

# Daily Pilot

THURSDAY, MAY 23, 2024 /// dailypilot.com



Photos by Eric Licas

**SISTERS KIARA TAYLOR**, 21, and Milani Rice, 17, of Compton get baptized in front of thousands at Huntington State Beach Sunday, May 19.

## Thousands take the plunge in baptism festival on the beach

BY ERIC LICAS

Kiara Taylor said she was struggling with depression, practicing self-harm and had given up on living two years ago. In one period of intense introspection, the 21-year-old Compton resident found herself praying for death.

"I didn't want to be here anymore," Taylor said. "I was just begging and pleading with God to take my life. And I guess that was his way of saying, 'No, you have a purpose here,' because that's when I felt God for the first time."

She had considered herself an atheist, but something about that moment inspired her to

begin reading the Bible. Taylor believes it was a turning point that led to better relationships with her loved ones and an improved outlook on life.

Taylor said she'd like to see others experience the kind of good she has since reconnecting with her religion. That's partly why she was among thousands of people inspired to proclaim their faith by taking part in a mass baptism held Saturday and Sunday at Huntington State Beach.

"A lot of people, they've been hurting," said David Hrisca of Leap Into Ministries, one of the groups performing baptisms at

See *Baptism*, page A3



**JOSH LORENZO** of Bell Gardens was one of over 6,000 people who participated in the mass baptism Sunday at Huntington State Beach.

## Costa Mesa allocates \$1.2M in federal CDBG grants

BY SARA CARDINE

Continuing a mission to address pressing social issues for residents in need, particularly around housing, Costa Mesa officials Tuesday allocated \$1.2 million in federal community development block grants and more than \$558,000 for housing rehabilitation grants and loans.

The commitment helps fund efforts undertaken by the city

and local nonprofits that assist low-income families, the unhoused or those at risk for homelessness. Its funds may also be used for staffing, loans and housing programs benefiting low-income residents.

City grant administrator Mikelle Daily explained Costa Mesa is eligible for the federal CDBG and HOME Investment Partnership Grant programs — operated under the U.S. Department

of Urban Housing and Development (HUD) — because more than 51% of city residents earn less than 80% of Orange County's Area Median Income, set at \$88,400 for one person or \$126,250 for a family of four.

"We're granted this money from the federal government, and we're responsible for it," Daily told the City Council in Tuesday's regular meeting. "That means we need to track it and

ensure we have an effective and efficient delivery of our services and we're complying with all the HUD program requirements."

Council members reviewed spending priorities laid out in a five-year consolidated strategic plan that is reviewed annually, the latest of which ends with fiscal year 2024-25.

Of the HOME funds, \$255,349

See *CDBG*, page A3

## Brakes pumped on name change

Instead of renaming Commerce Lane, Surf City council votes to thank businessman Ed Laird with honorary sign.

BY MATT SZABO

Commerce Lane in northern Huntington Beach will not be changing its name.

An agenda item at Tuesday night's City Council meeting, submitted by Mayor Gracey Van Der Mark, Mayor Pro Tem Pat Burns and Tony Strickland, had proposed changing the name of Commerce Lane to Ed Laird Lane in honor of the longtime Surf City businessman.

But Burns said that due to concerns by Laird himself and the businesses on the street, he made a different motion to place a sign celebrating Laird in front of his two businesses on the street.

"We'll post those instead of changing the street name," Burns said. "We'll put ceremonial signs out there."

The proposed sign features the

See *Change*, page A2

## Judge says settlement must be unveiled

Decision grants petition asking for full disclosure of Huntington Beach's \$7M agreement with Pacific Airshow operator.

BY MATT SZABO

An Orange County Superior Court judge ruled Wednesday the city of Huntington Beach must release its full multimillion-dollar settlement with Pacific Airshow operator Code Four.

Judge Jonathan Fish ruled he was granting Gina Clayton-Tarvin's petition under the California Public Records Act and the California Constitution for writ of mandate.

Clayton-Tarvin, a Huntington Beach resident and longtime member of the Ocean View School District Board of Trustees,

See *Judge*, page A2

## OC Coastkeeper hosts beach cleanup for Kids Ocean Day

Children from all over Orange County hit the beaches Tuesday afternoon to help clean up their shores as part of Kids Ocean Day, an educational outreach program that encourages kids to learn about coastal quality issues.

OC Coastkeeper officials said about 1,000 students from 12 elementary schools countywide came out to Huntington State Beach to remove an estimated 300 pounds of garbage from the sand and to create a giant message in the sand that reflected this year's theme, "Make Ripples of Positive Change."

"We want the students to know that the ocean starts at their front door," said Michaela Coats,

education director at Orange County Coastkeeper in a statement. "Kids Ocean Day teaches students how marine debris travels through our waterways to the beach and empowers them to take meaningful steps to protect our environment."

Leading up to the cleanup, the nonprofit's staff members visit schools to teach students about marine debris and coastal conservation.

Kids Ocean Day is coordinated by the California Coastal Commission, which does so statewide with proceeds from the Whale Tail License Plate and donations on state tax returns for the Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund.

— Lilly Nguyen



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**KIDS AND** volunteers from Pio Pico Elementary pick inorganic materials from the sand during the Orange County Coastkeeper's Kids Ocean Day beach cleanup at Huntington State Beach on Tuesday.

**AN OVERHEAD SHOT** of the aerial art made on Huntington State Beach on Tuesday as part of Kids Ocean Day.



Courtesy of Orange County Coastkeeper

# THE COACH HOUSE

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THU, MAY 23  
**LISSIE**



SUN, MAY 26  
**BLACKHAWK**



SAT, JUN 1  
**STEELHEART**



THU, JUN 6  
**HOWIE DAY**

- 5/23 LISSIE
- 5/24 DSB (JOURNEY TRIBUTE)
- 5/25 IN THE AIR TONIGHT (PHIL COLLINS & GENESIS TRIBUTE)
- 5/26 BLACKHAWK
- 5/31 YACHTY BY NATURE
- 6/1 STEELHEART
- 6/2 CELEBRATING WHITNEY (WHITNEY HOUSTON TRIBUTE)
- 6/6 HOWIE DAY
- 6/7 ROBERT JON & THE WRECK
- 6/8 THE ENGLISH BEAT
- 6/9 GARY HOEY
- 6/14 AMBROSIA
- 6/15 CHEST FEVER (THE BAND TRIBUTE)
- 6/16 ELVIN BISHOP BIG FUN TRIO
- 6/21 DESPERADO (EAGLES TRIBUTE)
- 6/22 DESPERADO (EAGLES TRIBUTE)
- 6/23 JUSTIN HAYWARD VOICE OF THE MOODY BLUES
- 6/28 THE BACON BROTHERS
- 6/29 SKELETON CREW (GRATEFUL DEAD TRIBUTE)
- 7/3 IAN MOORE
- 7/5 WALTER MICHAELS BAND
- 7/6 SHINE ON (PINK FLOYD TRIBUTE)
- 7/12 YYNOT (RUSH TRIBUTE)
- 7/13 FAST TIMES - THE ULTIMATE 80s TRIBUTE!
- 7/14 THE CREAM OF CLAPTON BAND  
FEAT. WILL JOHNS & NOAH EAST
- 7/19 THE 5TH DIMENSION
- 7/20 Y&T 50TH ANNIVERSARY
- 7/25 THE RAT PACK
- 7/26 KEN GARCIA
- 7/27 BOB SCHNEIDER
- 7/28 BOBBY GRAY
- 8/1 CASH'D OUT (JOHNNY CASH TRIBUTE)
- 8/2 BEACH BOY AL JARDINE
- 8/3 CUBENSIS (GRATEFUL DEAD TRIBUTE)
- 8/9 BIG BAD VOODOO DADDY
- 8/17 PIANO MEN: GENERATIONS  
(BILLY JOEL AND ELTON JOHN TRIBUTE)
- 8/23 SUPER DIAMOND (NEIL DIAMOND TRIBUTE)



SUN, JUN 9  
**GARY HOEY**



FRI, JUN 28  
**BACON BROTHERS**



FRI, AUG 2  
**BEACH BOY AL JARDINE**



FRI, AUG 9  
**BIG BAD VOODOO DADDY**

- 8/24 SUPER DIAMOND (NEIL DIAMOND TRIBUTE)
- 8/27 TAB BENOIT & ANDERS OSBORNE  
WITH SPECIAL GUEST JD SIMO
- 8/28 TOM RUSH
- 8/29 THE PETTY BREAKERS (TOM PETTY TRIBUTE)
- 8/30 GLENN HUGHES - DEEP PURPLE SET  
- 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BURN
- 8/31 MICK ADAMS & THE STONES
- 9/1 MIDGE URE
- 9/7 SOUTHERN ROCK THROWDOWN  
(LYNYRD SKYNYRD, BAD CO., ZZ TOP TRIBUTES)
- 9/12 GRAHAM BONNET  
PERFORMING RAINBOW, MSG & ALCATRAZZ
- 9/14 JOURNEY USA (JOURNEY TRIBUTE)
- 9/15 BENISE: FIESTA!
- 9/19 THE MAN IN BLACK (JOHNNY CASH TRIBUTE)
- 9/22 JANE MONHEIT
- 9/25 ANA POPOVIC
- 9/27 DAVE MASON
- 10/3 ZEBRA w/SPECIAL GUESTS FUZZBUBBLE
- 10/4 MIRAGE (FLEETWOOD MAC TRIBUTE)
- 10/5 KIMBERLY PERRY (OF THE BAND PERRY)
- 10/10 HENRY KAPONO
- 10/11 HENRY KAPONO
- 10/16 JIMMIE VAUGHAN
- 10/18 GARY PUCKETT & THE UNION GAP
- 10/20 THE YOUNG DUBLINERS
- 10/31 OINGO BOINGO FORMER MEMBERS / UNTOUCHABLES
- 11/1 OINGO BOINGO FORMER MEMBERS / UNTOUCHABLES
- 11/3 THE WINEHOUSE EXPERIENCE  
(AMY WINEHOUSE TRIBUTE)
- 11/8 COMMON SENSE
- 11/9 TYRONE WELLS
- 11/15 RONSTADT REVIVAL (LINDA RONSTADT TRIBUTE)
- 11/16 JOSHUA RADIN & RON POPE
- 11/22 SPACE ODDITY (DAVID BOWIE TRIBUTE)
- 11/23 RUFUS WAINWRIGHT
- 11/27 BEATLES VS STONES - A MUSICAL SHOWDOWN
- 11/29 THE PLATTERS
- 11/30 LEE ROCKER OF THE STRAY CATS
- 12/4 LIVINGSTON TAYLOR & LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III
- 12/15 THE GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA - CHRISTMAS SHOW
- 12/29 L.A. GUNS
- 1/24 GENE LOVES JEZEBEL / BOW WOW WOW

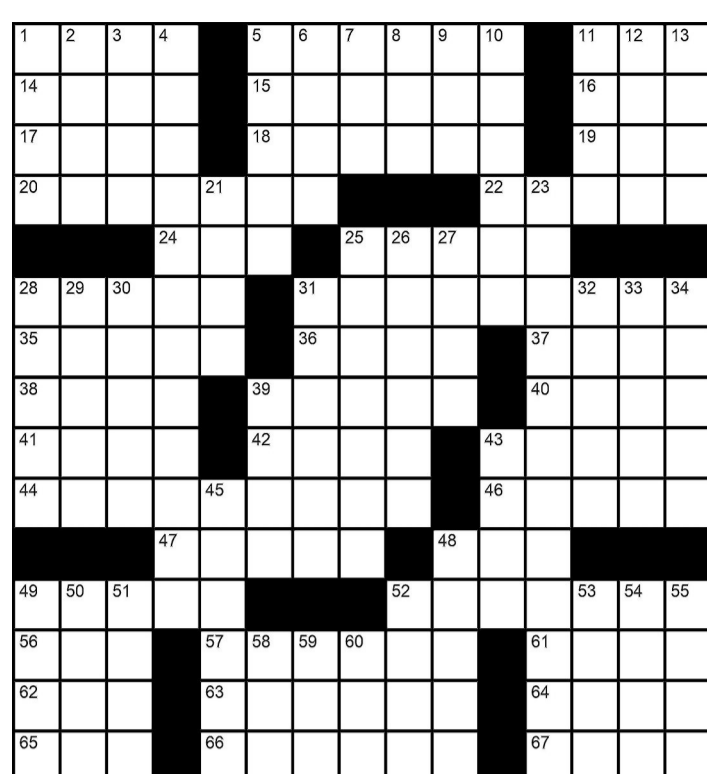
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## THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Stella Zawistowski

### ACROSS

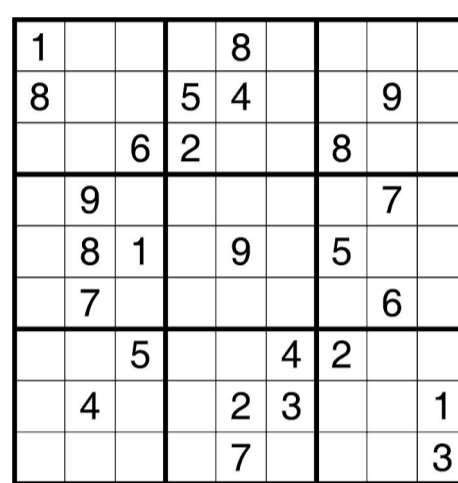
- 1 BBQ entree
- 5 Icky people
- 11 Old music medium
- 14 "New Jack Hustler" rapper
- 15 Call on the phone: 2 wds.
- 16 Passe
- 17 Author Jonathan Safran
- 18 Ruined
- 19 Letters before an alias
- 20 Went in
- 22 Bowling venue
- 24 Consume
- 25 Japanese poem style
- 28 Venetian blind parts
- 31 Sore loser's opposite: 2 wds.
- 35 "Private Practice" star Kate
- 36 Very uncommon
- 37 "Would \_ to you?": 2 wds.
- 38 Molecule part
- 39 Mattress brand
- 40 Windshield coloring
- 41 Singer Horne
- 42 Space shuttle sponsor: Abbr.
- 43 Tropical fruit
- 44 Sit-ups and push-ups
- 46 Situation after a leadoff single: 2 wds.
- 47 Get narrower
- 48 Lad
- 49 Deep gulf
- 52 Fixed, as shoes
- 56 Ship's diary
- 57 Jail
- 61 \_ of the above
- 62 Bitter beer
- 63 Countless
- 64 Make a profit
- 65 "Sure!"
- 66 Is impudent to
- 67 Probability



## 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).



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

### DOWN

- 1 Far from scarce
- 2 iPad symbol
- 3 Red root veggie
- 4 Urban
- 5 Oil holder
- 6 Watermelon part

### 7 Finish

- 8 Sense of self
- 9 Play on words
- 10 Orates
- 11 Solid fossil fuel
- 12 Ellington of jazz
- 13 Remain
- 21 Allergic reaction
- 23 "12 Years a

Slave" Oscar winner: 2 wds.

- 25 Raspier-sounding
- 26 Big blood vessels
- 27 Notion
- 28 Lowland
- 29 Glove material
- 30 By oneself
- 31 Oily gunk
- 32 QB protectors, for short
- 33 Starr of the Beatles
- 34 Grand \_ National Park
- 39 Quick cut
- 43 Cow's sounds
- 45 School grounds
- 48 Is flexible
- 49 Sculpting medium
- 50 Ace in the \_
- 51 Eons
- 52 Part to play
- 53 Pile of laundry
- 54 Author Bagnold
- 55 Lions' homes
- 58 Messenger molecule: Abbr.
- 59 "\_ a secret!"
- 60 "Mayday!"

Tribune Media Services

## CHANGE

Continued from page A1

Huntington Beach logo, a picture of the pier and the words "Honorary Laird Lane, for his service to Huntington Beach."

The signs will appear on light poles in front of Laird's business, hanging over the sidewalk.

Van Der Mark seconded Burns' motion. It passed 4-0-3, with Strickland and Casey McKeon also voting in favor. Minority council members Natalie Moser, Rhonda Bolton and Dan Kalmick all abstained.

"Ed Laird has done so much work to change so many lives for our youth for decades and decades," Van Der Mark said. "Most of the time we wait until people pass away to memorialize them, remember them and celebrate them. That's actually just to benefit us ... [but] I think it would be great if we actually do this so he could get the joy to get to see this as well."

Laird is a wealthy Republican donor and in fact has donated thousands of dollars to the political campaign committees of the conservative City Council majority in the last couple of years.

But Strickland said there



Matt Szabo

### LAIRD COATINGS,

formerly called Coatings Research Corporations, was founded by Huntington Beach businessman Ed Laird in the 1970s.

were no Levine Act conflicts of interest related to the street sign because there was no monetary value involved with the sign.

Laird has been heavily involved with the Boy Scouts of America for about 60 years and was also a former chairman of the board of directors of the Bolsa Chica Conservancy, currently serving as chair of the advisory board. He was also a city planning commissioner for two years.

His business on Commerce Lane is Laird Coatings, formerly known as Coatings Resource, established in El Monte in 1976 and moved to Huntington Beach in 1990.

Twelve affected property and business owners on

Commerce Lane had sent an email to the City Council opposing the proposed name change, saying that it would create substantial administrative, logistical and business costs.

"I want to apologize on behalf of this council for the fire drill that the folks on Commerce Lane had to go through, and start contemplating how much money they were going to spend on calling their website person and updating all of their letterhead," Kalmick said.

Kalmick added the City Council should build a policy for commemorative signs, allowing someone to submit nominations to the Community Services Commission before bringing it to the council for a vote.

He made a substitute motion to table the item and have staff come back with a process, but that failed 4-3.

"This is the proper body to deal with it," Strickland said. "As we introduced the resolution, we heard from our constituents and our community ... and that's why we amended it to where it is today. This is exactly the process of government, you hear from your constituents and you adjust based on those concerns."

matthew.szabo@latimes.com  
Twitter: @mjszabo

## JUDGE

Continued from page A1

had sued the city and City Atty Michael Gates after he wouldn't hand over the complete settlement for up to \$7 million with Code Four. The settlement came after Code Four sued the city for breach of contract, when the 2021 oil spill off the coast led to the cancellation of the third and final day of that year's Pacific Airshow.

At the time of the settlement, Gates produced an "executive summary" page. But Fish's decision orders full disclosure of the settlement, with no redactions.

"Justice has been served," Clayton-Tarvin said in a statement on X, while posting the full decision. "Hiding the truth from taxpayers will not be allowed any-



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

A SHORT TAKEOFF and landing aircraft, better known as a STOL plane, makes a pass over the ocean during a press conference for the Pacific Airshow earlier this year.

more." The city can appeal Wednesday's decision.

Gates said in a text message that barring any different direction given to him

by City Council, he plans to fully comply with the court's order.

matthew.szabo@latimes.com  
Twitter: @mjszabo

# Artists, art enthusiasts flock to Balboa Island

As the sun broke through the clouds early Sunday, the 29th Balboa Island Artwalk was the place to be. Throngs were found inching along the South Bayfront admiring the 85 exhibits throughout the day while enjoying the sounds of live music.

Among the first-time exhibitors were the "Mosaic-Fanatics," Lani Wilson and Sandy Stevens of San Clemente, who between them have more than 20 years' experience in glass mosaic.

"When we started the garden part, everyone went crazy over this,"

Wilson said about their mosaic butterflies.

Also new to exhibiting at the event this year was Julie Granbery of Costa Mesa, who displayed an oversized panoramic photograph of Catalina Island that combined watercolor treatment. "I thought there would be a lot of people who like Catalina and boating," Granbery said of the subject matter.

In keeping with her yearly ArtWalk tradition, Costa Mesa resident Diana Johnson, who purchased a painting from Long Beach artist Kirsten Anderson, said, "We al-

ways find something to take home. I'm always inspired by the art."

Winners of the 2024 Artists Awards handed out at Sunday's event were Sharon Jackman, who captured the Mary Hardisty Realty Award of Excellence; Debra Huse, Mayor's Choice Award; Kathleen Williams, Huse Skelly Gallery Art Star Award; and Denise Busony, Andrew Cortez and Susan Leonhard, all of whom were given Randy Higbee Gallery Awards.

To see the winning artworks visit [balboaislandartwalk.info](http://balboaislandartwalk.info).

— Susan Hoffman



**GERALD CARROLL** sits with his carved turtles and teak pieces reclaimed from old fishing boats at the Balboa Island Artwalk Sunday.

Photos by Susan Hoffman

**ARTIST LINDA BUCCI**, a.k.a. Ms. Gotrocks, displays her mixed-media metal-smithing jewelry of enamel, copper, silver and collage art-ware during the Balboa Island Artwalk on Sunday.



**MOSAIC-FANATICS** partners Lani Wilson, left, and Sandy Stevens stand alongside a selection of their mosaic butterflies during the Balboa Island Artwalk Sunday.

## CDBG

Continued from page A1

will be used to provide approximately 10 grants and one rehabilitation loan, while another \$150,000 will be used for tenant-based assistance.

This year's action plan identified various categories and projects to which CDBG funds could be allocated, including \$385,000 for two full-time and one part-time community improvement officers to connect eligible property owners and residents with resources to help resolve substandard housing conditions and quality of life issues.

Another \$414,331 will be used to replace the roof at the city's Senior Center, while another \$30,000 will help partially fund a case-worker to help direct senior center clients to agencies and services that promote

physical, mental, emotional and social health.

Those expenditures left the city with another \$115,714 to be used toward public service grants for local nonprofits whose social service programs primarily benefit low- and moderate-income individuals and families.

Interested organizations were invited to apply for up to \$30,000 in grants by a Feb. 9 deadline and have their proposals considered by a council-appointed Housing and Public Services Grant Committee, which met March 7 to decide how to distribute the funds. Although eight programs applied, only five were selected for amounts just below \$30,000, because the city's CDBG allocation from HUD was about 4% less than the prior fiscal year.

"It was a night of robust discussion and difficult decisions, when there are so

many who are in need in Costa Mesa," committee member Becks Heyhoe told the council. "[So] the committee really worked to focus on the sub-populations the City Council has identified they want to make investments in — people experiencing homelessness, seniors and youth."

As such, the committee recommended \$28,500 for Families Forward, which targets homelessness prevention efforts at households with children; \$28,500 to Human Options, a domestic violence prevention group; \$23,750 for Project Hope Alliance, a youth homelessness prevention organization; \$14,464 for a job assistance program run by the Boys & Girls Club of Central Orange Coast and \$20,500 to Trellis International, which organizes an annual Love Costa Mesa service day and a year-round neighbor assistance program called

Labors of Love.

"I do want to thank the city for awarding us this CDBG grant two years in a row," said Reina Cuthill, director of Trellis' Neighboring Initiative, which hired a part-time coordinator with the grant. "This focused effort is crucial to the quality of the program for our neighbors to feel seen, heard and loved."

Two programs proposed by Community SeniorServ, Inc. — Meals on Wheels and a Lunch Cafe that lets seniors socialize around communal meals — sought \$30,000 grants but were not selected, staff explained, because the programs could continue to operate with or without the grants.

Mayor John Stephens, however, moved to direct staff to incorporate into the city's 2024-25 budget, which is still being worked on, a means of giving the five approved recipients and Community Sen-



File Photo

**COSTA MESA** homeowner Mary Parpal with Labor of Love volunteers in 2022. Run by nonprofit Trellis International, the initiative will receive \$30,000 in grant funding.

iorServ, Inc. full \$30,000 grants.

"I do believe there are places in the budget that our creative financial staff can find to fund these programs," he said. "We've already talked at length about Love Costa Mesa Day

— I think we need to put our money where our mouth is."

Stephens' motion passed 6-0 (Councilwoman Andrea Marr was absent).

sara.cardine@latimes.com  
Twitter: @SaraCardine

## TUBS USED

for baptisms sit in front of thousands taking part in Baptize California, billed as the largest synchronized day of baptism in history.



Photos by Eric Licas

## BAPTISM

Continued from page A1

the event over the weekend. "And it was great for them to come down here. It was like an act of going, 'Y'know what, I need something different in my life.'"

This is the second year Orange County-based Oceans Church has hosted Baptize California, a festival featuring Christian rock bands and sermons in addition to communal baptisms. At the inaugural event in 2023, 4,100 people were baptized, according to Ocean's Church.

The event was even larger this year. More than 6,000 people lined up along the shore to get baptized, and in total as many as 19,000 came to enjoy the festival, according to Oceans Church Pastors Mark and Rachelle Francey.

The couple at the head of the Orange County-based nondenominational



**ALBERT GARCIA**, 19, of Boron, gets baptized in front of thousands at Huntington State Beach on Sunday.

megachurch hope Baptize California might help spark a spiritual revival. They would like to see it grow into a national or even global "great awakening," Mark Francey said.

However, during an interview with The Daily Pilot on Sunday, he was willing to acknowledge that the highly public and evangelical nature of the event

might not be for everyone. And he said some people may have left the event uninspired or still unsure about the existence of God. But he believes a renewal of faith is still possible for everyone at the right time, with the congregation that's right for them.

"I'm not trying to push that on anybody," Mark Francey said. "But I would

just invite people in to taste for themselves and judge. I don't think there's one church that checks every box for everybody."

More than 300 churches participated in Baptize California this year, including some that don't always see eye-to-eye on everything, Francey said. But for at least one weekend they saw past their differences to celebrate a shared tradition.

"For us, water baptism is one of the coolest days of a believer's life," he said. "You're outwardly expressing an inward belief you have about Jesus," Francey said.

eric.licas@latimes.com  
Twitter: @EricLicas

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## Daily Pilot

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**CONTACT US**

**Carol Cormaci**  
Executive Editor  
carol.cormaci@latimes.com

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

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

Reporters:  
**Sara Cardine**,  
Costa Mesa  
sara.cardine@latimes.com  
**Sarah Mosqueda**, TimesOC  
sarah.mosqueda@latimes.com  
**Lilly Nguyen**,  
Newport Beach  
lilly.nguyen@latimes.com

**Gabriel San Román**,  
TimesOC  
gabriel.sanroman@latimes.com

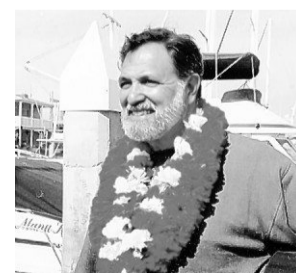
**Matt Szabo**,  
Huntington Beach and Sports  
matthew.szabo@latimes.com

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

Send Letters to the Editor to  
erik.haugli@latimes.com. See  
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### Renato Pasquale Antonio Giovanni Monaco, MD

December 24, 1928 - May 11, 2024

Dr. Monaco is survived by his wife of 38 years, Marianna Monaco, his three children, Lisa, Kim and Sean, his six grandchildren, Kaly, Kendra, Colin, Jaime, Carina and Akina, and his two great-grandchildren, Julian and Amelia. Renato Monaco was the son of Dr. Salvatore and Marie Monaco of the Balboa Peninsula. He practiced medicine in Newport Beach for over 60 years, serving on the staff at Hoag Hospital and teaching courses in Italy and Orange County. In addition to his renown as a psychiatrist, he was a musician, artist, sailor, diver, fisherman, hunter, kayaker, skier and travel enthusiast. Dr. Monaco leaves behind the legacy of a life well lived and was loved by so many, including not only his family and friends but his many patients through the years. The family will hold a private celebration in honor of this most remarkable man.





## TRACK AND FIELD

## Seven qualify for state championships

BY ANDREW TURNER

MOORPARK — Newport Harbor's Keaton Robar dropped two full seconds off her personal record in the 800 meters, her lifetime-best performance of two minutes 7.01 seconds giving her the win in the CIF Southern Section Masters Meet on Saturday at Moorpark High.

The junior mid-distance star produced the third-best time in the state this season, a time that also ranks fourth all-time in the event among Orange County athletes. The county record belongs to Mary Decker of Orange (2:02.29 in 1974), who is second only to Studio City Harvard-Westlake's Amy Weissenbach (2:02.04 in 2011) in state history.

"I wanted to win, but I wanted top three at least here," Robar said. "I just really wanted a [personal record] because it's been a while since I've been in a competitive race. I've shown the strength for a [personal record], but I just hadn't been able to execute it."

Athletes who placed in the top six of the Masters Meet, as well as additional competitors who met the at-large standards for qualifying in their event, advanced on to the CIF State track and field championships. The state meet takes place Friday and Saturday at Clovis Buchanan High.

Robar had waited a long time for this, more than a year since running her previous best time in the Arcadia Invitational as a sophomore. She had almost no time to celebrate, as Robar was in a rush to make it to



**NEWPORT HARBOR'S** Keaton Robar crosses the finish line first in the 800 meters at the CIF Southern Section Masters Meet at Moorpark High on Saturday.



**HUNTINGTON BEACH'S** Sydney Rubio (11) and Makenzie McRae (2) compete in the 3,200-meter race.

the prom. Little did Robar know that her part in this play had yet to end. After she

departed from the meet, Sailors senior Carlos Maradiaga was preparing to lace up his racing spikes, but they were nowhere to be found. Maradiaga said Robar had taken off with them by mistake.

Newport Harbor coach and Maradiaga began pleading with other competing schools for a pair of racing spikes. When one obliged, Maradiaga made it count, running 9:02.64 in the 3,200 meters to dip under the at-large qualifying time by less than two seconds after placing seventh.

"I wore spikes that were a size too big and a jersey

that was probably a size too small and I ran one second off the school record and qualified," said Maradiaga, who borrowed a jersey from teammate Natalie McCarty for the race.

Newport Harbor coach Haley Bates jokingly credited Robar for providing the "adrenaline to lock back in" for the competition.

McCarty notched two state qualifications, placing fifth in 43.43 seconds in the 300 intermediate hurdles. She tied for fourth in the high jump with a clearance of 5 feet, 4 inches.

"I'm beyond excited," McCarty said of heading to

the state meet. "I mean, nervous, but it's going to be just such a cool experience regardless of how I do. I want to see all the best athletes, how they do, and it's over two days. That's a new experience. I haven't done a two-day track meet yet."

Ocean View senior Isis Salazar, who signed with Cal State Bakersfield for women's soccer, showed that she is good in the air in multiple sports. She tied for second with a personal-best clearance of 5-6 in the high jump.

"It's very exciting," said Salazar, who set a new personal record for the second consecutive week in qualifying for state. "I would never in a million years think that I would make it to Masters, let alone finals for our state. I was overwhelmed with joy because I was ... the last person to get 5-6 out of the three."

Huntington Beach freshman Sydney Rubio advanced in the 3,200 (third, 10:20.89), as did Corona del Mar senior Melisse Djomby Enyawe in the 800 (fifth, 2:12.13).

Edison senior Alexa Sheldon, headed to Cal State Fullerton in the fall, qualified for state in both the shot put (fourth, 42-10) and the discus throw (fifth, 139-10).

"Honestly, it's a very big relief," Sheldon said of moving on to her first state meet. "This is my last chance to actually get up there, so it was a lot of pushing for it at practice. I didn't do as good as I wanted to, but it was good to the point of what I needed."

andrewturner@latimes.com  
Twitter: @AndrewTurnerTCN

## AVP HUNTINGTON BEACH OPEN

## Team Taylor, Canadian Olympic duo capture titles

BY MATT SZABO

The new Assn. of Volleyball Professionals League debuts this fall, with eight men's and women's teams competing for eight different cities around the country.

The winners of the AVP Huntington Beach Open, along with two other Heritage Series events, were able to book their spots into the league.

Two Taylors were up to the challenge Sunday. Top-seeded Taylor Crabb and Taylor Sander won the men's championship, defeating former Newport Harbor High standout Cody Caldwell and Seain Cook, 21-15, 21-15, in the title match. Caldwell and Cook were the No. 5 seeds.

The women's final featured an Olympic preview, as Canada's Melissa Humana-Paredes and Brandie Wilkerson beat top-seeded Taryn Kloth and Kristen Nuss of the United States 23-21, 18-21, 15-13, aveng-

ing an earlier loss in the tournament.

Crabb and Sander did not drop a set in Surf City.

"I think it's perfect that the AVP League is right after the Olympics," Crabb told reporters after the victory. "It's do or die out here for us right now. There are three tournaments, and we're fortunate enough that we got to play this one and win it ... We were talking Friday about how nervous we were, because every tournament now means something. Everyone wants to make the League, and only eight teams are going to make it. So it's great to get that under our belt, and now we get to have some fun."

In making their first finals appearance, Caldwell and Cook upset Tri Bourne and Chaim Schalk in the semifinals.

On the women's side, Humana-Paredes and Wilkerson dispatched No. 3-seeded Costa Mesa native Sara Hughes and Kelly



**MELISSA HUMANA-PAREDES** hits past the block of Taryn Kloth during the women's finals of the AVP Huntington Beach Open on Sunday.

Cheng of Huntington Beach, 21-19, 21-16, in the semifinals. Hughes and Cheng were the defending tournament champions.

"Winning any tournament is great, but winning

the first tournament of the AVP season is always amazing, especially when there's a spot in the League on the line," Humana-Paredes said.

Also notably at the tour-

namer, former Newport Harbor High standout April Ross and partner Alix Klineman made their return to professional beach volleyball after nearly three years away as a team.

Ross, now 41, is a three-time Olympian who captured gold with Klineman at the 2020 Summer Olympics.

Both Ross and Klineman now have infant sons, Ross Riley and Theo.

The duo finished tied for seventh after they were knocked out by No. 6-seeded Terese Cannon and Megan Kraft, 21-19, 15-21, 15-10.

"Overall, I played better than I expected, but tournament play is different from training," Ross said. "It hurts to lose that last one, but at the same time I'm proud of us and I'm proud of me."

The AVP will return to Southern California for the Manhattan Beach Open, Aug. 16 through 18. That's the second Heritage Series event of the season, followed by the Chicago Open from Aug. 30 to Sept. 1.

matthew.szabo@latimes.com  
Twitter: @mjszabo

## CDM SIGNING DAY

## College-bound athletes celebrated as futures planned

BY ANDREW TURNER

More than 25 athletes sat up on stage Monday ready to sign with their college programs at the Sea King Theater at Corona del Mar High.

The dress code inside the stage called for hoodies and T-shirts, all signaling the next chapter to come in the playing careers of the honorees.

Corona del Mar athletic director Brian Walsh read off a list of accomplishments by the recognized seniors. Family and friends captured the moments on video, and each athlete received a round of applause at the end of those respective remarks.

Piper Blackband will be joining the sailing program at Stanford. The Cardinal won a fourth national championship in the sport in April.

"It definitely represents a journey of hard work and dedication to academics,



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**CHARLIE OLSON** (golf, Gonzaga University), Nick Salmon (baseball, UCSB) and Abigail Schalow (field hockey, St. Louis College), from left, join others in an ovation during the annual National Letter of Intent signing day at the Sea King Theater at Corona del Mar High School on Monday.

and to sailing, as well," Blackband said of the arrival of signing day. "I feel like my time at CdM hasn't just represented me sailing, and I feel like the program I'm going into also, it's more than just sailing.

It's about being a leader on and off the water, too. ... It's the top women's sailing in the nation collegiately, so I'm really excited to go sail with some strong and powerful women, too." The Sea Kings once

again earned their accolades in the water. Taylor Bartell (Tulane) and Dylan Sih (Stanford) also signed for sailing. Sabrina Baker will join the women's rowing program at UCLA.

Additionally, Chase Campbell (Harvey Mudd), Ava Schoening (Brown), Camren Simoncelli (UC Santa Barbara) and Charles Warmington (Pepperdine) have extended their stays at the pool for water polo.

Eugenio Franco, a state medalist as the third-place finisher at 195 pounds in the CIF State individual wrestling championships as a junior, signed with Cal Poly. Antonio Aramburu and Zion Bowling-Hernandez, both critical to the CIF Duals title over Western, 35-33, in the Division 6 final in 2022, put pen to paper to join the San Francisco State wrestling program.

Looking back, Franco thought about the person-

al growth that took place when he lost his opening match at the state meet, only to run the table with eight consecutive wins the rest of the way.

"In just that one weekend, I literally learned so much about myself, so much about how far I can go, how much I can push myself," Franco said. "It was one of the best weekends of my life."

Nick Salmon signed with UC Santa Barbara, where he plans to pitch for the Gauchos' baseball team.

"I love competing, so competing at the highest level is everything you can ask for," Salmon said. "I can't even say how excited I am to compete. I want to show the coaches there, and anyone, what I've got, and I think that I have a lot to show."

Salmon, who also played football and basketball, had quite the senior year. The Sea Kings made the CIF Southern Section Divi-

sion 4 final in football, and CdM was a Division 2A semifinalist in boys' basketball.

"I really believe in diversifying your sport," Salmon said. "I think becoming an athlete is much more important than being good at one sport. I think the athletes are the ones that succeed, and playing multiple sports is how you become an athlete."

Niels Hoffmann, who won the CIF Southern individuals boys' tennis singles title as a junior, signed with USC. Standout outside hitter Sterling Foley also signed with the Trojans for men's volleyball.

Distance runner Melisse Djomby Enyawe, who qualified for the CIF State track and field championships in the 800 meters through the Masters Meet on Saturday, will be heading to Cal Poly.

andrewturner@latimes.com  
Twitter: @AndrewTurnerTCN