its latest honor roll list, a trend for many state and county beaches brought on by rains earlier this year.

"More rain typically means that increased amounts of pollutants, including bacteria, are flushed through storm drains and rivers into the ocean. Sewage spills pose increased health risks and trigger immediate beach closures, which should be heeded until public officials clear the area," the group said in a statement. "Last year an astounding 45 million gallons of sewage were spilled and made their way to California beaches."

Poche Beach, which is on the border of San

Clemente and Dana Point, ranked as ninth on the "Beach Bummers" list, which conversely lists the most polluted beaches evaluated, with those at the top considered to have the most significant water quality issues.


Polluted runoff from a storm drain flows directly onto Poche Beach, according to the report, and although the county attempts to mitigate the issue, equipment used to clean runoff from the drain was not running at full capacity last summer. The authors of the report

wrote "... it may be time for Orange County to reassess its water quality improvement strategy for this beach since it is no stranger to the Beach Bummers list."

Not being included on the organization's honor roll does not necessarily mean that O.C. beaches are in poor shape as the summer season gets underway.

Countywide, 98% of local beaches received A or B grades for last summer. Wet weather grades were

See *Beaches*, page A10



UCI Health

Choosing UCI Health for cancer care gave us mom back.

Visit ucihealth.org/cancer or call 714-500-7891 to schedule a next-day consultation.

Models used for illustrative purposes.

BOSS

Continued from page A1

entrepreneurship is just one way to select a career," said Lucy Santana, chief executive officer at Girls Inc. of Orange County. "We want to get them to start thinking early on about jobs and how to become self-sufficient young women."

Girls Inc. of Orange County's mission is to inspire all girls to be strong, smart and bold. The organization achieves that by offering research-based programs for girls ages 5 to 18, SmartUps among them.

SmartUps is a four-week summer program that teaches girls in the third through sixth grades how to create a business plan. The girls learn introductory and advanced principles of business, take field trips to local businesses, hear from guest speakers and eventually participate in a business showcase and pitch event similar to "Shark Tank." The girls present their businesses to investors, vying for "capital" to start their business.

Nunez-Jurado was among 45 business savvy girls who gathered in small groups at Santa Ana College



VALENTINA JIMENEZ, 10, presents her elevator pitch during a summer program with Girls Inc. called SmartUps.

on Tuesday to prepare for their upcoming presentations on June 29. On this day, the group is learning what makes a good "elevator pitch." Nunez-Jurado and Ava Tang, a sixth-grader who has participated in the SmartUps program for three years, work together on a pet food concept.

"We have a business called Puppy Proteins and we are trying to help puppies and dogs in general, so when they want to eat human food they can," said Nunez-Jurado, "But it is healthy for them, and it

not like real human food, that way they can have that experience and they can eat what their human eats and they can all feel good."

The girls are building a website, designing a logo and working on a prototype, but Ava points out they aren't just learning how to start a business.

"We are also learning about leadership," said Tang. "But it is not only that; it is about having kindness, having fun and listening to other people's ideas."

"I think it is also a program that really teaches about self-confidence," said Santana.

The business ideas from the other girls range from restaurant concepts to therapy. One girl sketches a milkshake complete with a whipped top and cherry in her notebook. Another group of girls talks excitedly around their desks. The connection with other like-minded girls is something Tang missed in her other SmartUps summers during the pandemic.

"It was during COVID in the previous years and we couldn't really connect with other girls," said Tang. "But



Photos by Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

CELESTE NUNEZ-JURADO, 11, left, talks with Yurianna Mendez, 7, at Smart Ups, a summer entrepreneur program put on by Girls Inc. that teaches girls how to create a business plan.

it was still fun."

The environment is one that is energetic and comfortable, with no one left out. Nunez-Jurado and Tang offer words of encouragement and compliment each other's contributions to the conversation.

"They get to be in a space where as girls, as women, they can support each other," said Santana.

It is a space that feels safe to the girls, and they recognize it.

"You are around girls, you are around the same gender and you feel comfortable," said Tang. "I feel like with boys you feel like you are going to get bullied a little. But with girls, you know you got to help a girl out."

"I definitely agree with Ava," said Nunez-Jurado. "With girls, you can really connect with one another."

"Girl boss" is a term often heard in entrepreneurship, and while it evokes feelings of empowerment, the gendering in the phrase singles out females in the business

world. Why not just "boss"? Smart Ups challenges such messaging in its own way, Santana said, by shaping young girls who may be negatively noted as "bossy" into leaders.

"Rather than shutting them down, it is about redirecting," said Santana. "It is always an opportunity to learn."

The program also takes the girls outside the classroom into local businesses both big and small, like a visit to BJ's corporate offices in Santa Ana and a restaurant in downtown Santa Ana, La Perla.

Mostly, said Santana, she wants the girls to start giving some thought to what their career paths might be in the future.

"If a girl has never had a conversation with anybody in their family about what their aspirations are, this is an opportunity for them to start thinking, 'What kind of career do I want? What jobs might I pursue?'" Santana said.

For now the girls are focused on their upcoming presentations. Speaking from experience, Ava said she feels good but admits the presentation part can be daunting.

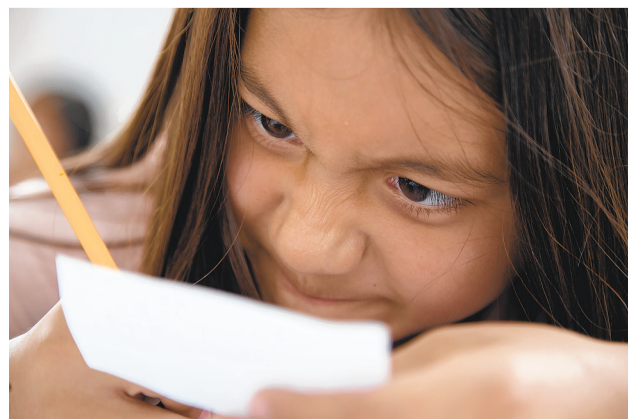
"I am feeling pretty good because this is my fourth year," said Tang. "But it is nerve-racking because this is a different business with different people."

Tang said their website and logo are good to go but they are still developing the Puppy Proteins prototype. Still, she feels confident the team will be ready for the business showcase on June 29.

"Thank God, it's not this Thursday," Tang said to Nunez-Jurado.

"That would be a lot," Nunez-Jurado agrees. "I feel like we still have a lot to do but I am feeling really confident that we will be able to do it."

sarah.mosqueda
@latimes.com
Twitter: @SarahNMos



JAZLYN RAMIREZ, 9, focuses on writing her proposal for an elevator pitch during a summer program with Girls Inc.

UCI Health

Choosing UCI Health for cancer care gave us mom back.

There's no greater feeling than knowing you've chosen the best place to help you beat cancer. At UCI Health, we treat more patients with cancer and more complex cases than any other hospital in the region. And with **world-class comprehensive cancer care** within your reach, the words "cancer-free" are even closer.



Visit ucihealth.org/cancer or call 714-500-7891 to schedule a next-day consultation.

Models used for illustrative purposes.

A harrowing tale of survival and success

At 15 years old, Tanya Tra was shot trying to escape Vietnam. Now she owns properties and restaurants throughout Orange County.

BY DAVID HANSEN

When she fled Vietnam as a young girl, running across a beach in the middle of the night and jumping into a small boat, she did not feel the bullet at first.

Her adrenaline was pumping and shouts of “stop” echoed from armed Communist police.

She did not stop. When she landed in the boat she tried to lie down flat, wanting to make room for the others. It was then she realized she could not move her leg.

Nearly 40 years later, Tanya Tra remembers the details as if they happened yesterday. Her dramatic history is what forged her determination, arriving in the United States with nothing yet slowly building a business portfolio of real estate and restaurants.

Today, she owns the Wharf restaurants in Laguna Beach and Garden Grove, along with the highly rated Wild Crab in Garden Grove. She also owns residential properties throughout Orange County and North Carolina.

But when she tells her story, she's not convinced it's that special.

“I don't know if this is a story,” she said, reluctant to put herself first. She agrees to retell the compelling events of her life if only to help others.

“I want to tell all the young kids out there, never, never, give up,” she said. “A lot of people told me, ‘No, don't do it; there's no way you can make it happen.’ But somehow I make it happen.”

It didn't happen the easy way.

In 1975, after Communists took over South Vietnam, Tra and her family lost everything. She had 12 sisters and brothers, many were in prison after trying to escape. By age 9, she was selling used goods on street corners to help put food on the table.

“We barely had anything to eat,” she said. “We tried so many times to leave. But we got caught all the time.”

“For me, I was in prison at least eight times, at least, but because I was very young — I was only about 9 or 10 — so they only keep me for sometimes two weeks, sometimes a month or two. But all my brothers and sisters would be in prison for three or four years.”

Even with the arrests, her father kept trying to get the family out of Vietnam. By the time she was 16 years old, after years of failed attempts, her dad finally got her and a brother to Cambodia on that fated beach.

“We could see the beach, but we have to hide in the forest until we see the signal from the boat,” she said. “It was late at night. So



David Hansen

TANYA TRA, who was shot while fleeing Vietnam nearly 40 years ago, has found success in Orange County. She owns the Wharf restaurants in Laguna Beach and Garden Grove as well as the Wild Crab in Garden Grove.

the boat gave the signal and it was time to go, and then we ran.”

Despite the chaos and bullets, Tra, her brother and two other families made it on the boat. She was the only one who got shot.

“I was in and out of consciousness. Honestly, I don't know much about what happened after that. My brother told me, and everyone thinks, there's no way I could survive because I lose a lot of blood.”

The Royal Thai Navy picked them up and took her to the hospital. Her right thigh bone was shattered. She had five operations.

“I stay in the hospital for about six months,” she said. “I couldn't speak Thai, I couldn't even speak English. I'm there by myself. But the Thai people were very nice. They know I have no family. I have no idea where my brother is.”

Vulnerable and alone, Tra said she was relieved when a Vietnamese woman started visiting her in the hospital, mysteriously.

'SOMETHING DIDN'T FEEL RIGHT'

“A beautiful Vietnamese woman came in and she wanted me to run away with her. Then one night she came in with two guys and say, ‘Let me help you, let me take you.’”

The men started to lift Tra out of her hospital bed.

“Something didn't feel right, so I yell out loud, and all the nurses and everybody came and rescued me,” she said. “If I listened to her, who knows what would have happened to me? In Thailand, they have houses for young girls, and I could become like one of those.”

Tra finally left the hospital and was reunited with her brother and some family. She applied for immigration to the United States and eventually made it to Long Beach, where two older sisters were waiting.

She went to school, a junior high in Long Beach, a high school in Orange, some college classes in Pomona. Along the way, she met a young man. They bought a house and had two daughters.

But the climb into a more stable, suburban life did not give Tra a complete sense of peace. She was restless, knowing deep down that she needed to take more control of her destiny. So she resorted to the only thing she really knew how to do: sell.

“I went door-to-door selling videotape, Spanish movies,” she said, smiling. “I was 22. It was hard. But I enjoyed doing business and wanted to have my own schedule so I could take care of my daughters.”

She hustled the videotapes, graduated to selling the tapes to larger discount stores, and even hawked Pokémon cards on the side.

After two years, she was finally able to cobble enough money together, along with some family help, to buy one of the small discount stores that she had been doing business with.

She started making other investments. Her model: Save as much as possible, get a loan, buy something promising, work hard, then sell it for a profit.

For the most part, the model has worked. There have been challenges along the way — a divorce, COVID-19, some family tension. But given her background, Tra has learned not to wilt under pressure.

“When I believe something, I will just go out there and do it,” she said.

With her restaurants, she honors her Thailand saviors by offering several Thai dishes, along with Asian fusion and Cajun.

“This concept is the concept that I think I can do. One thing I've learned in the restaurant business is if you don't know about the thing that you're doing, then you will suffer.”

Suffering and survival are in Tra's DNA and yet she is still quick to smile. Often, she can be

seen at her restaurants sitting next to regular customers and catching up on their lives.

Laguna Beach business owner Heidi Miller is a regular at the Wharf and marvels at Tra's background but is more impressed by how Tra handles it now.

“She's a complete American Dream story with a bullet in her leg,” Miller said. “But she doesn't let that define her. A lot of people let their hardships define them. She's the opposite.”

Miller said Tra has an infectious, warm personality that is not often seen.

“She's got a quiet strength, and I think it's a result of that fierce, fierce, fierce determination,” she said. “When you're a good person like she is, people gravitate toward her and want to support her. She's doing a fabulous job.”

Tra admits that her past life will continue to shape her future, so she tries to make the best of it, knowing things can always be worse.

“My whole family was on the blacklist,” she said. “We lost everything. But everyone has a story. Every day we need to figure out how to survive.”

DAVID HANSEN is editor of Under Laguna in Laguna Beach. He can be reached at david@underlaguna.com.

ISSUES

Continued from page A2

permit programs be refined. The report advised that some permit programs have been around for a decade or more without a substantive change in their purchase price.

“I think increasing the fees on the parking permits after leaving them too low for decades makes sense,” Whalen said. “It is open to all employees and employers.”

Employee parking permits have cost \$300 for the year since 2008. The new

rate will be \$40 per month for the standard pass, while a premier permit will cost \$80 per month. The city will put 500 total employee permits (300 standard and 200 premier) into circulation. Parking passes for Alice Court and Hagan Place will each be priced at \$100 per month.

The shopper permit will remain \$80 every two years, a rate that has been in place since 2006. Permits for 24-hour residential access, nonresident seniors and military veterans or families living outside of town whose children attend the Laguna

Beach Unified School District will be \$200 annually.

Councilman Mark Orgill commented that some of the proposed rates might fall short of keeping up with inflation.

“I think we were trying to balance 20 years of no increases versus the sticker shock of catching up all at once,” said Director of Transit and Community Services Michael Litschi.

Other ideas presented included the possibility of a residential parking program aimed at addressing employee and visitor parking in the neighborhoods. The city could also look at

offering a parking validation system for downtown restaurants and shops that would provide free parking in peripheral lots.

The council directed staff to pursue some infrastructure projects to add to the city's parking stock, including the addition of a partial parking deck at the Glenneyre parking structure (Lot 6) that could add 37 spaces. The city would also like to negotiate a long-term lease of the top level of the Mission Hospital parking garage.

The panel also opted to move forward with next

steps regarding preliminary design of a potential three-level parking structure at the Village Entrance at 635 Laguna Canyon Road, which could yield 200 spaces near the downtown and the festivals.

Kempf reasoned that fragmented parking lots lead to cars circulating to find a space.

“One of the reasons that I favor building parking behind City Hall back here is not because I favor a bunch of parking structures but because we have all this valuable space right

here adjacent to City Hall, and it's grossly underutilized,” Kempf said. “For me, when I look at that, other than the Village Entrance, like the landscaping ... [done] along the roadway, the interior of all that, that's a lot of surface space, and we are space confined here. ... My thinking is to get an estimate for what it would take to build back there to see if we can just create some more room.”

andrew.turner@latimes.com
Twitter: @AndrewTurnerTCN

REPORT

Continued from page A1

Waymakers.

“Providing a trauma-informed response means that along with survivors taking the lead, I as a service provider am well aware that it is very likely that the victim I am providing services to comes with a history of trauma, abuse as well as being a part of imbalanced relationships, relationships where they were likely exploited or harmed in some way or another often by no fault of their own,” said Michelle Heater, Waymakers' director of victim assistance programs, during an interview Thursday.

Building partnerships with a diverse collection of groups focused on the same goal helped local law enforcement shift to a po-

sition that viewed those being sold for sex as victims of crimes. Working together with nonprofits also made it easier to connect people with resources to help them find shelter, work and other forms of support in order to hopefully find a fresh start.

The changes agencies have made over the past decade have had measurable results, Heater said. Their records show that more survivors who connect with aid programs commit to them for longer periods of time, instead of returning to the people who abused them.

However, leaving the sex trade means survivors often have to rebuild their lives from scratch, which often involves figuring out how to obtain shelter, employment and other necessities in what may be an entirely new environment.

Meanwhile, funding for programs to help them start over are spread thin and aren't compulsory. Those may largely be the reasons why the majority of trafficked adults who are referred to groups like Waymakers still return to their prior lifestyle.

The matter is complicated by the fact that many support programs will not readmit survivors who have dropped out, Heater said. That means that some of those who are at the greatest risk of being victimized may have the greatest difficulty in getting help.

“The issues faced by the people who become victims of this crime are incredibly complex, and they come with complex histories,” Heater said. “And therefore, the ways in which we are able to effectively engage survivors of

human trafficking and child sexual exploitation in programming that could potentially help them along their healing journey go from a place of being in crisis to a place of stability and, hopefully thriving in the future, is incredibly difficult.”

The grand jury's report also noted that there was room for organizations to improve the way they monitor the long-term progress of survivors, and recommended the creation of a shared database for support agencies. They also acknowledged that more attention needs to be paid to those who purchase sex, noting that current laws typically result in a “slap on the wrist” for patrons of human trafficking.

eric.licas@latimes.com
Twitter: @EricLicas

Daily Pilot

A Times Community News publication.

CONTACT US

Carol Cormaci
Executive Editor
carol.cormaci@latimes.com

Beth Raff
Advertising Manager
(424) 225-9928
beth.raff@latimes.com

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

Reporters:
Sara Cardine, Costa Mesa
sara.cardine@latimes.com

Lilly Nguyen,
Newport Beach
lilly.nguyen@latimes.com

Matt Szabo, Huntington
Beach and Sports
matthew.szabo@latimes.com

Andrew Turner, Laguna
Beach and Sports
andrew.turner@latimes.com

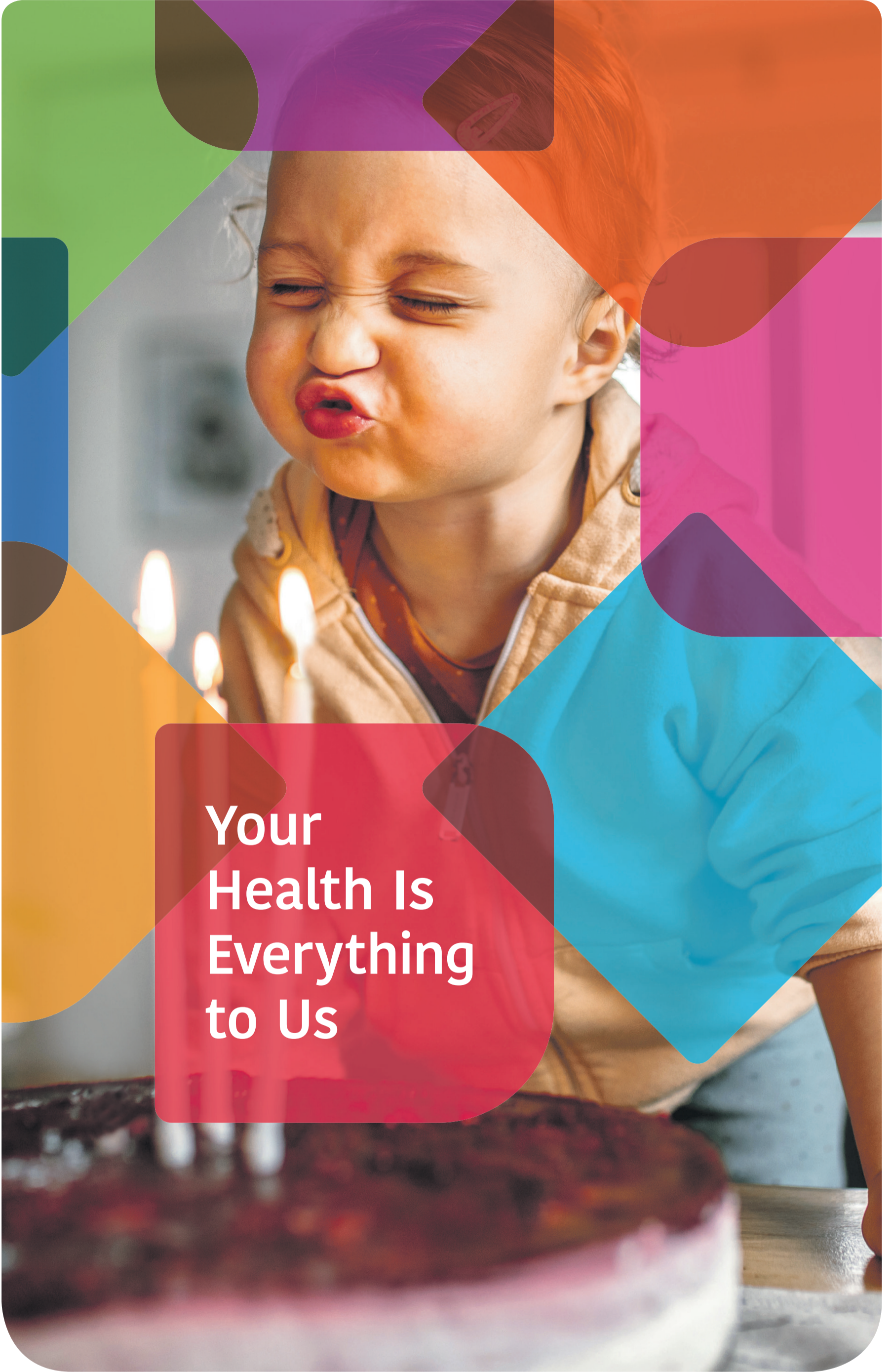
Eric Licas, Public Safety
eric.licas@latimes.com

Sarah Mosqueda, TimesOC
sarah.mosqueda@latimes.com

Send Letters to the Editor
to erik.haugli@latimes.com.
See Mailbag for guidelines.

The Daily Pilot, established
in 1907, is published
Wednesday through
Sunday by Times
Community News, a
division of the Los Angeles
Times. Subscriptions are
available only by
subscribing to The Times,
Orange County.

© 2023 Times Community News.
All rights reserved.



Your
Health Is
Everything
to Us

Focused on healthy futures

◆ Access to Care ◆ Support Services ◆ Whole Person Health

As the largest health plan in Orange County, we know healthy futures depend on more than medical care. No matter your age, life circumstances affect health. We remove barriers that hold health back, supporting members in need with access to preventive care, housing services, food security and much more. Because your health is everything to us.

Pacific Symphony
CARL ST. CLAIR, MUSIC DIRECTOR

SUMMERFEST 2023

Presented by City of Hope | ORANGE COUNTY

JULY 4 SPECTACULAR: TRIBUTE TO THE BEATLES

July 4 at 8 PM • FivePoint Amphitheatre

Richard Kaufman, conductor | Pacific Symphony
Classical Mystery Tour

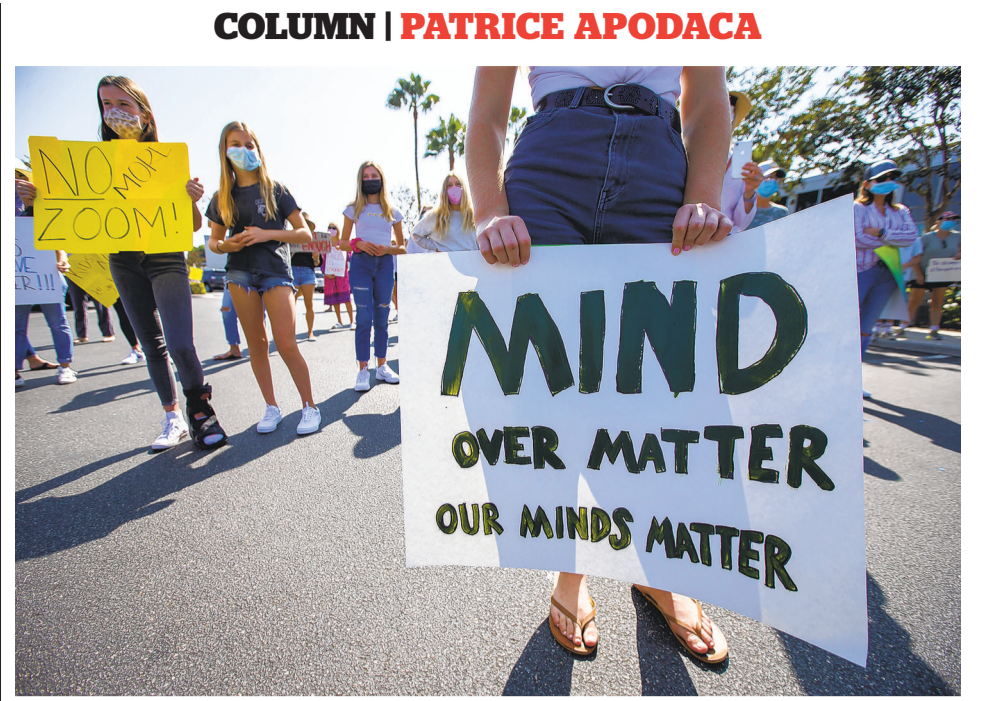
Celebrate Independence Day at Pacific Symphony's epic outdoor concert. Rock out to The Beatles' timeless classics, then watch the sky light up!

Tickets from \$39
Parking is FREE!

Purchase Tickets Today:
PacificSymphony.org
(714) 755-5799

WITH FIREWORKS

PRS SOCIAL Official Television Station
K-EARTH 101 Official Pops Radio Station
LA 1st Official Media Partner



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

STUDENTS AND PARENTS protest outside of the Newport-Mesa Unified School District offices in Costa Mesa in October 2020. A recent meeting centered around book bans.

Examining the 'parental rights' debate in education

By today's distorted standards, Newport-Mesa Unified School District's recent board meeting was a relatively sedate affair. During public comments, a few people spoke out against book bans. They were applauded by some in the audience. One person objected to any display of the LGBTQ+ rainbow flag on school property, eliciting enthusiastic applause from others.



the nation's raging culture wars. Or maybe the Newport Beach City Council's meeting the same evening had absorbed some of the steam locally. Either way, it was only a temporary reprieve because the conflicts roiling our schools are burning hotter than ever. Indeed, the fact that it's notable when histrionics don't break out shows just how ugly the discourse has become.

that so much as touch on race or LGBTQ+ themes are considered repugnant. Rather than looking upon teachers and administrators as collaborators in providing children with a substantive, balanced education, the "parental rights" forces tend to regard many of these professionals as adversaries attempting to indoctrinate students in social views they find scary. Acronyms are carelessly bandied about, without any real understanding of what they mean or how they might, or might not, figure into K-12 public education. All we hear is that CRT and DEI are evil, and beyond some misapplied or grossly misinterpreted anecdotes that's all anyone needs to know. The bullying tactics are legion. School board members are routinely harassed. Administrators are threat-

Afterwards, a group of women gathered outside exchanged harsh words with a couple of the anti-book ban commenters, and loudly expressed their dissatisfaction with Supt. Wesley Smith's measured remarks. Still, not a particularly high reading on the contentiousness scale. Perhaps it was a rare off-night for one of the preferred battlegrounds in

Advocates operating under the banner of "parental rights," fueled by a well-oiled campaign driven by fear and misinformation, are demanding that schools remove books, whitewash curriculum and muzzle classroom discussions. This effort goes far beyond reasonable concerns over the age-appropriateness of some material; virtually all references to history, issues or life stories

See *Apodaca*, page A8

2 WAYS TO SAVE.
JOIN UNIFY FINANCIAL CREDIT UNION!

9-MONTH CERTIFICATE
5.00% APY¹
(IRA Certificate option available)²

UnifyFCU.com/StashMoreCash

HY CHECKING
4.00% APY³
Earn up to

UnifyFCU.com/HY

Earn 4.00% APY³ on average daily balances of \$2,000 - \$15,000. Earn .05% APY on average daily balances from \$0-\$1,999.99 and over \$15,000.

UnifyFCU.com
877.254.9328

UNIFY
FINANCIAL CREDIT UNION

¹APY = Annual Percentage Yield. 9-month promotional rate effective April 4, 2023. Promotional Share Certificates must be funded with a minimum of \$500. Fees or withdrawals may reduce earnings on account and penalty may be imposed for early withdrawal. UNIFY membership required, which includes opening a membership share savings of at least \$5. Offer subject to change without notice and may end at any time. Share Certificates opened online have a maximum deposit of \$54,000. One additional deposit is permitted within the first 30 days of account opening, but deposit must be made in a branch or by mail. Opening a Share Certificate in online banking may not be available for some members. Call 877.254.9328 to get started.

²IRA = Individual Retirement Account. Substantial penalty for early withdrawal. Fees may reduce earnings on account. IRAs may have IRS-imposed contribution limits and tax implications, especially for premature distributions. Consult a tax advisor to determine what applies to your individual situation. Additional paperwork may be required to open the IRA certificate. Open at a branch or by phone.

³APY = Annual Percentage Yield. As of February 1, 2023, HY Checking earns 4.00% APY on average daily balances between \$2,000-\$15,000. Average daily balances between \$0-\$1,999.99 and over \$15,000 earn .05% APY. Minimum opening deposit is \$25. Dividends earned and ATM fees reimbursed each month you meet the following qualifications: have recurring direct deposit or conduct eDeposits of at least \$500 aggregate for the month and conduct at least eight (8) purchase transactions with your UNIFY debit card.

Insured by NCUA.

THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Jacqueline E. Mathews

- ACROSS**
- 1 Pathway
 - 5 Sits down ungracefully
 - 10 Cushiony
 - 14 401(k) alternatives
 - 15 "Walk Away _"; 1966 hit song
 - 16 Concern
 - 17 Skiff movers
 - 18 Underpaid's partner, in phrase
 - 20 "Meet the Press" network
 - 21 Folk singer Burl
 - 22 Groups of actors
 - 23 Not as new
 - 25 Seat for many
 - 26 Lettuce concoctions
 - 28 Physical well-being
 - 31 "Well, you're a fine _ talk!"
 - 32 Chinese or Laotian
 - 34 Hightailed it
 - 36 Sulk
 - 37 Group of ships
 - 38 Stand up
 - 39 "The Big Easy" of golf
 - 40 Persists
 - 41 Mailman's beat
 - 42 Bundle of energy
 - 44 _ up; said in a nutshell
 - 45 King topper
 - 46 Snooze
 - 47 Adhesive
 - 50 Report card avgs.
 - 51 That guy
 - 54 Unproven charge
 - 57 Rational
 - 58 Sear
 - 59 Intolerant person
 - 60 Climb _; mount
 - 61 Access Daly
 - 62 Loose change
 - 63 Put in the overhead bin

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14					15				16				
17					18				19				
20				21					22				
		23	24					25					
26	27						28			29	30		
31					32	33				34		35	
36					37					38			
39				40					41				
	42		43						44				
				45				46					
47	48	49					50				51	52	53
54					55	56				57			
58					59						60		
61					62						63		

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.

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

For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A8.

- animal
- 2 Saudi native
- 3 Sleep disorder
- 4 Curvy letter
- 5 Shows to be true
- 6 Crowbar
- 7 Individuals
- 8 _ person; each
- 9 Emulate Betsy
- Ross
- 10 Write awkwardly
- 11 Thousand _ CA
- 12 Worry
- 13 Williams and Koppel
- 19 Indian or Pacific
- 21 "_ Anything";
- song from "Oliver!"
- 24 Not on time
- 25 _ moss
- 26 Partial amount
- 27 As comfortable as _ shoe
- 28 Rushes
- 29 Victorious
- 30 Speediness
- 32 Additionally
- 33 All _; prepared
- 35 In _; poverty-stricken
- 37 Renown
- 38 European capital city
- 40 Shoestrings
- 41 Is remorseful about
- 43 Word with Mother or human
- 44 Isn't level
- 46 Utensil
- 47 Treaty
- 48 "_ Breaky Heart"
- 49 Do a grocery clerk's job
- 50 Best Picture of 1958 Oscar winner
- 52 Crash _; ram
- 53 Feline cry
- 55 Opening trio
- 56 Uncle in Madrid
- 57 Cry for help

Tribune Media Services



Spine and joint care tailored to what moves you.

Your passions define you, not your pain. The jogs at sunrise. Hiking. Baking with grandkids. Your joys are as unique as your body. That's why our spine and joint care are uniquely tailored to you at the MemorialCare Orthopedic & Spine Institute at Orange Coast Medical Center. We'll develop a treatment plan that solves it your way, relieves the pain, and gets you back to what you love. Offering a premier non-surgical spine outpatient center. Providing elite expertise in minimally invasive surgery, advanced robotics and precise navigation technology. And giving you close guidance from your patient navigator, always. For all the things in life that move you, choose the team that's *called to care*.

Find a Specialist.
[memorialcare.org/MOSI](https://www.memorialcare.org/MOSI)


MemorialCare[™]
 Orthopedic & Spine Institute

Day of Music Fullerton amps up for its ninth year

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Last year's Day of Music Fullerton was an intimate gathering, concentrated mainly in the Fullerton Museum Plaza.

"I think we are just getting our sea legs back from the pandemic," said Jen Strbac, former Day of Music Fullerton president. "It obviously had a dramatic effect on us, but I think there is now an appetite to pick this back up."

After COVID-19 waned, the event was kept small as the city eased back into large gatherings. Now in its ninth year, Day of Music Fullerton was back in full force on June 21 with live music performances in the

plaza and in many surrounding businesses in Downtown Fullerton.

"Fullerton is a wonderful sort of village in the middle of greater Los Angeles," said Strbac, as congo lessons began behind her in the Kids Korner of the festival. "That paired with our rich artistic history along with our musical history just makes us the perfect spot for the celebration of the day of music."

Day of Music Fullerton is part of a larger event that originated in Paris in 1982. Fête de la Musique, as it was known in France, was brought to the city of Fullerton by Glenn P. Georgieff in 2014. It became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization,



CAUSE FOR CONCERN performs the Runaways' song, "Cherry Bomb," during the Day of Music Fullerton.

bringing free music to the streets of Fullerton, until 2022 when the Fullerton Historic Theatre Foundation took over the organization, with members staying on as volunteers to produce the event.

"The fact that Fox has taken it over is good, and they have very ambitious musical goals for music day and carrying the tradition," Strbac said.

As in years past, residents and music lovers gathered in the plaza for live music that began at 2:30 p.m.

Even earlier, live musical performances took place at the Night Owl on Harbor Boulevard, where the coffee shop hosted Tritone Music Academy.

"It is actually a local rock 'n' roll school that teaches kids rock 'n' roll," said Night Owl owner Joe Rosati. "So they are going to be rocking our patio today."

Burnt Ramen, Ocean Wolf and Doll House each played sets at Night Owl, and Rosati said he was happy to have Day of Music Fullerton back in full swing.

"It is a cool event that brings people together and just lets them have a good time," said Rosati. "And it's about time, after all the pandemic and everything. It is good to see people smiling and dancing and singing along."

The Fullerton community has a rich musical history that includes native Leo Fender who designed the Fender Telecaster, Fender Precision Bass and Fender Stratocaster in the 1940s. Fender founded the Fender Musical Instruments Corp., and construction of Fender guitars continued at a Fullerton plant until 1985. Today, the Leo Fender Gallery at the Fullerton Museum Center features a collection of electric guitars from the lifelong resident, including the first prototype of a sol-



Photos by James Carbone

JESSICA KACZMAREK plays a classic blues guitar solo in the Fullerton Museum plaza during the Day of Music Fullerton at the Fullerton Music Center on Wednesday.

id-body electric guitar.

"This is the home of Leo Fender," Rosati said. "He had a shop right across the street. He used to come here for lunch back when this was a diner back in the '40s and '50s. This is Leo's city."

Fullerton was also ground zero for the Orange County hardcore punk music scene in the 1980s and the home of bands like the Adolescents and Agent Orange. Although ska band No Doubt hailed from Anaheim, lead singer Gwen Stefani attended college briefly in Fullerton, and the band regularly played at CSU Fullerton. Jackson Browne and Tim Buckley also attended school in Fullerton, and the city has produced alternative rock band Lit, as well as '80s acts Berlin and Stacey Q, who headlined last year's festival.

In the Fox Theater Courtyard, the Ironside Collective kicked off at 8 p.m. Other participating businesses hosting live music included Bootleggers Brewery, Bourbon Street, Back Alley, Bowery, Callahan's, Heroes, High Horse Saloon, Hopscotch, Les Amis, Lost Level Arcade, Mickey's Irish Pub, Olde Ship, Roscoes and 212 Grill.

During the festival, Comic Book Hideout, a comic book store on West Commonwealth, hosted live bands at the back of the store, which doubles as a space for Lark Music Lessons.

"With so much history and culture and the Fender



FULLERTON RESIDENT Kara Hazen plays her guitar and sings her original songs in the Fullerton Museum gallery.

museum being right here, I think that being a part of such an artsy community is really unique, and it is a fun spot," said Brittany Lark Lovero, who teaches piano and singing lessons at Lark Music Lessons.

"I also do ukulele, and I have taught drums, but my husband is the primary drummer teacher," said Lovero. "He also does guitar, bass and ukulele." The main plaza hosted Keili Fernando, Steve Metzger, Cause for Concern, Jessica Kaczmarek, the Mark Sells Band, local favorite Darden, Sean Oliu & the Coastline Cowboys and Orange County-based synth-pop duo Bordeaux as headliners. The latter group was formed in 1988 by longtime Fullerton residents Jon St. James and Stacy "Acacia" Smith. The group's 1988 song, "Three Time Lover"

scored them a multialbum deal with Enigma Records, and they released their first full-length album, "Bold as Love," the same year.

Lovero said it makes sense to keep music alive in Fullerton.

"It is a really cool tradition, and I hope it never goes away," said Lovero.

Strbac said she is confident the people of Fullerton will continue to support music for all.

"The most important thing is that deep sense of community that we have in this town — it is just like no other," said Strbac. "We all rally around things that are important, and the arts are very important and music is fundamental in our lives."

sarah.mosqueda@latimes.com
Twitter: @SarahNMos

Free! **2023 GOLDEN FUTURE 50+ SENIOR EXPO**
FRIDAY, JULY 7TH
9am - 1:30pm
Hyatt Regency
1107 Jamboree Road
Newport Beach, CA

- FREE Admission
- FREE Parking
- Health Screenings
- 60+ Vendor Booths
- Free Tote Bag
- Prizes & Giveaways
- Expert Talks
- Bingo / Arts & Crafts
- Haircuts & More!

Southern California's Premier Lifestyle, Health & Active Aging Expo!
Pre-Register Online or at the Door
www.GoldenFutureSeniorExpo.com

MARKETPLACE
To place an ad, go to
<http://timescommunityadvertising.com/>

MERCHANDISE 800
Miscellaneous Merchandise

Vinyl Records Wanted
\$\$\$ Top cash paid
4 all or part of collection.
Jazz, Classical, Psychedelic, Blues
949-933-6777 Mike

EMPLOYMENT 1500
Employment

Restaurant Service Manager:
High School
Diploma req. \$33,779/yr,
F/T, Resume to Kwanglim
Ko, LAXURROS, INC. 114
W. Commonwealth Ave,
Fullerton, CA 92832

FIND an apartment through classified
Sell your Car in Classified!

IRVINE RANCH WATER DISTRICT
NOTICE OF FILING OF REPORT AND OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON HAVING SEWER CHARGES FOR CERTAIN PARCELS OF LAND COLLECTED ON THE TAX ROLL

NOTICE is hereby given that a report has been filed with the Secretary of the Irvine Ranch Water District relative to having sewer charges for certain parcels of land within the Newport North area of the District collected on the tax roll. The report contains a description of each parcel and the amount for annual charges for Fiscal Year 2023-24 (annual charges of \$398.88 per year for single family units and \$277.20 per year per apartment). The report is on file with the Secretary of the District at the District Office and is available for public inspection on the District Bulletin Board located at 15600 Sand Canyon Avenue, Irvine, CA. This report is filed pursuant to Section 5473 of the Health and Safety Code of the State of California.

NOTICE is further given that on Monday, July 10, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. (or as soon thereafter as is reasonably practicable) in the District's Board of Directors meeting room at 15600 Sand Canyon Avenue, Irvine, CA, the Board of Directors will conduct a public hearing and consider all objections or protests, if any, to the report.

Dated: June 25, 2023 /s/ Leslie Bonkowski
July 2, 2023 District Secretary
Irvine Ranch Water District

APODACA

Continued from page A6

ened. Teachers are intimidated.

Some of the accusations are so outlandish that I don't wish to repeat them. But they are cited as gospel and widely circulated by national organizations and allies in the media who are adept at manipulating information to suit their agendas.

To be clear, parents should always be diligent and deeply involved in their children's education. No one is arguing that.

But when some refer to "parental choice," what they really mean is "rights for me but not for thee," since they seek to restrict what all students — not just their own — are allowed to see or hear.

It's important to remember that parents of public school students already have extensive rights, including opting their children out of certain activities and instruction. What's happening now is an attempt by some extremists to run the entire system through a fine-mesh sieve that filters out all references that they don't like.

Compounding the damage, this movement has distracted from the legitimate, serious problems confronting K-12 education, most critically the ongoing struggle to recover

from devastating pandemic-related learning losses.

Teacher shortages are another issue made worse by their efforts. Resignation rates in many areas are historically high, and fewer people are joining the field. While low pay and burnout are big factors driving this trend, the politically motivated attacks and censorship drives are also cited as key contributors to educators' decisions to leave.

Unfortunately, as it now stands, the demands of a small minority who fear evolving societal standards are often overriding the majority who want their children to learn to think, deeply and critically; to examine a range of ideas and backgrounds and to develop informed opinions based on thoughtful consideration of various viewpoints.

I think back to my own public school days and to the classes and programs that had a profound effect on me.

Chief among those was an independent-study

literature course that a generous English teacher, enthused by my idea to delve deep into a selection of classic books, agreed to guide me through. That semester I devoured the writings that she suggested, such as Albert Camus' "The Stranger," and "Siddhartha" by Hermann Hesse, then wrote reports on my readings and engaged in lively discussions with the teacher.

Not everything sat easily with me. In particular, I found "The Stranger," with its remorseless main character who believed that life has no meaning, particularly disturbing. But those books prompted me to examine diverse philosophies and cultures and to become more confident in my ability to absorb and analyze different perspectives. It was one of the best educational experiences of my life.

Decades later, I try to keep learning and growing, and I continue to read books that open my eyes to backgrounds and communities outside my own

bubble.

There was a time, for instance, when I'd never heard of transgender. Now I understand that trans youth are disproportionately bullied, ostracized and misunderstood, and they have higher rates of depression and suicidal ideation. They deserve empathy and fair treatment, to be seen and heard.

The same applies to anyone who falls outside someone else's narrow vision of what is normal. Modeling the values that really matter — those of compassion, kindness and inclusivity — should be central to any school's mission. Educators who embrace that goal should know that there are many of us standing with them against the onslaught of intolerance.

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.

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS

L	A	N	E	P	L	O	P	S	S	O	F	T
I	R	A	S	R	E	N	E	E	C	A	R	E
O	A	R	S	O	V	E	R	W	O	R	K	E
N	B	C	I	V	E	S	C	A	S	T	S	
			O	L	D	E	R		P	E	W	
S	A	L	A	D	S		H	E	A	L	T	H
O	N	E	T	O		A	S	I	A	N		R
M	O	P	E		F	L	E	E	T		R	I
E	L	S		L	A	S	T	S		R	O	U
D	Y	N	A	M	O		S		S			
			A	C	E		S	L	E	E	P	
P	A	S	T	E		G	P	A	S		H	I
A	C	C	U	S	A	T	I	O	N		S	A
C	H	A	R		B	I	G	O	T		O	N
T	Y	N	E		C	O	I	N	S		S	T

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

Mark's Painting & Handyman Service
714-222-3055
Wood Restoration Specialist
Licensed & Bonded
C-33-#967860

Frances Ann Burruss Hill
September 20, 1933 - May 7, 2023

Frances Ann Burruss Hill passed away peacefully on May 7, 2023, with family by her side. Born September 20, 1933, in Kimberly, West Virginia to William and Juanita Burruss, Fran was a coal miner's daughter. The oldest of six children, she graduated from Mt Hope High School in 1950 and attended the UWV with her 3 sisters. Upon graduation from UWV in 1954, Fran worked as an elementary school teacher. She met John Hill of Oak Hill and they married in 1958, leaving WV for Ohio State University in Columbus, after a year in Colorado Springs, the Hills moved to WLA, CA, and Fran became a full time stay at home mom. In 1970 The Hills moved to Costa Mesa residing on Chios Road, raised four children and lived happily for the next 52 years. A dedicated wife & mother, Fran was a gifted cook with an emphasis on healthy eating long before it became popular. Fran became active in volunteering in the OC area including being a greeter on Main Street at Disneyland, serving at Children's Hospital of Orange County, & others. Fran was a gifted quilter & seamstress. She was well liked by friends & neighbors & remained lifelong friends with many residents in the area. An avid walker, she loved good company and conversation. She enjoyed traveling with John & vacationing with her siblings. Fran had a wonderful laugh & after 60 years in So Cal, her West Virginia accent never went away. She will be remembered for her firm love, health focus, fighting spirit, & infectious smile. Fran is survived by her husband of 65 years, John Hill, her children, & their spouses: Carolyn Hill Transue, John & Jeany Hill, Spencer & Emily Hill, Samantha & Jan Abrahamson. Grandchildren Anna & Jason Lister, Preston, Anderson & Spencer Hill, Drake & Sara Abrahamson & Sara's spouse, Levy Barlevy. Great grandchildren are Ella & Levi Johnson. Fran's siblings are Tom and Jane Payne, Joseph and Terry Haugh, William and Sandra Burruss, Lewis and Cathy Burruss, Bill & Nancy Darnall. A memorial service will take place July 1, 2023 at Mesa Verde United Methodist Church in Costa Mesa, 1pm. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Children's Hospital of Orange County <https://foundation.choc.org/> in memory of Frances Burruss Hill.

A special ed teacher works to help the underserved

BY MATT SZABO

Nicole Fusaro has always been an advocate for children with learning disabilities.

She has touched countless lives in her 17 years in the Newport-Mesa Unified School District. Most of that time has been spent at Corona del Mar High, where her passion has led to inclusive new programs.

About seven years ago, she started the CdM special athlete team called Sparkle, which pairs up with the CdM cheerleading team. She's also the club adviser for Best Buddies, which meets each Thursday in the small gym and is designed to integrate students without special needs with their peers who have disabilities.

These connections lead to special relationships. Catherine Raack gushes about the bond her daughter Julia, 20, has with Fusaro.

Julia is a 2022 CdM graduate who remains in the

district's Seamless Transition Enrichment Program. She was born with Rubinstein-Taybi syndrome, a rare chromosomal disorder.

She is short in stature and her mental state is that of a 5-year-old, Catherine Raack said, but Julia walks, talks and is very happy.

"Nicole and Julia are very, very close," Raack said. "Once a week, they have what we call 'best friend day,' just because they have such a great relationship. My daughter adores Nicole. She's been really great to our family and we see her all the time."

Helping children and young adults like Julia is paramount to Fusaro, 52. Her new nonprofit gives her another avenue to do so.

Fusaro launched Building Futures & Friends, or BFF, last week with a gathering at the Place in Corona del Mar. The goal is to support individuals with disabilities through consultation, advocacy and enrichment programs.



NEWPORT BEACH resident Nicole Fusaro chats with Julia Raack during an outing at the Irvine Lanes bowling alley.

The nonprofit could help individuals attend her popular summer camp, a limited liability company which is separate from her work at CdM. The camp has a different activity each day of the week like going to the beach, the movies or bowling.

But there are other benefits to the nonprofit. Each child has an individual education plan, known by the

acronym IEP.

"A parent may feel they need some extra support at school or understanding the paperwork that is given to them," Fusaro said. "They might say, 'Hey, I need an advocate, can you read this IEP and help me with it?' Or they just need someone to talk to and get some consultation."

Fusaro already has 10 moms — some with disabled children and some who are just big advocates like herself — on an executive board for Building Futures & Friends.

"I want to help the underserved," she said. "There's underserved in Newport that we don't always realize. There are families that can't afford extra things."

She started her Fusaro's Activities, Visions and Experiences (My FAVE) camp six years ago. It provides socialization and activities for kids with disabilities from age 6 all the way to 35, from Aliso Niguel north to Huntington Beach.

She said there are more

than 50 families in the program, which started just in the summertime but expanded to any school breaks or holidays. This year, Fusaro and her staff added activities on Saturdays, and the benefits are obvious for local families.

"It can be hard to take Julia out in public to the market or to the movies," Catherine Raack said. "She always wants to go home when she's with me. When she's with Nicole and that group, she gets to see more, she gets to do more. She gets to be with her friends."

Maryann Sharpe is another big fan of Fusaro's and attended the Building Futures & Friends launch celebration last week. Sharpe's daughter Rebecca, 18, is in the special education program at CdM.

Rebecca is a triplet, and her siblings Audrey and Spencer recently graduated from Newport Harbor. They are typical students, but Rebecca is considered on the autism spectrum as the result of a seizure disorder.

The Sharpes met Fusaro

through the Sparkle program at CdM, and Maryann is excited about the new nonprofit.

"I just think Nicole can offer so much to parents who are struggling with understanding IEPs and what they're entitled to, how they can advocate for their kids," Maryann Sharpe said. "There's really a need for that, and I think because of her long history working in the school district, she's really got all of the knowledge to bring to the table."

"In addition to the fact that she's going to be super-good at it, she cares, she's loving. You don't feel like she's somebody who's just doing a job. It's her life devotion, her passion. The kids absolutely love her, and the parents do too."

Fusaro, who for several years taught at the Phoenix Day School for the Deaf in Arizona before coming to California, has a master's degree in special education from the University of Ari-

See **Teacher**, page A10



NICOLE FUSARO hugs one of her students during an outing at the Irvine Lanes.

Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

CONNECTING PEOPLE

> Cameron D. works as an Associate at Smart & Final

WITH OPPORTUNITY

For 99 years and counting, Goodwill of Orange County has opened up opportunities. We help people unlock their potential and reach their goals. We turn opportunities into triumphs. To put it simply, we are a force in workforce development. So, how can we help you? OCGOODWILL.ORG

BEACON

Continued from page A1

happened to stumble across Chakra Shack.

"My intuition brought me here," said the 36-year-old, who's now a regular at the shop. "It's just peace, it's home. I literally come in, drink tea and sit down to talk to someone and immediately feel better. This is exactly where I'm meant to be."

Templin began delving into metaphysics after the death of her father. She found it to be more broad and open to interpretation than some of the churches she'd attended in her search for meaning and truth. One day, she felt deeply called to help others make a similar leap.

"The idea to open a shop came to me, and I literally had no second idea," the 45-year-old said with a chuckle.

Although a soul has no age, Templin finds that a lot of young people come through her doors. Many of them even end up working there, including Sasha Safarzadeh, who started in college and now, in his 30s, works behind the scenes as an operations manager.

He said the pandemic seems to have inspired a renewed interest in metaphysics and the quest for meaning that resonates with



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

GUESTS SHOP for their favorite metaphysical items Wednesday at Chakra Shack in Laguna Beach. Right, a small Buddha rests on a table with incense sticks as Terry Gregor, in the background, performs a ceremony during the summer solstice celebration at the shop.

what Chakra Shack is all about.

"It's about informing the community and guiding them in their journey," Safarzadeh said Wednesday of the store's mission. "[And] the community has really grown with us."

Guyot, 21, started working at the store three years ago and now comes back while on break from her studies at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

"I don't usually work throughout the year, but every winter I come back here," she said.

Stacy Boura-Garcia came to Wednesday's solstice event to celebrate the friendship she's formed with Templin over the years, partially over their shared love of dogs. In fact, the 56-year-old Coto de Caza resident brought her blind Jack Russell terrier Marley with her to the event.

She said she's had regular intuitive readings performed at Chakra Shack and always comes to check out the merchandise when she's looking for gifts for

friends.

"It's kind of like a gathering of spiritual energies, just the vibe of the space," Boura-Garcia said. "It's a place you can come and ground yourself."

As Wednesday's solstice wound to a close, participants gathered inside the store, sitting cross-legged on cushions and folded-up yoga mats for the sound bath led by Terry Gregor, a practitioner of kundalini yoga. Gregor led the group in a mantra, before beginning the meditative experience.

Together, the audience imagined seeing themselves sitting in a field of yellow flowers. Gregor guided them to envision their energetic bodies floating up toward the sun and out into the universe before bringing them back to the earthly realm. Outside, the sun had already set, illuminating the tops of waves with pink light as night descended.

sara.cardine@latimes.com
Twitter: @SaraCardine

TEACHER

Continued from page A9

zona. In her time at CdM she has been a longtime scorekeeper for the boys' basketball team, and recently started doing the same for the boys' and girls' volleyball program.

She has no children of her own, but that's only true in a biological sense.

"I think she feels like these are the kids she never had," Sharpe said. "She has that energy to give to them."

Fusaro said she's received a bevy of support since she launched her nonprofit, with plenty of emails, phone calls and text messages.

"People can make a donation for any kid, or if they have a specific kid in mind they want to sponsor," Fusaro said. "Life's expensive, so any support is great."

matthew.szabo@latimes.com
Twitter: @mjszabo



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

NICOLE FUSARO, who has spent the majority of her career at Corona del Mar High, laughs with one of her students while bowling in Irvine.

BEACHES

Continued from page A2

also better than average, with 63% of county beaches receiving those same high grades. In the winter dry season, 94% also received A or B grades.

The county saw about 19 inches of rain during the 12-month period covered by the report, 116% higher than the historical average of about 9 inches, according to the organization, but that significant increase did not seem to greatly impact county beaches.

For example, at many of the sites sampled around Newport Bay, water quality was ranked significantly high across all three grades, save at the Newport Slough at the Lancaster/62nd Street Beach, which received an F during the wet season. The same was true in parts of Huntington Harbor and Little Corona Beach, in both the summer and wet seasons. By comparison, La-

guna's beaches seemed to do exceptionally well, along with Corona del Mar State Beach and Crystal Cove.

Five beaches in Newport Beach received Fs in the wet season, including the beach at Orange Street, 52nd/53rd Street, at 38th Street and at 15th/16th Street.

"As climate change continues to bring weather whiplash, our water woes will swing from scarcity to pollution. This year, record precipitation produced major impacts on water quality across Coastal California," Tracy Quinn, president and chief executive officer of Heal the Bay, said in a statement. "Now more than ever, we must prioritize multi-benefit projects to manage stormwater as both a water quality and supply solution, all while ensuring that the public is kept informed of risks to public health."

lilly.nguyen@latimes.com
Twitter: @lilibirds

CLOCKWISE: Golden Goose, Givenchy, A|X Armani Exchange, Williams Sonoma, Balenciaga, Sephora, Hermès, Ferragamo, JD Sports, Hoka

ROAD TRIP ESSENTIALS

Anthropologie • Apple Store • A|X Armani Exchange • Balenciaga • Berluti • Burberry • Coach • Dior • Dolce&Gabbana • Fendi
Ferragamo • Gentle Monster • Givenchy • Golden Goose • Gucci • Hermès • Hoka • J.Crew • JD Sports • Jo Malone London
Kate Spade New York • Loewe • Louis Vuitton • Lululemon • Madewell • Montblanc • Nike • Oliver Peoples • Porsche Design
Rimowa • Saint Laurent • Sandro • Sephora • The Webster • Tory Burch • Tudor Tourneau • Tumi • Williams Sonoma • Zara • Zegna

partial listing

Quality is

International Destination

SOUTHCOASTPLAZA.COM

COSTA MESA, CALIFORNIA