

Daily Pilot

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Duck mutilations blamed on snapping turtles

ROBERT DI MASSA, a bird watcher and photographer visits "duck hill" at Mile Square Regional Park in Fountain Valley Oct. 20.

James Carbone



Some animal advocates express skepticism over official explanation of injured birds at Mile Square Regional Park.

BY SARA CARDINE

State wildlife officials investigating the cause of waterfowl found at Mile Square Regional Park with mutilated bills say the injuries appear to be the work of snapping turtles, though some animal advocates are doubtful. Tim Daly, a regional informa-

tion officer for California's Department of Fish & Wildlife, confirmed Wednesday the department's Law Enforcement Division collected five ducks and geese from the Fountain Valley park over a one-year period and sent them to a wildlife health laboratory in Sacramento.

Three of the birds were collected in July and August of 2022, while the remaining waterfowl were transported to the lab this summer for necropsies. All of the animals had either died from their injuries or been previously euthanized.

"There were enough reports coming in, whether from the public or the media, that the injuries seemed odd enough that it might be concluded that it was a person harming these ducks," Daly said. "It appears the cause of injuries to the birds' beaks were most likely a snapping turtle."

Illegal in California without a permit, snapping turtles are native to North America's East Coast. They can grow upward of 200 pounds and are known for strong, triangular-shaped jaws that snap

See **Duck**, page A3

Patriots Day Parade names 2024 honorees

Laguna Beach resident Rick Shoemaker, one of a handful of names on the exclusive list, will serve as grand marshal.

BY ANDREW TURNER

The Laguna Beach Patriots Day Parade is among the grandest traditions in town, and those who have found themselves selected to be recognized in the upcoming rendition certainly know it.

Honorees were recently announced by the parade committee. Held annually on the first Saturday in March, the theme for the next parade will be "Laguna Heritage."

Karyn Philippsen, who has been named the Citizen of the Year, said she is humbled by the honor. She added she remains a "bit in shock" after learning of it.

"When I look at this award, the parade is celebrating 57 years next year, whether it stopped once for rain or COVID, it's 57 years of celebration," Philippsen said. "I'm just thrilled to share the day with the selected honorees."

"It isn't just about next year, 2024. I'm being included in a legacy and an example of honor of people that gave their service with what appeared to be ease. I know and remember some of these people, and they all came before me, and they were outstanding, and I was in awe of them."

Philippsen was heavily involved in the tourism industry as a founding member of Visit Laguna Beach. She is also the founding president of Laguna Beach Sister Cities, the president of the Laguna Beach Library, and she has been a board member for the Laguna Playhouse.

The honor of grand marshal will go to Rick Shoemaker, a 54-year resident and a 45-year member of Laguna Presbyterian Church.

"The community of the town and of the church are people that

See **Parade**, page A5



Photos by Susan Hoffman

ANTHONY GUTIERREZ stands with his "sunset orange" 1955 Chevy Apache truck during the Newport Beach Classic Car-Truck Festival Saturday, Oct. 28 on the Balboa Peninsula. The event hosted by Knights of Columbus #15083 Balboa Council raised money for a number of charities.

Classic cars and trucks shine at beachside charity event



GARY BOLER polishes his 1932 Ford Roadster, which he takes on road trips, during the Newport Beach Classic Car-Truck Festival.

BY SUSAN HOFFMAN

About 150 cars and trucks shimmered against the sparkling expanse of the Pacific Ocean, which served as a backdrop last weekend for the fifth annual Newport Beach Classic Car-Truck Festival.

The charity event was hosted by Knights of Columbus #15083 Balboa Council and drew between 2,000 and 3,000 people to the Newport Elementary School playground on the sands of the Balboa Peninsula, according to event organizer Mark O'Ravitz. The group raised \$50,000 for its efforts.

"Now with the city into it, and quality sponsorships, [the show] has grown legs," said O'Ravitz. "Until now, the city of Newport Beach was the only local city that

didn't have a car show. Now they're doing this for us."

Hoping to appeal to a younger demographic, the show included a kids' activity area with storytelling, face painting and a costume bike parade. A surf and snow expo was also added to bring in younger families, along with musical entertainment.

"Our [Knights of Columbus] organization has always been a charitable organization, and along with Meals On Wheels, Share Our Selves and Be Well, for example, we're very involved in the Maui Relief effort, with donation 'Jars for Maui' available," said O'Ravitz.

Among the vehicles showcased at the festival was a 1966 Volkswagen double-cab pickup

See **Classic**, page A4

COMMENTARY | **DAVID HANSEN**

Laguna's youngest politician survives first year

Nearly a year ago, Alex Rounaghi arrived in the Laguna Beach City Council chambers as its youngest member in history, believing he could revitalize a moribund, bickering group of elected leaders more than twice his age.

Now that his first-year honeymoon is ending, is he still the happy-go-lucky kid who wants to change the world?

"Yes, I am. I don't regret it," he said, smiling. "It's a lot of work, but we're here to solve problems."

And in Laguna, there are always problems — real or imagined. The city is known for its entrenched, educated factions who know how to fight.

So for Rounaghi, 25, it's been a lesson in diplomacy, and his efforts have not gone unnoticed.

"One of the many reasons I supported Alex for City Council was that he connects well with

people — due to his optimistic and generally good nature — and his ability to grasp the issues with a healthy dose of pragmatism," said one of his colleagues on the dais, Councilwoman Sue Kempf.

Kempf said Rounaghi is unafraid to volunteer for some of the city's most difficult projects, such as the undergrounding of Laguna Canyon Road.

"I have also witnessed him pressing for nuanced solutions, often begun through a thoughtful series of questions," she said. "Like most of us serving on the council, he is about the work versus sideshows. Make no mistake about it, the guy works. And he is a breath of fresh air."

Laguna's problems might be good problems to have for most cities, but there are some significant challenges ahead.

See **Survives**, page A5



WITH A "Mr. Alex Goes to Washington" smile, Laguna Beach Councilman Alex Rounaghi has embraced his first year on the dais.

David Hansen

ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



James Carbone

CDM FOOTBALL RIDES SECOND-HALF MOMENTUM TO FIRST-ROUND WIN OVER PARACLETE PAGE A5

NEWPORT-MESA UNIFIED TRUSTEE ANNOUNCES RUN FOR CITY COUNCIL PAGE A3

THE CROWD | B.W. COOK

'Mystical Black Tie' gala brings \$2 million to OCMA, fetes artist

The importance of the Orange County Museum of Art in relation to the people, culture and legacy of the community cannot be understated.



When historians and archaeologists excavate and examine our ancestral ancient civilizations, the artistic expression uncovered reveals more truth about the people than science can interpret.

Of course, we do not expect the modernist concrete and steel museum edifice in Costa Mesa designed by Morphosis Architects to be in a timeline for excavation and study at this moment in history. It is rather our community purpose, and perhaps even obligation, to support, embrace, and use this artistic vault to elevate culture and inspire ideas in this 21st century former bean field, now a major center of life on the Pacific Rim.

To this end, OCMA celebrated its third annual Art Sense Gala last month hosted by **Heidi Zuckerman**, the museum's chief executive and director.

The director has been the recipient of significant national press associated with the evolution of the museum and its artistic outreach. For the fall gala, billed as "Mystical Black Tie," event co-chairs **Alexandra Airth** and **Reesa**



Photos by Reza Allah-Bakashi / Capture Imaging

OCMA CEO and director Heidi Zuckerman, center, with Art Sense co-chairs Alexandra Airth, left, and Reesa Emadi. More than \$2 million was raised for OCMA programs at a recent gala.

Emadi welcomed some 300 arts patrons dressed to impress. Mystical was in the eye of the beholder. Of most importance, the crowd raised \$2 million in support of museum programs.

Not only was the dress code "mystical," the setting of the outdoor fall evening was appropriate to the billing. Party décor and design by Leproux Collective was created to reflect the image of the honored guest artist, **Jennifer Guidi**.

Arriving with respectable fanfare, Guidi shared embraces with museum donors and board president **Lucy Sun** with husband **Warren Felson**, **Barbara** and **Alex Bowie**, **Lauren** and **Trace Chalmers**,

Carol Choi, **Semira Darishushnia** and her husband **Mark Moshayed**, **Lisa** and **Richard Merage** and **Lilly** and **Paul Merage**.

Zuckerman introduced the guest of honor Guidi to many in attendance, also welcoming additional artists in the crowd, **Rebecca Morris**, **Peter Shelton** and **Mary Weatherford**.

"This has been one moment of significant reflection as I witnessed the coming together of this exhibition," Guidi said. "I was surprised how emotional it made me feel to see a decade of work in one place."

She attended the party and exhibition in her honor with her husband and fellow artist **Brooklin**

Soumahoro.

Post a standing ovation in her honor, Zuckerman proudly shared news on the museum's successful first year since its debut in 2022.

"In the first year we have welcomed over 263,000 visitors to the museum — we could not have done that without the support of everyone here," Zuckerman said. "I believe the access to art is a basic human right and not a privilege. I have learned everything I know about how to be a human from art. I've learned how to see, how to think, how to speak and how to live. I've even learned how to love."

Her fiancé **JP McNeill** smiled.



GUESTS CELEBRATE at the Orange County Museum of Art's gala, Art Sense III, last month.



ART PATRONS attending the Art Sense III gala at OCMA: Erica Fink, Jennifer Duran and Susan Etchandy.

Art lovers mingled in the mystical setting of soft lavender fabrics draped on outdoor tables and lounges festooned with verdant pale pink, lavender and white orchids abloom everywhere along with roses, zinnias and vines of ivy wrapping around tables amid hundreds of flickering candles.

Wine flowed curated by sommelier **Jay Fletcher** in coordination with cuisine by **Chef Ross Pangilian** of Mix Mix Terrace, joining associate **Chef Nick Weber** of Populaire Modern Bistro

creating specialty hamachi roll appetizers.

Spotted among the glitterati were **Holly** and **Mark Kerlake**, **David Horowitz**, **Marta** and **Raj Bhathal**, **Shanaz** and **Jack Langson**, **Britt Meyer**, **Ling** and **Charles Zhang** and **Jacqueline Mars**.

The Art Sense Gala was presented by Comerica Bank with media partner Cultured Magazine.

B.W. COOK is editor of the Bay Window, the official publication of the Balboa Bay Club in Newport Beach.

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THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

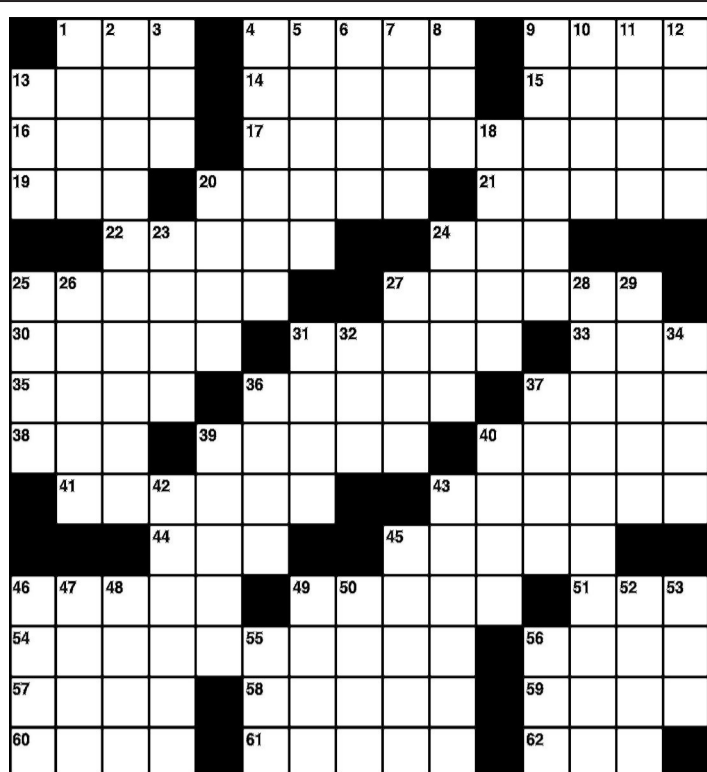
By Jacqueline E. Mathews

ACROSS

- 1 Depressed
- 4 Colorful parrot
- 9 Driving hazard
- 13 Piggyback ride giver
- 14 Dwelling
- 15 Singer Perry
- 16 Dutch _; cast-iron kettle
- 17 Alamo's location
- 19 Rather, for one
- 20 Tribal pole
- 21 Alex Haley's famous book
- 22 "The Pine Tree State"
- 24 Gullible fool
- 25 Unethical payoffs
- 27 Lifts with effort
- 30 Solitude lover
- 31 Lunch in the sty
- 33 _ Tin Tin
- 35 _ and ends
- 36 Shaver's target
- 37 Finish _; racer's goal
- 38 Classroom contest
- 39 Angry look
- 40 Cheek coloring
- 41 Hateful
- 43 Ill-fated
- 44 Wish undone
- 45 Drifter
- 46 Detest
- 49 Exposed
- 51 Busy airport
- 54 Outer limits
- 56 Not in danger
- 57 Encourage
- 58 Irritates
- 59 Shoelace problem
- 60 _ off; angry
- 61 Cluttered
- 62 Part of TGIF

DOWN

- 1 _ lamps; 1960s fad
- 2 Receptive to new ideas
- 3 Pallid; sickly
- 4 Bricklayers
- 5 Decrease in force



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.

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

For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A5.

- 6 Funnel's shape
- a _
- 7 Early man
- 18 Mountain road
- 8 Actress Ming-Na
- 20 Stadium level
- 9 Ice cream portions
- 23 Lincoln & others
- 10 Toddler's taboo
- 24 Auctioneer's cry
- 11 Fail to include
- 25 Goopy lump
- 12 Courts
- 26 Cowboy's
- 13 Like two peas in

competition

- 27 Employ
- 28 Rejoicing in victory
- 29 Burn the edges of
- 31 Black and Red
- 32 Military conflict
- 34 " _ I say more?"
- 36 Sapphire's color
- 37 Weaving frame
- 39 Melon or squash
- 40 "Abbey _"; Beatles album
- 42 Pressed flat
- 43 Like formal attire
- 45 Kilmer's famous poem
- 46 Share a border with
- 47 Dull speaker
- 48 Enormous
- 49 Cheese good with fruit
- 50 Has poor health
- 52 Eerie saucers
- 53 Play the ponies
- 55 Word attached to chair or pit
- 56 _ lift; uphill transport

Tribune Media Services

NMUSD trustee plans run for Newport Beach council

BY LILLY NGUYEN

A second competitor has entered the race for the Newport Beach City Council.

On Friday, Newport-Mesa Unified School District trustee Michelle Barto announced her bid for District 2, which represents Newport Heights, Westcliff, Newport Shores and West Newport. Barto will run for election against community activist Nancy Scarborough. Both will run to succeed Councilman Brad Avery, who will finish his second term next fall.

The election will be held Nov. 5, 2024, and will include Districts 2, 5 and 7.

It is so far unclear who will run in District 7. Mayor Noah Blom is expected to run for reelection in District 5, which represents Balboa Island.

Barto was first elected to the school board in 2018 and served as its president last year. She is a small business owner and has

been involved with the Assistance League of Newport-Mesa, the Pretend City Children's Museum, the Harbor Council PTA, Project Hope Alliance, the Newport Beach Foundation's Distinguished Citizens program and a trustee and president on the Coastline Regional Occupational Program Board.

Barto was born and raised in east-side Costa Mesa and moved to Newport Beach in 2008. She has lived in her district since 2012.

"When I ran for school board, the systems for educational development, achievement and facilities weren't in place. We didn't have really strong leaders seeing this through at a staff level, but we do now, and we have a lot of great things that we've been able to accomplish in a short amount of time," Barto said.

She said the school district faces the same challenges as the city, such as

speeding e-bikes, traffic and homelessness, but notes they are community issues.

"A key component of that comes down to supporting our law enforcement, but I ... [may look] at the problem a different way than other people might have because of my time with working with youth and families on the school board," Barto said.

Her main focuses are on public safety and quality of life, protecting Newport Harbor and continuing fiscal responsibility within the city. She said she announced early because of encouragement from her supporters.

"I think I make the best candidate for District 2 because of the experience I bring in working on community solutions with [the City Council], the school district and local law enforcement," Barto said.

lilly.nguyen@latimes.com
Twitter: @lilibirds

DUCK

Continued from page A1

shut like a spring-loaded trap.

Alligator snapping turtles are ambush predators who lie on the bottom of a lake and lure prey into their open, waiting maws, while smaller common snapping turtles walk on land and can aggressively lunge and snip at prey. Females get especially combative in summer when looking to lay eggs.

"They are voracious, aggressive eaters that have been known to eat baby alligators. They also eat other turtles," said Fullerton resident John Kim, who heads the California Turtle & Tortoise Club and its Orange County chapter.

"They will eat anything that crosses their path, which is why they're illegal in California."

Kim further said snappers are known for going after a bird's feet, although residents who watch the Mile Square Park birds say they've never seen those sorts of injuries.

Fountain Valley bird enthusiast and hobbyist wildlife photographer Robert Di Massa, who visits the park daily and was on site Wednesday evening, said he's never seen snapping turtles there.

"That's what I've been told a dozen times from every other person, because that's what someone told them. Someone at the top put that down the chain, and then that's what everyone goes with,"

he said by phone. "[But] I haven't seen one yet. and I've looked low down under the brush with binoculars and a scope."

Debbie McGuire, executive director of the Wetlands & Wildlife Care Center in Huntington Beach, has treated several Mile Square ducks and says there are two distinct types of injuries — bills are either ripped or cut off, or the top or bottom half of a bill is broken on both sides near the jawline.

"How would a turtle bite make it break like that without part of the beak being missing?" she posed.

McGuire recalled an incident about a year ago, when workers were repairing the lake at Mile Square

See **Duck**, page A5



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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

CdM claims first-round win over Paraclete

BY ANDREW TURNER

Momentum is a fickle component of competition, and for much of this season, it has proven elusive to the Corona del Mar football team.

The Sea Kings hope the tide has turned, as a 40-21 win over visiting Lancaster Paraclete Thursday to open the CIF Southern Section Division 4 playoffs gave CdM its first set of back-to-back victories since the second week of the season.

Senior quarterback Kaleb Annett, a Boise State commit, accounted for five total touchdowns. The Sea Kings took the lead twice on his touchdown passes in the first half — on a red-zone toss to Breck Clemmer in the first quarter and then a deep ball to Russell Weir in the second quarter.

Annett tallied his third and final passing touchdown on a screen pass to halfback Wyatt Lucas on the opening drive of the second half, extending the CdM advantage to 20-7. A personal foul on the extra-point try was assessed on the kickoff, leading to an on-side kick by the Sea Kings that was recovered by Michael Lynch at the Paraclete 32.

"We caught some momentum early second half with the touchdown, then their personal foul, then our onside kick," CdM coach Kevin Hettig said.

A mobile quarterback, Annett did not take off beyond the line of



James Carbone

CORONA DEL MAR quarterback Kaleb Annett (11) runs in for a touchdown in the fourth quarter against Paraclete in the CIF Southern Section Division 4 playoffs on Thursday at Davidson Field.

scrimmage in the first half. He was effective as a runner after halftime, his first three carries resulting in two first downs and a touchdown. Annett converted the extra possession into a 20-yard

rushing score inside the right pylon.

"I just try to let the game come to me, not force everything, especially when we're in a pass situation, try to get my guys the ball,

make the right read," Annett said. "But if it's there, using my legs, that's something I can do, so just keep trying to play good football."

Corona del Mar (6-5) turned in two defensive stops thereafter,

with Christian Brooks and Thomas Telesco often finding themselves around the ball. Damian Zeno-Herrera also recorded a sack.

Annett added a goal-line run to make it 33-7 early in the fourth quarter. When quarterback Tyler Soles answered with a 20-yard rushing touchdown five plays later for Paraclete (7-4), it took CdM six plays to respond with a 24-yard rushing score by Owen Sanders.

"We played clean tonight," Hettig said. "Our big focus this week was connecting all three phases. We played excellent in special teams tonight. We played excellent defense tonight. We played very good offense tonight."

A budding group of junior tight ends has helped give CdM options beyond wide receiver Weir and slot receiver Dorsett Stecker. Zach Giuliano, Sebastien Boydell and Clemmer have all made key contributions.

"We all push each other in practice, and it's great competition," Clemmer said. "We all compete for that spot, and all three of us, I think, can go out there and make some plays, so it's great to have three guys like that for our offense."

Corona del Mar will be on the road in the quarterfinals against the winner of Santa Fe Springs St. Paul and Santa Barbara.

andrewturner@latimes.com Twitter: @AndrewTurnerTCN

DUCK

Continued from page A3

Park with a backhoe and dredged up a snapping turtle and a soft-shelled turtle from the muddy bottom. But she still disputes CDFW's recent findings.

"I totally disagree, but I do think it's a plausible explanation for some of the injuries," she said.

Equally troubling about the possibility of snappers at Mile Square Park is the jurisdictional quagmire they present.

Just like waterfowl, which don't technically belong to the park, there is no one agency responsible for the care and keeping, or removal, of wildlife at the park.

Alexa Pratt is a spokeswoman for Orange County's Community Resources Division, which oversees the county's parks and animal care efforts. Pratt said Tuesday snapping turtles aren't within the department's purview.

"We're glad that snapping turtles were the cause and not any foul

play," she said. "But because they're an illegal species, [animal care officers] don't take in any snapping turtles. The officer would call Fish & Wildlife."

Daly said Friday while the department might get involved if someone were bitten by a snapping turtle, there are not enough officers on staff to handle local animal management issues.

"We're happy to work with O.C. Parks on solutions, advice and safety tips, etc.," he said Friday. "But the message from us is the importance of not dumping an illegal, potentially harmful species into public lakes. Though it might seem harmless to you, it might present a harmful situation to animals or others, which appears to be the case here."

Anyone who discovers an injured animal at Mile Square Regional Park or any other county property is asked to call O.C. Animal Care's 24-hour line at (714) 935-6848.

sara.cardine@latimes.com Twitter: @SaraCardine



THE LAGUNA BEACH High marching band proceeds down Forest Avenue during the 56th annual Patriots Day Parade in Laguna Beach earlier this year. The parade is held on the first Saturday of March. In 2024, the theme will be "Laguna Heritage."

Don Leach Staff Photographer

PARADE

Continued from page A1

I love to be with, and they're all giving people," said Shoemaker, who flew for the Air Force for five years before joining Continental Airlines in 1966. "That was what I love to do is just help other people. It's in my heart to help others. My friends from the church and those that I've met at the church and the city have the same feeling I do. I wanted to help the homeless as best I could."

Shoemaker added that he has helped out with the

Friendship Shelter and the Alternative Sleeping Location, as well as the Laguna Food Pantry.

When natural disaster struck, Shoemaker would avail himself in relief efforts, including after a tornado touched down in Joplin, Mo., and following Hurricane Katrina.

The Honored Patriot will be Vietnam War veteran Col. Richard Seitz. The Athlete of the Year will be Laguna Beach High junior Brayden Belden, who recently made waves by qualifying for a final in the Brooks Street Surfing Classic.

The Junior Citizens of the Year, yet to be announced, are chosen by staff at the high school.

Mike Tauber, who will be honored as the Artist of the Year, said he will be encouraging community organizations to participate as exhibitors in the parade. Some of his latest work is on display at the Taco Stand restaurant at South Coast Highway and Cleo Street. The pieces are called "Laguna Honors its Artists" and "Swimming in Sea Life."

"It's one of Laguna Beach's biggest community events downtown, if not the

largest," Tauber said of the parade. "The far corners of all of Laguna participate, which is very exciting to me — everyone from the Garden Club to the students."

"Some of my favorite things are the marching bands that come down from as far away as Los Angeles, the Valley, Bakersfield, Temecula. It's amazing to me that these teenagers must get up at 5 a.m., put on their uniforms and come down to Laguna with their instruments and come out and perform for us."

andrew.turner@latimes.com Twitter: @AndrewTurnerTCN

SURVIVES

Continued from page A1

For example, how will the city meet the relentless state mandates for affordable housing when the current median home listing price is in the \$4-million range, according to Realtor.com?

It's these types of issues that worry Chris Quilter, an affordable housing and senior advocate in Laguna, who worked on Rounaghi's campaign and hopes he can follow through on his agenda.

"He was born in a town where he can barely afford to live, so it's no surprise that he is our most vocal advocate for affordable housing," Quilter said. "Despite the state man-

dates that require us to act, building anything in Laguna is expensive and divisive. So any housing project Alex supports will be fiercely opposed by our many NIMBYs," Quilter noted, using the common acronym for Not in My Backyard. "It will be interesting to see how he navigates this challenge."

Rounaghi admits he feels like he has a long way to go. Nothing comes easy, and the machine of government bureaucracy sometimes weighs him down. He is, after all, a Gen Z with a blushing Instagram account.

"There should never be a six-hour meeting," he said. "Six-hour meetings are not a sustainable way of having 22,000 residents being able to get involved. Most people are working, they're raising their kids, they're paying their high property taxes to live in Laguna Beach. They don't have time to be involved in a six-hour meeting. I barely have enough time to do that."

If he could wave a magic wand, he would significantly streamline the city's byzantine regulations, starting with the Design Review Board process.

"If you look at our design review process, that's what I get the most emails and calls about," he said. "It's like hell and back to go through a remodel on your house."

So he's working on changing it, along with a laundry list of other issues:

• **Village Entrance:** "It's been debated for 30-plus years when really it's kind of a simple question: Is the surface parking lot there the highest and best use for that land? And I think most reasonable people would say, no, it's not."

• **Second-story downtown housing:** "It's going to bring our downtown alive, and it's going to create opportunity for our young people, artists, and seniors to be part of our community."

• **Restaurant closures:** "I think it's a crisis. When you talk to residents, people are pissed off. They want to be able to go to restaurants. They want cool things. But if you want to open up a restaurant in the city of Laguna Beach, it's a hard process."

• **Rethink rules:** "We've been sort of complacent, saying, 'Oh, we have all these rules and we're just going to keep blindly following them.' Some of the rules make sense, but then others don't. I think more broadly, we need to be more intentional and ask, what do we want for this town?"

• **Business vitality:** "We can get out of the way but still regulate the things we want to regulate. Every month that a business is waiting to open, that's another month that they

have to pay rent and absorb costs. The big chains can handle that; the little guy can't. They're going to go to Costa Mesa and open up there instead — or Dana Point."

• **Take over PCH and Laguna Canyon Road:** "It's dangerous. A lot of these cars don't even stop here. They use it as a freeway. If we could slow it down, it would make it a lot better for residents. I think we just need to take it over from Caltrans. In the canyon, the question is not if a fire is going to start from an above-ground utility line but when. The cost of doing nothing is way higher than the cost of taking action."

You can't help but wonder how long Rounaghi will be content to fight the fight in Laguna. Will he move on once he gets bored or feels like he's done enough? Perhaps, but for now he's all in.

"I'm optimistic that for the next few years — or eight years if I'm reelected — I feel like we're going to be able to solve some of these big problems that we've been talking about for years. I think now is the time to take action. That's what makes me the most excited about being on the City Council."

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

Daily Pilot logo and contact information for the publication, including names of editors and reporters.

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS

Crossword puzzle grid with filled-in letters.

Sudoku puzzle grid with numbers.

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