



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

ANAYA GREEN chops a carrot at her station as part of the culinary arts program at the Orange County School of the Arts kitchen in Santa Ana.

The power of food

14-year-old cancer survivor attends culinary arts program

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

As a young child, Anaya Green enjoyed watching cooking competitions on television.

“Watching shows on Food Network sort of made me forget about being sick,” said Green, who was diagnosed with stage 4 neuroblastoma when she was just 2½ years old and given only a 4% chance of surviving.

“A 4% chance of survival is not a good thing to hear,” said Anaya’s mother, Amanda Green.

But Green now sits next to her daughter, an outgoing 14-year-old who is in her first year of the culinary arts program at the Orange County School of the Arts in Santa Ana.

“I am most happy about having friends that share a love of cooking,” said Anaya.

Food has always played a large role in the family. When Anaya



ANAYA GREEN stands at her station at the Orange County School of the Arts kitchen with Chef Director Daniel Mattos.

was 3 years old, she was receiving treatment at an outpatient center, where she met Max and his mother, Audra DiPadova.

“We would have to be there for infusions, so normally we were there for quite a few hours,” said Green.

Max was receiving treatment along with Anaya, and Green said she started to not feel so alone.

“Up until that point, it had always been scary and I didn’t plan on making connections,” said Green. “You are singularly focused on your kid and possibly losing your kid. It was the first time I had the ability to sit and talk with a mom and realize I wasn’t the only one feeling like that.”

At the same time, DiPadova was using her chef background to help parents use nutrition and integrative medicine to help their children thrive in treatment and beyond.

While Max was still in chemotherapy treatment, DiPadova started the MaxLove Project, a nonprofit with a mission to increase quality of life and re-

See **Food**, page A2

F.V. to build its 1st fully inclusive play area

Designed to foster play for people of all abilities, the playground will be constructed at Fountain Valley Sports Park.

BY ANDREW TURNER

Fountain Valley will be placing a playground suitable for all individuals in its central gathering place by the end of the year.

Plans for a universally accessible playground were approved by the Fountain Valley City Council on Tuesday. The play area is expected to cost about \$1.72 million.

A \$1.45-million contract was awarded to PlayPower LT Farmington for construction. The vendor will partner with Unlimited Play — a nonprofit that helps to have fully accessible playgrounds built — to fundraise for and promote the project to the community.

Universally accessible playgrounds are touted as inclusive facilities that can break down barriers, raise awareness and build friendships through parallel play.

“A playground like this, it will be such a welcoming atmosphere for persons with disabilities, not only children, but also adults,”

See **Play**, page A3

Smokey, feathered star on YouTube, is missing

Fountain Valley resident John Nguyen, who offers tips on raising birds on YouTube, seeks help finding his parrot.

BY SARA CARDINE

For more than a decade, Fountain Valley resident and bird lover John Nguyen has educated people on the ins and outs of caring for avian pets, posting regular videos on a YouTube channel that has garnered more than 87,500 followers.

He shares what he’s gleaned about raising, training and housing birds in videos starring Smokey, an African grey parrot he’s raised for the past 14 years and with whom he’s shared a strong bond since he bottle-fed her at 5 weeks old. Some videos have been viewed millions of times.

A beautiful grey — pigeon-sized with mottled gray feathers, ruby red tail feathers and a white fask that encircles eyes of pale yellow — Smokey’s good looks and ability to maintain tidbits of conversation, meow like a cat and utter phrases like “tickle, tickle”

See **Missing**, page A3

Are 1 million Girl Scout cookies enough for O.C.?

BY ERIC LICAS

Someone once gave 10-year-old Mia Tejeda of Newport Beach a fake \$100 bill to pay for Girl Scout cookies, and she was gutted when she found out. But she bounced back the following year and managed to deal out 3,000 boxes of the coveted, seasonally available snacks, becoming her troop’s sales leader for the 2022 season.

At 8.5 ounces per box, that’s more than 22 times the average American fifth-grader’s mass in cookies. Tejeda hopes to sell just as many if not more this year, she said while creating signs to advertise the treats at the Arguros Girl Scout Leadership Center in Newport Beach Friday.

She, her 5-year-old sister Ava Tejeda, their mother and troop leader Adrianna Tejeda, as well as fellow Newport Beach Girl



Emily Barry

GIRL SCOUTS Addison Barry, right, 9, and Mia Tejeda, 10, pose next to stacks of cookies that they plan to sell in Newport Beach. They plan to use their profits to buy supplies for a local animal shelter.

See **Cookies**, page A2

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Junior’s award-winning app creates an ‘Impact’

Joyce De Quiros designed the app to help her peers keep up with events around the world.

BY LILLY NGUYEN

Joyce De Quiros is a girl who sees a problem and devises solutions.

De Quiros, 17, said she noticed during her history classes that when her teachers would ask her classmates if they had the answer to something or if they were paying attention to any current events, no one would raise their hand.

“I felt like I needed to help my peers be more aware of our world events because I understand that we are going to be running

this world someday,” De Quiros said.

Inspired by a competition, De Quiros created an award-winning app to meet that need.

“I really wanted to help my peers understand the world better, and one way I could do that was through community service, which I included in my app,” she continued. “There is a list of world events in each continent and when you click on it, you can get more information and a list of resources to help or make a difference, or make an impact, which is what I named my app.”

She decided to create the application after hearing about the 2022 Congressional App Challenge from a teacher. The challenge is

hosted by the U.S. House of Representatives and aims to inspire students to pursue careers in computer science. The competition is district-specific, and De Quiros came out on top for California’s 48th Congressional District, represented by Rep. Michelle Steel.

She had participated previously in 2021 with a mental health and tracking app she called Eaze, capturing third place in the competition.

“I wanted to get first place just to prove myself,” De Quiros said. “I wanted to keep making apps for students to use ... so, I thought about it for a really long time trying to figure out what I wanted to do for the app. Something that was helpful for others, not just



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

JOYCE DE QUIROS, a Newport Harbor High School junior, won the Congressional App Challenge with her app, Impact. The app features a list of world events.

something that I wanted to make. It took me a really long time. Maybe four months? But it only took me

two weeks to actually make the app. I had to stay up late for so many days to get it working.”

But since she had experience, it didn’t take her nearly as long as it did in 2021. Programming the Impact app started and was completed in November, in time to meet the competition’s deadline.

De Quiros waited all December for an email back, having expected one from either Steel or one of her assistants to announce the verdict on “Impact,” but she didn’t see any correspondence from the congresswoman’s office. So, De Quiros looked it up online and saw she was the one who won.

“I want to extend my congratulations to Joyce for winning this year’s Congressional App Challenge,” said

See **Impact**, page A8



Photos by Eric Licas

FROM LEFT, Girl Scouts Mia Tejada, Ava Tejada and Addison Barry create a sign to advertise cookies on Friday.

COOKIES

Continued from page A1

Scout Addison Barry, 9, and her mother Emily Barry, have been gearing up for this year’s cookie season for over a month. Shipments of Thin Mints, Caramel deLites, a new treat called Raspberry Rally and seven other varieties that are offered this year won’t even be distributed to most troops until Jan. 28, but they have already begun receiving a steady stream of orders from regulars.

“She’ll be walking back from a booth sale pulling her wagon behind her, and someone will usually stop us in the parking lot and say ‘Wait! Can we still buy some cookies from you?’” Emily Barry said.

She said the wildly popular goodies almost sell themselves, but that doesn’t mean Girl Scouts won’t have to hustle to meet the sales goals that each one decides upon ahead of the season. Adriana Tejada said her daughter would set up shop from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. on Saturdays, all while managing school and extracurricular activities last year.

Cookie sales, like practically all of a troop’s activities, teach girls how to plan, set budgets, manage expectations and think like entrepreneurs at an early age, Girl Scouts of Orange County chief executive Vikki Shepp said Friday. She added that youth who were a part of the program



GIRL SCOUT Ava Tejada, 5, and her sister, Mia, have been gearing up for this year’s cookie season for over a month.

are more likely to graduate from college and become civically engaged as adults.

The girls also learn to work together, even in a competitive setting, Adriana Tejada said. They coordinate with each other to make sure they’re not all trying to make sales in the exact same area at the same time, and are told to never discourage people from buying from other Girl Scouts to benefit their own numbers.

This year, Addison and Mia’s troop plans to use a portion of profits from cookies to buy supplies for a local animal shelter. The rest will help fund educational trips and other experiences designed to teach life lessons while rewarding each Girl Scout for their hard work.

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FOOD

Continued from page A1

duce health risks for families surviving childhood cancer. Nutrition is crucial for children who need strength to endure multiple rounds of chemotherapy.

Amanda and Anaya found themselves in the MaxLove community, and Anaya fell in love with the organization’s various programs, like the Fierce Food Academy program.

“At the cooking classes they would teach us how to cook. We were not able to eat out, so they would find ways to teach us how to make food but keep it healthy so we weren’t harming ourselves,” said Anaya. “We were still able to have fun.”

The Fierce Food Academy is a family-focused culinary medicine program that offers cooking classes and nutrition support. The program teaches families to incorporate nutrient-dense foods into their everyday lives and teach them how to use real food to restore health, reduce side effects of conventional treatments and improve

long-term quality of life. Green said it is just one of the ways MaxLove Project helps families feel like they can regain some control.

“It gives us a lot of hope,” Green said. “That is something that I can control and Anaya can control, the ability to learn about the power that food has ... Getting lost in food and learning about food and having that community to empower you ... is just fun for the kids. It allows us to feel like that is something we have control over.”

Learning to make guacamole was a favorite for Anaya, especially since avocados fit within the ketogenic diet many children battling cancer find can be helpful.

Then when Anaya and her mother attended a MaxLove fundraising event, Anaya saw kids like her serving the food.

OCSA’s Culinary program founder and director, Chef Daniel Mattos, is passionate about MaxLove Program’s mission and encourages his students to participate in the group’s events.

“Audra introduced me to Chef Mattos, and at that

point, I thought my daughter is so excited about these kids cooking for the event, let me pick his brain,” said Green.

Green said it opened a door for her daughter, and now as a freshman in the program, Anaya is excited to hone her skills.

“It is my first year and I am exploring everything,” said Anaya.

One particular triumph for Anaya was being able to serve guests at MaxLove’s Farm to Fork event this year with her OCSA classmates. It was an experience she said she enjoyed even more than being a guest.

“I feel like doing the service is more satisfying,” said Anaya. “When people say, ‘Oh wow this is really good,’ it stays with me longer than if I just ate the food.”

Green, who lives with her daughter in Mission Viejo, said she sometimes worries about her working in the culinary field, but Anaya is quick to remind her of her strength.

“As a mom, you are like, ‘Oh my god, you are going to work with knives, you are going to cut a finger off,’” said Green. “But she



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

ANAYA GREEN holds up an eggplant at the Orange County School of the Arts kitchen in Santa Ana. The 14-year-old is in her first year of the school’s culinary arts program.

reminds me, ‘Mommy, I have been through worse than that, I think I got it.’”

For now, Anaya is excited to see where her culinary career will take her. She has an interest in learning

pastry but also wants to share the food of her culture with others.

“We are from Trinidad, so anything Caribbean,” Green said of the food Anaya likes to make.

“I want to make people happy with my food,” Anaya added.

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PLAY

Continued from page A1

John Borack, chair of the city's advisory committee for persons with disabilities, told the council.

"I've been told that a lot of adults with disabilities use the Sports Park and Mile Square Park. They walk around, and they might get a little bit tired or weary and need a shady place to sit down. I know there's ample shade at this facility, so that would be one use for it beyond just the playground function.

"The fact that it's multi-generational, the fact that it's inclusive, that folks with disabilities can play right alongside other children, that's something that would not probably have happened 15 to 20 years ago."

Capital improvement

funding of \$400,000 was available from the past two years for the rehabilitation project. Park renovations halted during that period due to the coronavirus pandemic, city officials noted. The city also received \$211,000 in state funding through a Proposition 68 grant.

City staffers said additional funding is expected to come in the form of community support. The Fountain Valley Community Foundation has pledged to match \$50,000 in community contributions, according to a staff report.

"There's been a push for [this project] for at least since we were participating with the Special Olympics," Community Services Director Rob Frizzelle said. "Back in 2015 was when our city got excited about supporting what we would like to call a universally ac-

cessible playground [and] parallel play in our community."

Frizzelle iterated that such playgrounds and recreation areas go beyond the step of helping those with physical disabilities. He noted the facility will have features such as musical equipment for independent play, as well as a sensory garden.

Renderings of the project have shown multiple seating areas, some of which are covered. There will also be shade structures on the playground itself. As the facility will be built in Fountain Valley Sports Park, there are references to athletics throughout, including a football gridiron surface beneath the zipline area.

Like the current iteration of the playground at the Sports Park, the facility will also have poured-in-place



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

FOUNTAIN VALLEY has plans to construct a universally accessible playground at the Fountain Valley Sports Park. The play area is expected to cost about \$1.72 million.

rubberized surfacing to make it ADA accessible.

"When we talk parallel

play, that's what we want to make sure is if we have swings, or the ziplines included in this project, that the kids are playing on the zipline together," Frizzelle said. "That's what parallel play is, and that's when we break down barriers, because that's when kids recognize that all people want to play.

"They want the same enjoyment out of play. They're looking for the same outcomes, and they all deserve that same respect, dignity and love."

Councilman Ted Bui said he felt the project would be great for the community, but he abstained from the vote after expressing concern about the timing of the spending. He wanted to delay a vote to know the annual maintenance costs

for the facility, and he was also interested in seeing fundraising projections for the project.

"Don't forget that the park fees for the Slater project alone, I think, it's approximately \$1.9 million," Mayor Pro Tem Glenn Grandis said. "Even if we were to not raise a dime, which we will, you're talking out of the \$1.5 million, we're going to have a surplus on that one. ... It can only be spent on parks. It's not like we can take it and move it to the general fund. That's only the first project in the next 10 years that is going to come before us. Each and every one of those will have park fees included."

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BEST HOSPITALS
U.S. News & World Report
CANCER
2022-23

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

MISSING

Continued from page A1

and "Are you a birdie?" amassed a lot of interest in the YouTube world and on social media.

Now Nguyen is hoping that interest will help him find his beloved bird, who flew out of a backyard aviary three weeks ago and hasn't been seen since.

The high school teacher has been pounding the pavement and searching the skies for his friend, while on walks with wife Dina Vu and 1-year-old daughter Hailey but, aside from an occasional lead that goes nowhere or, in one case, a prank call, there's been no word of his pet.

In his most recent video, posted to the YouTube channel "wingsNpaws," Nguyen, 35, relates the sad story, urging anyone in Orange County who may have seen his beloved parrot, or possibly taken her in, to contact him.

"Hi guys," he says, somberly addressing the camera. "Smokey is missing."

He explains the last time he saw her, at around 5



Courtesy of John Nguyen

AFRICAN GREY parrot Smokey, pictured in 2017, has been missing from her Fountain Valley home since Jan. 1. Owner John Nguyen has a YouTube channel dedicated to birds.

p.m. on New Year's Day, he was replacing a falling perch in her aviary when she suddenly startled, flapping and flying out of panic through an unlatched door. The parrot circled once and then gained altitude, reach-

ing a height unfamiliar to her.

Although Nguyen searched for her in the gathering dark, calling out her name, he could not find her. He's since posted fliers, contacted nearby veterinary of-

fices and animal shelters and tried to spread the word on social media.

Hundreds of followers of Nguyen's YouTube channel, and others on Instagram, have offered words of encouragement from all over

the world in response to the teacher's last video post. Some share tales of their own missing birds or an occasional reunion. Still, despite more than 5,700 views, Smokey's whereabouts remain unknown.

Unlike missing cats or dogs, who may be able to subsist outdoors on scraps and their own hunting instinct, domesticated birds may have a harder time locating food in the wild. Nguyen says his only hope is that Smokey, perhaps exhausted from flying, may have flown to a stranger who could be keeping her safe.

"I suspect, at this point, it's very unlikely that she's still in the wild," Nguyen said. "I'm clinging to the hope every day that she's with a family right now and they just don't know we're looking for her."

Meanwhile, his Fountain Valley home is a lot quieter these days. Smokey's indoor perches are a sad reminder of happier times, while the outdoor aviary seems vast and empty without its tenant. Hailey, who'd become accustomed to feeding Smokey each morning, still asks after her.

"I was able to get my daughter to the point where she could scratch Smokey's head — I think she misses her bird," he said. "We really want her back."

Undaunted, Nguyen continues to search and reach out to locals who may have seen or heard signs of unusual sounds or activities near their homes, such as Smokey's uncanny impression of crows or the beeping of a truck backing up.

Though he tries to remain positive, hope is dwindling as each day passes. He's asking anyone in Fountain Valley, Huntington Beach, Santa Ana, Westminster and Garden Grove — or even as far away as Costa Mesa or Anaheim — to keep an eye and an ear out for Smokey and call (714) 725-8355 with any possible leads.

"It's very defeating, at the end of the day, knowing another day has gone by, which means the chances of finding her are getting so much harder," Nguyen said of the search. "I feel like I'm fighting against time."

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forum

COMMENTARY | TONY STRICKLAND

Should OCPA still light Surf City? Not without major changes

The Orange County Power Authority finds itself at a crossroads. It started with the idea of making energy cheaper for most, greener for some, and offered by a competent, accountable, transparent and local Orange County provider. But since its inception, OCPA has remained in the news for all the wrong reasons, repeatedly discrediting itself and its mission.

Any government organization that begins with serious questions of leadership qualification, basic transparency failures, early executive resignations, city investigations, county investigations, state investigations, grand jury reports and even whistleblower complaints needs more than just a look in the mirror. Anything short of wholesale change shows a rubber stamping

of the status quo.

The reason you see the county of Orange leaving, and cities like Huntington Beach considering being next in line to go, is because OCPA has yet to show an ability to even execute the basics of government or make the changes necessary to do so.

From my perspective, just as troublesome as OCPA's operational issues is that it continues to tout supposed cost savings enjoyed by OCPA customers, when almost every member city of OCPA automatically sticks every resident into a 100% Renewable Tier, where costs skyrocket for most customers who don't go out of their way to read the fine print and take action to maintain a more affordable rate.

This directly goes against what was, and still is, being sold to the public about the very idea of

CCE, generally, and OCPA specifically. A rate increase being sold as a cost savings is a simple bait and switch, and the kind of blatant dishonesty that erodes trust in government.

As the new mayor of Huntington Beach, I am working to find a solution to this mess that first and foremost protects Huntington Beach ratepayers. We have already remedied the backdoor rate increase, knocking Surf City residents back down to the Basic Tier that more closely mirrors our old rates.

But a more fundamental question exists: Should Huntington Beach even stay part of such a troubled organization? In this case, there are a few obvious changes I believe are essential for OCPA to credibly continue:

See **OCPA**, page A7



Rob Nikolewski | San Diego Union-Tribune

HUNTINGTON BEACH Mayor Tony Strickland writes about changes he feels should be made at the Orange County Power Authority.

MAILBAG

Mayor's claims about housing in H.B. ignore the high cost



Raul Roa

A READER writes that housing in Huntington Beach is too expensive for residents' children and grandchildren to afford. Pictured, balconies of the Huntington Gardens apartment complex on Florida Street.

In recent Daily Pilot reporting (Warning delivered to Huntington Beach City Council as it again considers suing state over housing mandates, Daily Pilot, Jan. 12), Mayor Tony Strickland notes that California has lost nearly 120,000 people in the last census and has lost a seat in the House of Representatives. The implication is that increasing housing cannot possibly be an emergency. I can certainly forgive Mayor Strickland for misunderstanding the local conditions here in Huntington Beach so badly, as he has only been a resident a handful of years. In fact, the main threat to our city's identity as a comfortable suburban beach community is the fact that our children and grandchildren cannot afford to live in their hometown. Early-career professionals setting up a household in our city can look forward to rent-burdens of around 60% of a (good) starting salary, leaving little to begin a college-savings plan or pay childcare. When our children start their careers in Ohio or Idaho or Massachusetts, we will have the short-sighted arguments of Mayor Strickland to thank. Who among us would rather face a 10-hour battle with John Wayne or LAX instead of an extra 15 minutes in crosstown traffic to visit with our

grandchildren? Who among us would prefer that our children be a part of the California Exodus, when simply building housing for them will keep them close by? Indeed, without dramatically increasing housing opportunities in the city, instead of a sleepy beach town, the mayor will have transformed the city into a playground for those with generational wealth — not exactly what he campaigned upon, and not exactly what anyone voted for.

Galen Pickett
Huntington Beach

Rouda a good choice for Congress

I heartily concur with the observations of letter writer Lynn Lorenz ("Porter's announcement is not unexpected", Mailbag, Jan. 13). Beyond Porter's obvious qualifications to serve in the U.S. Senate, she would bring a needed balance to our state representation. It is an odds on bet that a female candidate would be a better fit to

See **Mailbag**, page A8

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In Conversation

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THE JOY CLUB

WHERE THE PAST BEGINS

THE BONESETTER'S DAUGHTER

Photo by Julian Johnson

THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Jacqueline E. Mathews

ACROSS

1 Angry cat's greeting

5 Of the countryside

10 Nocturnal birds

14 _ A Sketch; drawing toy

15 Turn _; avert

16 Cheese good with fruit

17 " _ Breaky Heart"

18 Vengeful

20 Fraternity letter

21 Follow orders

22 Finds odious

23 _ to; because of

25 Luau dish

26 Make wider

28 Medical facility

31 Fess up

32 Less vivid in color

34 Soft wet soil

36 Protein source

37 Ski lodge beverage

38 Full of energy

39 Break a fast

40 Destined

41 Silly as a _

42 _ of; finds out about

44 Women's accessories

45 Name with Fannie or Ginnie

46 Ascends

47 Colorado resort

50 Sound of relief

51 Courtroom promise

54 Covering completely

57 In the sack

58 Come to shore

59 Renter's contract

60 Clothed

61 Peepers

62 Noted

63 Cruz & Danson

DOWN

1 Listen

2 Eczema

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.

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

symptom	9 Garland
3 Playground pal	10 Acquire
4 Timid around others	11 Judge's order
5 Steep-sided valley	12 TV's "One Life to _"
6 _ up; finishing all of	13 Notices
7 Fruit casing	19 "Ave Maria" singers
8 Put 2 and 2 together	21 Hand protector
	24 Be patient
	25 "Not guilty," for

one

26 Knighted woman

27 Perfect

28 Nincompoop

29 Not doable

30 Bane

32 Patio plant containers

33 Many a hardware store

35 Becomes a redhead

37 Oldster's support

38 _ as a boil

40 Candid

41 Spew forth

43 Make _; atone

44 _ out; blew the diet

46 Wash off soapsuds

47 _-bodied; robust

48 Wipe out

49 See-through rectangle

50 "The King and I" setting

52 Pushing up daisies

53 Probability

55 Sprite

56 Actress Leoni

57 Perform

Tribune Media Services



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An entrepreneur’s restaurant dreams persevere

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Business owner Vicky Liu isn't one to give up easily. When the young entrepreneur was growing up in northern China, she never dreamed about being an employee, she said. She dreamed about being a boss.

“My parents, they were business owners,” Liu said. “So I never thought of being an employee. When I was a kid I thought I would be a business owner too.”

Last summer Liu opened Little Pan Gourmet Juicy Pan-Fried Bun in Santa Ana on Hut-ton Centre Drive, not far from John Wayne Airport.

“We are a pan-fried style of xiaolongbao,” said Liu. “The flour we use and the way we cook it is different. It makes the texture differ-ent.”

Like xiaolongbao, the buns are filled with soup and proteins like pork, but are fried rather than steamed, making for a crispy bottom and puffy top.

Little Pan isn't Liu's first business venture or even her first restaurant. She moved to the United States in high school and was accepted into the business economics program at UC Irvine. After getting her degree in 2015, she set out to start her first business, a food delivery app, in 2016.

“It was called Ban Ban Delivery,” said Liu. “I was running that for four years.”

Ban Ban Delivery did well, Liu said. But as more food delivery platforms like Uber Eats and Door Dash entered the market, it became more difficult for her small business to compete.

“There was just too much competition,” said Liu.

So she began a restaurant business called Little



A PLATE of 24-karat gold-leaf black truffle buns at Little Pan Gourmet Juicy Pan-Fried Bun in Santa Ana.



OWNER VICKY LIU stands inside Little Pan Gourmet Juicy Pan-Fried Bun in Santa Ana. Liu came to the U.S. as an international student who studied business at UC Irvine.

Pan Fried Bun in Santa Ana that specialized in pan-fried soup dumpling. Things were going well, and she looked to expand the concept with a second

location. She signed a lease at the Union Market in Tustin, but before she could open, a lawsuit between the sublease and the property management company forced all the tenants to vacate.

“It was almost ready to open this month, and then I got this information that we need to close,” Liu told TimesOC back in August 2022.

Liu didn't give up, however, and she pushed forward on opening a second location in Santa Ana, just a few doors from her original concept.

“The most exciting thing is we have a lot of old customers following us,” said Liu. “That gives me a lot of energy to keep going.”

Liu said diners don't always know what to expect when they learn Little Pan's Chinese food is from northern China, but she is confident they can find familiar items.

“Dumplings are little easier because people recognize dumplings,” Liu said.

The house special pan-fried pork buns are the most popular, Liu said, along with the black truffle pan-fried buns that are served with edible, 24-karat gold leaf on top.

“Since a lot of people don't eat meat we developed two other flavors,” said Liu. “One is corn cheese pan-fried bun and the other is purple yam pan-fried bun.”

Since mini dumplings are trending in Asia and on TikTok, the eatery has added them to the menu as well.

“The mini buns are beef,” said Liu. “Right now the mini pan fried bun is very popular in China.”

Besides pan-fried soup buns, the menu features soups and congee, a rice porridge dish, as well as delicacies like seafood pancake made with shrimp, squid and leek or Szechuan-style chicken in chili sauce.

Liu said she learned a lot with her previous businesses and hopes to use that experience to make Little Pan a continued success.

“I was facing a lot of problems when I was ending my old business, but still I stand up,” Liu said. “I am growing, and one day I think I will be the person I want to be.”

Most importantly, she will never give up, she said, and she wants to encourage others to follow her example.

“Doing business in America is hard, but it is not that hard,” said Liu. “If you have that dream, just do it. Even if you are from Asia or wherever you are from. Just do it. You will succeed.”

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Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

AMY TANG, owner of Sir Owlverick's Coffee, at Brewery X in Anaheim. Sir Owlverick's Coffee has collaborated with Brewery X to launch a beer in celebration of Lunar New Year.

Sir Owlverick's Coffee and Brewery X get hoppy for the Year of the Rabbit

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Coffee has always been part of Amy Tang's life.

“I came from a roasting family. My maternal grandfather was a coffee roaster and my dad was also a roaster,” said the founder and chief executive officer of Sir Owlverick's Coffee in Anaheim. She was born in Vietnam, but her family originated from China. When they came to the States, they brought the family business with them.

“When we came to the U.S. my father had been roasting coffee since he was 17, so he got a shop in Anaheim,” said Tang.

After an unsatisfying stint in the tech industry, Tang decided to continue her father's business and launched Sir Owlverick's Coffee in 2018. As a certified organic, non-GMO, women-owned and minority-owned coffee roaster, Tang found herself more fulfilled.

“You can talk to anyone about coffee,” said Tang.

“It brings people together.”

Tang has not only used coffee to bring people together but to share her heritage. To that end, Sir Owlverick's has collaborated with Anaheim's Brewery X to create a Vietnamese coffee stout in honor of Lunar New Year.

White Rabbit Vietnamese coffee stout is made with a dark roast blend from Owlverick's called Saigon Nights, which is a modern take on Vietnamese coffee.

Traditionally, Vietnamese coffee is a blend of chicory and Robusta beans making for a dark and smoky coffee flavor that is enhanced with sweetened condensed milk.

Tang worked with Trevor Walls, chief brewing officer at Brewery X, to capture that flavor in a beer.

“We said, ‘How do we come up with a beer that tastes like Vietnamese coffee?’” said Tang.

The result has a mouthfeel that is not unlike a latte. “We did this beer on nitro, rather than CO2,” Walls said.

Nitro carbonation creates smaller bubbles and a smoother texture, just like the Saigon Nights beans.

“Any beer you usually drink is carbonated with CO2 — carbon dioxide,” said Walls. “Then when you go to a coffee shop you hear about nitro ... a smaller bubble that really accentuates the flavor.”

Brewery X has used Owlverick's coffee in brews before and collaborated last year on a Lunar New Year beer as well.

“The difference between last year and this year is we made it a white stout versus your traditional-style stout,” said Walls. “I think a lot of people get intimidated by dark beers

See **Hoppy**, page A8

A dancer comes ‘full circle’ to Irvine Barclay

UC Irvine dance alumna Andrea Yorita joins BalletX for a show at the Barclay on Tuesday.

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Andrea Yorita danced on the Irvine Barclay Theatre stage for the first time as a young girl.

“My very first show, when I was 3 years old, I was a ladybug,” said Yorita, “and it was on the Barclay stage.”

On Tuesday, Yorita returns to the Barclay with her dance company, BalletX. “It feels like a full circle for me to be coming to perform at the Irvine Barclay,” she said. “It has been there at every stage of my life. I very much know the stage as a kid, and then I performed there when I was at UCI. Now performing there as a professional dancer is such a full circle.”

The Irvine native studied dance at Academy of Dance in Santa Ana, where she trained in the Royal Academy of Dance syllabus under Merle Sepel, Rebecca Tsivkin and Mignon Furman. After high school, Yorita attended UC Irvine, where she graduated with a BFA in dance performance in 2012 before joining BalletX.

One of the nation’s premier contemporary ballet companies, BalletX is based in Philadelphia and led by co-founder, artistic and executive director Christine Cox.

“BalletX is a contemporary ballet with a focus on new works, discovering new ways to move and bringing humanity to the ballet technique,” Yorita said.

The company is known for its progressive approach to ballet and its fresh presentation of brand-new dances.

“We do a lot of world premieres,” Yorita said. “We have done so many world premieres since the inception of the company. So we are always learning different ways to move from different choreographers and bringing their voices and their stories and translating it through our bodies.”

Yorita said she also appreciates the emphasis BalletX puts on diversity,



Sharen Bradford

BALLETX DANCERS perform. UC Irvine dance alumna Andrea Yorita and the company will appear at Irvine Barclay Theatre on Jan. 24.

which is a switch from classical ballet that often puts a focus on uniformity.

“Everybody here is very different. Everybody comes from different backgrounds, different careers, different training and different ways they came about dance. I think you see that a lot in their dancing,” said Yorita. “When I watch my co-workers, I love to see that we are individuals. We are not cookie-cutter and all have the same type of body. We have very different bodies and very different looks, and I feel like that is pretty unique.”

BalletX’s upcoming show in Orange County will include “Umoja,” by Tiler Peck, principal dancer with the New York City Ballet. The dance, named from the Swahili word for “unity,” is meant to inspire feelings of togetherness.

BalletX pushes dancers to explore the contemporary realm, and Yorita said at a recent show in Philadelphia she danced in flat ballet shoes, then pointe shoes, then sneakers.

“We do a lot of trying to morph back and forth between styles,” Yorita said.

But she admits contemporary dance was something she might never have explored without her training at UCI.

“Going to college really opened up my eyes to the contemporary dance world. Had I not gone to UCI, I probably would have aimed myself at a more traditional ballet company,” said Yorita. “At UCI, I was so lucky to have been exposed to a large range of styles from classical ballet to modern to jazz ... I don’t think I would have auditioned for BalletX had I not gone to UCI.”

As for her homecoming performance next week, Yorita assures audiences there is something for everyone.

“We have the more ballet-based piece by Tiler Peck for those who like the more traditional ballet lines, but then we also have very emotional work too. We have the fun and light stuff and the edgy piece from Jennifer Archibald,” Yorita said, referring to “Exalt,” by the Canadian-born founder of Arch Dance Co.

“There is something in there for everyone to like. The whole thing is going to take you on a very crazy journey in the best way possible,” she said.

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Iziliaev

BALLETX DANCERS Andrea Yorita and Richard Villaverde.

OCPA

Continued from page A4

- Whatever the path, OCPA needs to make major changes to once and for all clean up its act in a way compelling enough to restore the public’s trust.
- Change doesn’t end with internal operations. Appointed members who have steered this agency astray from its mission ought to be replaced, too. Skepticism will remain until those who squandered the public trust are replaced by new policy makers. To this end, as long as we are still a member, I have appointed my colleague, City Council member Casey McKeon, to look out for Huntington Beach’s interests on the OCPA Board.
- OCPA needs to do away with defaulting residents to any level but the Basic Tier. That’s what was, and still is, being sold to the public. What’s more, if higher participation in the 100% tier is a goal, OCPA staff can work to encourage environmentally conscious residents to voluntarily sign up. That’s what we were told the second C meant in Community Choice Energy.

But if OCPA remains unwilling or unable to make such changes, the choice for Huntington Beach becomes simple and straightforward.

We’re not opposed to energy that’s cheaper for most, cleaner for some, and local for everyone. What we’re against is OCPA’s, to-date, failed implementation of that idea.

TONY STRICKLAND is the mayor of Huntington Beach. He is a former California state senator and member of the Senate Energy Committee.

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Dr. Mark Kramer

Huntington Beach Art Center prepares to debut ‘Centered on the Center’ show

BY MATT SZABO

Carol Calkins got into photography as a hobby when she retired.

The Fountain Valley resident joined the Photographic Society of Orange County, which helped her fine-tune her skills. She enjoys taking pictures down at the Huntington Beach Pier or the Bolsa Chica Wetlands.

“My first photo I did was very small, and I only charged \$65 for it because I was nervous about even putting that price on it,” she said with a laugh. “And it sold, which was amazing to me. I was thrilled.”

This past year, Calkins attended a Volkswagen van show at the pier and saw an older couple sitting relaxed in front of their van. She asked if she could take their picture, and they agreed.

“It kind of reminded me of the hippies of the ‘60s, but the beach lifestyle, that’s for sure,” she said.

The resulting photo, titled “The Good Life,” is one of hundreds of pieces of art that will be on display at the Huntington Beach Art Center’s annual show known as “Centered on the Center.”

The exhibition will have a public opening reception on Saturday evening, Jan. 29, and run through March 11.

“It’s our annual biggest community-oriented show,” Huntington Beach Art Center executive director Kate Hoffman said.



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

PREPARATOR EAMONN SWIFTFOX goes over his notes as he hangs up art pieces in preparation for the Huntington Beach Art Center’s biggest community-oriented show, “Centered on the Center.” It opens on Saturday.

“Anybody who would like to submit work for the show merely pays a \$20 entry fee for one piece or \$30 for two pieces.”

The non-juried show, which Hoffman said will feature about 350 pieces, is eclectic. There are several different mediums including photography, acrylic paintings and sculptures.

They will be displayed wall to wall and floor to ceiling, salon style, in the

Art Center’s 3,000-square-foot galleries, along with a virtual display on its website.

“That’s what makes the show so interesting, the variety,” Hoffman said. “And the fact that since they’re limited to two pieces, there’s no way that one piece of art or one artist dominates the show at all. It’s really very, very fun to see the kind of variety that comes through.”

“Centered on the Cen-

ter” will also feature the annual “Art for Lunch” day on Feb. 16. Visitors are invited to bring a sack lunch into the galleries on that day to learn more and enjoy the exhibition with HBAC staff. Participating artists also are invited to come share more about individual works and processes.

Calkins said the opening reception typically has an excellent turnout.

“It’s wall-to-wall peo-

ple,” she said. “Usually I have to go back during the week, just to walk around and really look at things.”

The Huntington Beach Art Center is located at 538 Main St., Huntington Beach. Hours and additional information can be found on its website, huntingtonbeachartcenter.org.

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IMPACT

Continued from page A2

Steel in a statement issued Dec. 30 announcing the win. “Her app is a reflection of the exceptional talent of Southern California students, and I commend her and all of this year’s participants for their hard work and creativity.”

De Quiros said she started screaming.

“I was ... telling my mom. ‘Look, look!’ and she was saying that she couldn’t read it because she didn’t have her glasses,” De Quiros said, laughing. “She was so excited for me and didn’t even know what it was. Turns out I did get an email [from Steel’s office], but it was [so buried in] all these college emails that I didn’t see it.”

The app isn’t offered on any Google or Apple store. It’s browser-based and designed to be accessed on phones. Interested readers can find Impact at thinkable.site/w/y5vB2-QuP.

De Quiros said she has been programming since she was in middle school when she was introduced to robotics. She hopes to pursue a career in computer science or engineering after she graduates from Newport Harbor High School.

She said she believed that not many students her age, including herself and her friends, felt that the events going on in the world directly impacted them. Those were things that the adults needed to take care of, she said.

“But, I believe we, right now, as 15- or 16-year-olds can make a difference,” she said.

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HOPPY

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... this is more approachable.”

A blond stout has a rich gold color instead of the deep chocolate brown drinkers usually expect

from stouts. When brewing a traditional stout or porter, deeply roasted malt is used to create a smoky characteristic and dark color. For the collaboration beer, Walls said they utilized the same stout ingredients with a lighter malt to create a beer that is

softer on the palate and helps the coffee flavor stand out. “It takes out some of those notes of wood or chocolate that would detract from the coffee because the Vietnamese coffee is the star of the show,” said Walls. “So we

wanted that to shine through.”

In addition to the beer, Owlverick’s has also released a special coffee blend honoring the Year of the Rabbit called Hop n’ Brew. As January’s Roaster Choice, the beans have flavor notes of caramel, fudge and a hint of citrus and are available for a limited time.

Tang fondly remembers Lunar New Year celebrated in her house.

“Coming from a Chinese and Vietnamese background, we do celebrate both cultures,” Tang said. “We have fish, we have noodles and family get-togethers.”

Even more fondly, Tang remembers the family gathered around fresh

brewed cups.

“Coffee is always a tradition for my family. When I was growing up, coffee was always the main thing,” she said. “It is always bringing my family together. It’s our thing, saying ‘Hey, let’s have coffee.’”

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replace the presumptively retiring Dianne Feinstein. While there are many talented and qualified Democrat male officials such as Adam Schiff and Ro Khanna who are electable, we should desire a balance in gender representation alongside Sen. Alex Padilla. Also, for the first time in decades, we would have two U.S. Senators under 50. Besides, we need Rep. Schiff and Rep. Barbara Lee in the House to stabilize our state representation in that body. Porter has an excellent back-up waiting in the wings in former Rep. Harley Rouda, who has already demonstrated his ability to take on Republican males like Dana Rohrabacher and Scott Baugh and, with former Republican opponent Michelle Steel in a different district now, he is the most familiar and formidable candidate going forward. Our 47th District would be in good hands. Rouda would be able to hit the ground running if elected in 2024. He would be able to appeal to moderates and crossover Republicans as well in something of a toss-up district. We need other potential interested officials like O.C. Supervisor Katrina Foley and state Sen. Dave Min to keep representing Orange County effectively.

I also agree with letter writer Ben Miles that a party unified early around a well-qualified and well-respected candidate like Rouda could effect a smooth transition in representation if Porter receives the Senate nomination.

Tim Geddes
Huntington Beach

While Supervisor Katrina Foley and state Sen. Dave Min are dedicated public servants and longtime members of our nation’s sole functioning political party, they ought to lend their coupled support to former U.S. Congress member Harley Rouda. With a thin line in the House of Representatives between the sensible Democratic members and the unreasonable Republican cabal, we can’t afford to divide the Democratic vote. Let all of us O.C. Democrats align behind Rouda and reject the revolting Republican agenda currently and dangerously in play.

Ben Miles
Huntington Beach

Porter’s eye on Feinstein’s job not unexpected

Not too many people were surprised by Rep. Katie Porter’s announcement on Jan. 10 that she was running for the Senate seat occupied by octogenarian Diane Feinstein, who has not yet committed to retirement. Porter has been consistently elected to Congress representing Orange County districts since 2018 as a prog-

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ressive Democrat. She just recently won a narrow victory over Scott Baugh in the newly reconstructed 47th Congressional District made up of

Newport Beach, Laguna Beach, Seal Beach and Huntington Beach, a district which leans more Republican than her previous district. Porter has proven to be one of the best fundraisers in California but has had to spend a considerable amount of her campaign war chest in her most recent election.

Should she be elected to the Senate where she would serve a six-year term, she would bring considerable Democratic identity and prestige to this purple county, which leans red more often than not. Political party aside, Katie would help shift some of California’s leadership to the south and most significantly to Orange County, rather than to the northern part of the state, which has traditionally dominated that role. As such, it would be a coup for Southern California in general.

Porter has a national reputation for standing up to Wall Street, pharmaceutical companies, oil and gas giants and lobbyists. She is one of just 10 members of Congress who doesn’t take a cent of corporate PAC or federal lobbyist money. She is most significantly known for standing up for American families by badgering the head of companies and banks for their corporate greed that she vividly demonstrates on her professorial whiteboards. Before running for Congress, Katie was a law professor at UC Irvine, specializing in consumer protection law.

No doubt Porter will have significant competition in this rare opportunity to run for a coveted Senate seat for which she has been the first to “throw her hat into the ring.” Already there has been criticism of her doing so before Feinstein has announced her retirement, but doing so is not unheard of. She has also been criticized for announcing her candidature during a natural disaster in the state, but her answer to that is that it is all the more reason to provide her strong leadership to the increasingly difficult problems facing California and the federal government.

Lynn Lorenz
Newport Beach