

# Daily Pilot

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 2023 /// dailypilot.com



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**OWNER BEAR PURKO** walks Phoebe in Best Costume category during the Laguna Real Estate Charitable Assistance Fund pet parade and chili cook-off at the Neighborhood Congregational Church in Laguna Beach on Saturday. The event returned for the first time since the pandemic.

## Pet parade, chili cook-off return to Laguna Beach

BY ANDREW TURNER

Community members looking to add some spice to their weekend had their chance on Saturday, as the Laguna Real Estate Charitable Assistance Fund brought back its annual chili cook-off and pet parade.

First introduced to the coastal community in 1997, the event returned for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic — and with no small degree of cuteness.

Animal lovers descended upon the Neighborhood Congregational Church to support the fundraiser, which primarily benefited the Laguna Beach Animal Shelter and the Blue Bell Foundation for Cats.

Parade entry categories included Most Handsome Male, Prettiest Female, Best Costume, Cutest Baby, Most Gorgeous Senior and Happiest Rescue.

Rolo, a feline who came home from Cat-Con in Pasadena to Cole and Elizabeth Rob-

See **Parade**, page A3



**DAN CONROY** from the Laguna Beach Fire Department serves up their second-place chili recipe at the Neighborhood Congregational Church in Laguna Beach on Saturday.

## H.B. OKs budget, avoids library closures

The budget for fiscal year 2023-24 has a \$5.4 million surplus, though deficits are forecast in the following years.

BY MATT SZABO

The Huntington Beach City Council unanimously passed a \$500-million budget for fiscal year 2023-24 during a special meeting Monday night, with some last-minute changes to what was originally presented that will allow three branches of the public library system to remain open.

Cuts that were proposed by city staff on Friday would have possibly shut down the Banning, Helen Murphy and Main Street library branches, and cut hours at the Central Library.

City staff worked to finesse things over the weekend after a public outcry that included a torrent of angry emails. Many residents were incensed that the city's libraries were again at the forefront of a council deliberation, following Mayor Pro Tem Gracey Van Der Mark's item last week to limit children from accessing books deemed obscene or pornographic by the city.

A revised proposed budget, taking out the option of library closures, was distributed to attendees near the start of Monday's meeting after Mayor Tony Strickland announced no libraries would be closed. This further frustrated some in the crowd, who hadn't been given enough time to review and form comments based on the new numbers.

"We were given this document at the last minute that says you're not going to close [libraries]," former Huntington Beach Mayor Debbie Cook said during public comments. "It's not appreciated when the public isn't given the information they need up front. Just a lot of hasty things seem to have happened in the last number of

See **Budget**, page A3

## To Our Readers: An update to print

The Daily Pilot continues to evolve to ensure our readers can obtain their community news in a variety of ways — be it in print, online or through social media, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

This week we're making changes to our print edition. Going forward, the Pilot will be published in print Thursdays through Sundays, with today's issue being the final Wednesday edition. This will allow us to feature longer stories on the days people generally have more time to read them, particularly on weekends.

There will be no changes to the newspaper's delivery method. Los Angeles Times subscribers who live within the Daily Pilot's coverage area will continue to receive their Pilots inside their morning copies of The Times on our four publication days.

The newsroom will continue to gather and report news daily online at [latimes.com/socal/daily-pilot](https://latimes.com/socal/daily-pilot). We invite you to bookmark that site and visit regularly to read the latest news from the vibrant communities it is our honor to serve — Newport Beach, Huntington Beach, Laguna Beach, Costa Mesa and Fountain Valley.

Thank you for continuing to be loyal subscribers to the Daily Pilot. We could not do this work without your support.

**KIDS FLOAT** on inner tubes in a lagoon on the opening day of Adventure Playground in Huntington Beach on Saturday. Since 1975, the site has encouraged generations of kids to build, play and imagine.

James Carbone



## Huntington Beach's Adventure Playground turns on the tap for first time in nearly 4 years

BY SARA CARDINE

Huntington Beach's Central Park was the place to go for a splashing good time Saturday, when city officials reopened the water-filled Adventure Playground after three years of pandemic- and drought-related closures.

More than 200 children and their adult chaperones flocked to the nearly 1-acre site which has encouraged generations of local kids to flex their imaginations and muscles as they climb forts, slide down a mud hill and navigate rafts through a watery lagoon.

"It was so nice to see life brought back

into the playground," Chris Cole, a facility and events manager for the city, said Tuesday after the grand reopening. "For the staff who've worked on it, it was super rewarding to see that happen."

Despite its popularity among children and parents as an affordable alternative to costly water parks (\$4 per child, free for adults), Adventure Playground was shuttered at the close of the 2019 season and remained closed for the next two years under pandemic restrictions.

Staff members and community volunteers used that downtime to make some needed improvements and upgrades to the play

area, including new rafts and forts, a rebuilt changing area and new mudslide staircase, ahead of a June 2022 reopening.

However, the month before the playground was to welcome its first visitors back to the site city officials, citing new water restrictions coming down from the state, announced Adventure Playground would remain closed for one more year to save water.

State officials had just declared a Level 2 water shortage, prohibiting the refilling of ornamental lakes and ponds beyond levels necessary for sustaining aquatic life. And be-

See **Adventure**, page A2

# Fire destroys C.M. mobile home unit

BY ERIC LICAS

Flames consumed one unit in a Costa Mesa mobile home park Saturday evening, leaving two people in need of shelter over the weekend, according to fire officials.

The fire was reported at 7:49 p.m. on the 1600 block of Whittier Avenue, Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Battalion Chief Chris Coates said. Black smoke and flames were pouring out of the structure by the time first responders arrived.

The home's residents and their neighbors managed to evacuate, and no injuries were reported. But a dog that may have been inside was unaccounted for as of Monday, Coates said.



Courtesy of Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue

**FIREFIGHTERS PUT** out a blaze that destroyed one mobile home in Costa Mesa.

The blaze caused a power line to collapse, creating additional hazards for crews from Costa Mesa, Newport Beach and Huntington Beach. It took about

an hour for them to douse the fire.

The mobile home that caught fire was a "total loss," Coates said. No others were destroyed, but one neighboring residence did sustain heat and smoke damage.

"Firefighters worked fast and decisively, and we were able to keep the fire from spreading to other homes," Coates said.

The fire left two people displaced from their homes, Coates said. They were being aided by the Red Cross with intermediate housing and other essentials.

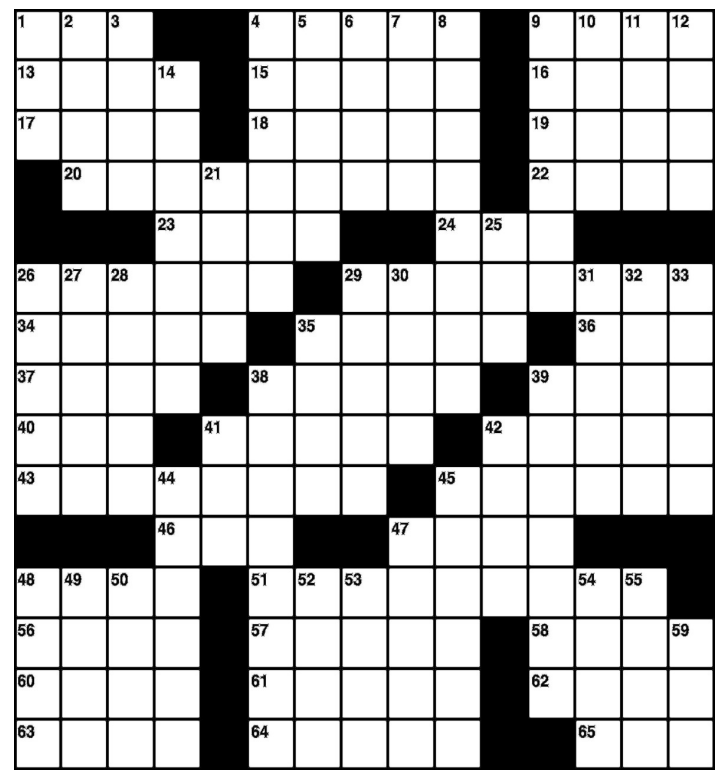
The cause of the fire was under investigation.

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## THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Jacqueline E. Mathews

- ACROSS**  
 1 DDE's successor  
 4 Veggie planting time  
 9 Snout  
 13 Bug's downfall  
 15 No-goodnik  
 16 Greek letter  
 17 Location  
 18 Silent actors  
 19 Old emperor's title  
 20 Answers  
 22 Small casks  
 23 Former  
 24 Flock member  
 26 Short fast race  
 29 One of four on "What's My Line?"  
 34 Get \_ out of; provoke  
 35 Lugged  
 36 Peg for Tiger  
 37 Rib or radius  
 38 \_ out; ultimately  
 41 Unshackled  
 42 Ointment  
 43 Heroes  
 45 Croquet stick  
 46 Colony insect  
 47 Cheat; defraud  
 48 Messy person  
 51 Singer Aguilera  
 56 Emmy-winning TV series  
 57 "Time \_ all wounds"  
 58 \_ off; snoozes  
 60 GE appliance  
 61 Bird of prey  
 62 Long look  
 63 Cookware items  
 64 Gown  
 65 Use an axe
- DOWN**  
 1 Yrbk. section  
 2 Bazaar  
 3 High-flying toy  
 4 Just about



## 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).

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

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

- 5 \_ at; indicate  
 6 Bacardi beverages  
 7 Words of understanding  
 8 Diminished  
 9 Stamp cost in 1965

- 10 Trickle out  
 11 Male animal  
 12 Hearing organs  
 14 Loathe  
 21 Window piece  
 25 Take the plunge  
 26 Fencing sword

- 27 Lying facedown  
 28 Watermelon casings  
 29 Leo XIII & Pius X  
 30 Gobsmacked  
 31 Know-\_; smarty-pants  
 32 Do a waiter's job  
 33 Dogma  
 35 Wedding cake level  
 38 Miserable  
 39 Low-impact exercise  
 41 Merriment  
 42 Shaker contents  
 44 Rooms on a cruise ship  
 45 Se-oritas  
 47 Invoices  
 48 Word in a red octagon  
 49 Kilauea's output  
 50 Plow pullers  
 52 Listen  
 53 Lose one's cool  
 54 Webster or Wyle  
 55 Sculptor's tool  
 59 Do tailoring
- Tribune Media Services

## ADVENTURE

Continued from page A1

cause Adventure Playground uses non-recirculated potable water from Central Park's irrigation system, closure seemed like the only option.

"That was kind of at the peak of concern over the drought," Cole recalled of the move. "We figured we'd be better stewards of water conservation and decided to postpone the opening."

However, after an unseasonably wet winter led to an easing of statewide drought restrictions, park officials decided on a Saturday reopening and invited members of the Kiwanis Club of Huntington Beach to serve freshly grilled hot dogs and snacks to first-day visitors.

John Etheridge came to the playground shortly after 8 a.m. to set up his grill and noticed a long line of people already stationed outside the entrance of the park.

"The excitement level was really, really high — it was exciting, even for me," the Huntington Beach resi-



James Carbone

**KIDS SLIDE** down the "mud slide" on opening day of Adventure Playground in Huntington Beach on Saturday.

dent said Tuesday.

Etheridge, 56, remembers playing at Adventure Playground when he was young, being out in nature, building tree houses with nails and pieces of plywood and just being a kid.

"It was a place you could get dirty, you could get muddy, where you got [an occasional] nail through the foot, which I did," he fondly recalled. "Today, the bottom of the area is concrete, so it's a lot safer and there's no more nails lying around. [But] the spirit is

the same."

Huntington Beach's Adventure Playground is located at Central Park, 7111 Talbert Ave. The area is open Monday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., through Aug. 18 but will be closed on July 4. For more information, or to check availability, visit [huntingtonbeachca.gov](http://huntingtonbeachca.gov) and search for "Adventure Playground" or call (714) 842-7442.

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PARADE

Continued from page A1

erts of Irvine, won Best Costume and tied for first in the Happiest Rescue contest. The social media star wowed the judges by turning full gangster, completing the look with a custom jacket, sunglasses and a gold chain.

Elizabeth Roberts said they were honored to have Rolo receive the recognition. Rolo has proven well-suited for public life since his adoption, when he fell asleep in Cole's arms on the two-hour car ride home.

"It's definitely something very special, and it is a growing niche out there," Elizabeth Roberts said. "There's definitely a lot of adventure cats that have started to come about, for sure. With Rolo, we started him as a kitten when we

noticed that he was OK with car rides.

"Most kittens that I have taken in my experience do not like car rides. They get nervous, they cry, they whine, and they don't feel comfortable the entire time, so it really definitely depends on a cat's personality."

Liz Comerford, a Realtor with Coldwell Banker Realty, hoisted the trophy for the winning chili after helping prepare it for the Charitable Assistance Fund.

Now a contributor to three winning entries in the chili cook-off, Comerford opined that there is no set way to make a championship chili.

"My recipe is no recipe," Comerford said. "I don't follow a recipe. ... A little of this, a lot of that."

The winning booth did not lack for potential additions, providing its taste

testers with optional ingredients such as cilantro, scallion and sour cream.

"We had cilantro, we had scallion, we had squeeze of lime," Comerford said. "Everyone told me ... what put mine over was the finishing squeeze of lime on top, which I think it's in agreement. That chili had an entire grill full of peppers and chiles that I charred on the grill before [they were] chopped up and put in, so maybe that was my secret."

Rosie Taylor, a Santa Ana resident and a winner in the 54th World Championship Chili Cook-off in 2021, was among the judges for the chili contest.

The Laguna Beach fire and police departments also competed.

The Laguna Real Estate Charitable Assistance Fund, a public benefit corporation consisting of Realtors and affiliates, has



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

A WAGON carrying three adoption dogs marches through the Laguna Real Estate Charitable Assistance Fund pet parade and chili cook-off in Laguna Beach on Saturday.

raised more than \$1.3 million for community non-profits and individuals in need since being created in 2004.

Suzanne Taylor, the president of the Charitable Assistance Fund, said the nonprofit group supports

various causes, including seniors and the arts. The group also has a fund that provides grants to Realtors and affiliates in need.

"The goal is twofold," Taylor said of Saturday's get-together. "One, to have a chili cook-off, and two, to

let people show us their pets and all the different categories of pets. We added a new one this year, which was the Top Pet In All Categories, and we had not had that before. We had been given a piece of art from Faux Paw Artique Gallery, and we gave that as the grand prize for the pet, but we also had ribbons for everyone. It was fun. It was a little hot for the animals, but it was fun."

Artist Debby Carman provided the artwork with some puppy-dog-eyed friends and a black cat for the grand prize in the pet parade, which featured largely cats and dogs. The finale featured a wagon full of rescues, a couple of which dared to escape their open-air mode of transportation.

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BUDGET

Continued from page A1

months that poke the beehive."

Huntington Beach public affairs manager Jennifer Carey said Tuesday that the timing was regrettable, but that the budget process is typically a six-month process. At the June 6 City Council meeting, the panel instructed staff to take another look at the budget and see if some cost savings could be found.

"That initial document that was posted [on Friday] with all of the potential cuts was never meant to be a list of everything that was going to be cut," Carey said. "Rather, it was an opportunity to provide the City Council with a list of items they could choose from ... We tried to listen to the community's feedback and take that off the list of options."

Carey added that due to the limited time frame remaining in the process — the fiscal year flips this weekend — information from the proposed revised budget couldn't be released to the public in advance "like we would have wanted to."

The presentation Monday night was made by interim chief financial officer Sunny Han, who is leaving for Irvine, like several other high-ranking Surf City officials have in recent months.

With the approved cuts the 2023-24 budget features a surplus of \$5.4 million. The 2024-25 budget is projected to have only a \$259,000 deficit, as opposed to the \$7.4 million deficit that was originally forecast.

The budget for the 2023-24 fiscal year, which begins Saturday, includes nearly \$292 million of general fund revenue.

The cuts made include popular services such as the winter ice skating rink at Pier Plaza and the Community Cafe discussions that were launched last fall.

Circuit, the popular transportation service that runs throughout downtown Huntington Beach and now costs \$2 per rider, will be continued until at least Jan. 1 and likely longer, depending on funding.

Revenue raisers include increased emergency medical services fees, as well as adding advertisements to the city's lifeguard towers.

"Almost every economist says next year we're headed toward a recession, and we're getting ahead," Mayor Tony Strickland said "Unlike other councils in other cities, who wait for an emergency situation where they don't have any options, we're actually fixing the budget today to make sure we're not in that position



File Photo

CIRCUIT, THE transportation service that runs throughout Surf City, will be continued until at least Jan. 1.

two years from now ... I'm proud of this budget."

Several speakers Monday were critical of the budget adding four full-time positions to the staff of City Atty. Michael Gates, whose office was one of the few not hit with cuts for next fiscal year. The office will add a deputy community prosecutor, two senior deputy city attorneys and one senior legal assistant.

The four positions will cost \$675,000 per year, which Gates said is cheaper than contracting the work and that he needed the help. Councilman Dan Kalmick asked for documentation to show the increase in hours worked by Gates' staff, which now numbers 11 people.

"Our attorneys are working 60 hours a week and they are working weekends, and they have been for well over a year," Gates responded. "Our attorney staff is way overworked, and that's nothing new."

Gates said his office is currently the plaintiff in less than five cases, though a key one is a federal lawsuit against the state of California over housing mandates.

"We need the resources," he said Tuesday, adding that cases have picked up after the coronavirus pandemic. "It literally has nothing to do with the housing lawsuit."

Gates pointed to recent rulings that will net the city about \$32 million including interest.

"In terms of value, we have far exceeded any burden to the taxpayer," he said.

Gates' office was further questioned during public comment. Several speakers mentioned the settlement with the Pacific Airshow that could end up costing the city more than \$7 million, though just less than \$2 million of that is on the budget for next year. The full settlement has yet to be released to the public, which Gates said is due to pending litigation.

Also, the new City Council majority previously voted to pay more than \$500,000 for an environmental review on behalf of the airshow.

"I've never heard of [the city picking up the tab for] that," said Cook, one of four former Surf City mayors to speak during public com-

ments along with Shirley Dettloff, Cathy Green and Connie Boardman. "That's just ridiculous."

Erin Spivey, a librarian at the Main Street branch of the Huntington Beach Public Library, said she attended Monday night to speak not as a city employee but a resident of more than 30 years.

"Community and love for community is built in parks and libraries and schools," she said. "It is not built through business deals and property density statistics."

Kalmick introduced a

substitute motion to approve the budget that was originally presented at the June 6 meeting, removing the four new city attorney's office positions. It failed, 4-3, with the conservative majority voting against.

"This hurry-up offense is no way to run a half-a-billion dollar organization," Kalmick said.

He and the other Democrats on the dais ended up going along with the revised budget as presented, with some reservations.

"This process was chaotic," Councilwoman Rhonda

Bolton said. "There are aspects of [the new plan] that I'm still trying to figure out. If I'm still trying to figure it out and the public is still trying to figure it out, then this is just not the right way to do this."

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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS

Crossword grid with answers: JFK, APRIL, NOISE, SAID, LOUSE, IOTAR, RITE, MIMES, CZAR, RESPONSES, KEGS, PAST, EWE, SPRINT, PANELIST, ARISE, TOWED, LIST, BONE, WIPED, WARN, END, FREED, SALVE, RESCUERS, MALLETT, ANT, BILK, SLOB, CHRISTINA, TAXI, HEALS, NODS, OVEN, EAGLE, GAZE, PANS, DRESS, HEW

Sudoku grid with answers: 9 1 3 8 6 2 7 4 5, 8 5 6 7 4 9 1 3 2, 2 4 7 3 5 1 8 6 9, 6 9 8 4 1 5 2 7 3, 4 3 1 2 9 7 5 8 6, 7 2 5 6 3 8 4 9 1, 5 6 9 1 7 4 3 2 8, 3 7 2 5 8 6 9 1 4, 1 8 4 9 2 3 6 5 7

The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y dirección de la corte es): Central Justice Center 700 Civic Center Drive West Santa Ana, CA 92701 The name, address, and telephone number of the plaintiffs attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la dirección y el número del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es): Kaelee Gifford 303533 7 Corporate Plaza Newport Beach, CA 92660 949-719-7212 Date: 07/01/2022 David H. Yamasaki Clerk of the Court (Secretary) Deputy (Adjunto) R. Baker Published in the DAILY PILOT 6/7/2023, 6/14/2023, 6/21/2023, 6/28/2023

**JONES CUP**

# Santa Ana Country Club eyes repeat

The 24th annual community golf tournament matches five professionals and club champions in a two best ball format.

**BY MATT SZABO**

The Jones Cup community golf tournament is always a good time for each of the five local country clubs that participate.

Of course, the competitive juices also flow.

Longtime Santa Ana Country Club team captain Geoff Cochrane was fired up last year after leading host Santa Ana to its first Jones Cup title. Every club participating has now won the tournament, in its 24th year, at least once.

Santa Ana will try to repeat Wednesday, when the Jones Cup tees off at Newport Beach Country Club.

As always, the tournament matches five professionals and club champions from Santa Ana, Newport Beach, Big Canyon, Mesa Verde and Shady Canyon in a two best ball format.

Mesa Verde, which has won the tournament eight times since it started in 2000, tees off first at 12:30 p.m. at Newport Beach on Wednesday. The squad includes captain Heidi Wright-Tennyson, professional Mike Fergin, ladies champion Kim Izzi, men's champion Ryan Knapp and senior men's champion Mitch Allenspach.

Santa Ana will tee off next at 12:40 p.m., featuring Cochrane, professional Drew Buddle, ladies champion Diane Booth, men's champion Nico Bollini and senior men's champion Brandon Goethals.

Shady Canyon, the two-time champion, will tee off as the



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**GEOFF COCHRANE** gives teammate Diane Booth a high-five after she sank a long putt for the Santa Ana Country Club team in last year's Jones Cup.

middle group at 12:50 p.m. It features team captain Brian Gunson, professional Kyle Bezuidenhout, ladies champion Kelly Ly, men's champion Eoin Middaugh and senior men's champion Kyle Palmer.

Big Canyon, which has won

the Jones Cup a record 10 times, tees off at 1 p.m. The quintet features captain Robert Pang, professional Erika Ilagan, ladies champion Olivia Slutzky, men's champion Jordan Nasser and senior men's champion Will Tipton.

Pang has been team captain for each of the club's four victories since 2011.

Host Newport Beach, which tees off last at 1:10 p.m., features captain Robin Shelton, professional Andy Alderdice, ladies champion Ailam Newkirk, men's

champion Blair Walsh and senior men's champion Todd Roberts. Newport Beach has won the tournament twice, most recently in 2015.

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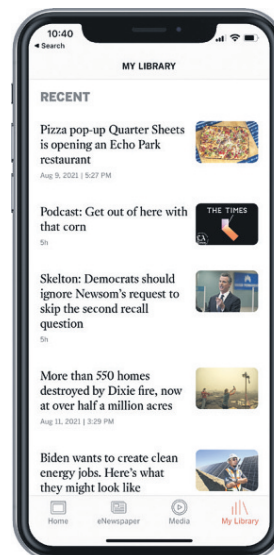
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