

# Daily Pilot & Times OC

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8, 2023 /// Serving the coastal cities of Orange County and beyond /// dailypilot.com

## Laguna, police union agree on contract

City's law enforcement officers will become the second highest paid in the county after a 19% boost in pay, benefits.

BY ERIC LICAS

Laguna Beach's police officers will see a 19% increase in pay and benefits per the terms of an agreement reached between the city and the union representing the department's employees, officials announced Wednesday.

The deal, which must be approved by the City Council before becoming a reality, is expected to increase the city's budget by \$400,000 in the fiscal year that runs from last July through June 2023, \$1.1 million the fiscal year ending in 2024 and \$1.7 million in 2025, Laguna Beach officials wrote in a news release.

The new contract features the

See *Contract*, page A3

## Sculpture exhibition narrows selection

About 33 sculptures are up for consideration for a rotating display in Civic Center Park. The survey closes Tuesday.

BY LILLY NGUYEN

Newport Beach residents have three days left to weigh in on which of 33 works will be displayed as part of Phase VIII of the rotating exhibition in Civic Center Park.

"We encourage all Newport Beach residents to provide their input and select their favorite sculptures for Phase VIII of the Sculpture Exhibition in Civic Center Park," said Newport Beach Arts Commission Chair Arlene Greer. "There are a variety of sculptures to consider, and we are

See *Sculpture*, page A4

## ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



Sarah Mosqueda

YOUNG MUSICIANS KEEP BAROQUE MUSIC ALIVE WITH KONTRAPUNKTUS PAGE A7



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**LAGUNA BEACH** residents Steve and Embry Munsey stand in the space that will be Jedidiah Coffee, a craft coffee and café in North Laguna. The Munseys are hopeful that the shop, named after their second child whom they lost at birth, will be up and running by the summer.

## Jedidiah Coffee owners brew plans for a new café

BY SARA CARDINE

For the past three years, Laguna Beach coffee roasters Steve and Embry Munsey have been preparing and selling beans for high-end craft java lovers from a Laguna Canyon Road studio called Jedidiah Coffee.

The couple can regularly be seen running espresso bars at local business openings, purveying beans to local restaurants and even hosting occasional pop-ups, making a name for themselves and building a brand despite not having a brick-and-mortar café.

But all that is about to change.

On Wednesday, the Munseys appeared before the Laguna Beach Planning Commission, seeking the necessary permits to open a sidewalk café at a commercial property at 397 E. Coast Highway. The spot was formerly occupied by Laguna Nursery.

Their plan is to offer a range of coffee drinks and pastries, while selling beans from Africa and Central and South America, along with an array of culinary and coffee equip-



STEVE MUNSEY posts a sign in the space that will be Jedidiah Coffee in North Laguna.

See *Café*, page A8

## O.C. companies join trek to Vegas for CES 2023

BY CANDICE YACONO

The world's tech community descended en masse on Las Vegas this week, all in search of the Next Big Thing at CES 2023 — the world's largest technology show.

More than 100,000 vendors, analysts, industry affiliates and media crawled Las Vegas' myriad convention facilities at the annual event, which was canceled in 2021 and was held on a much smaller scale in 2022. This year marked the first time that major companies like Google returned to the consumer electronics show since the start of the pandemic, and a sense of pent-up energy was palpable.

Many Orange County companies were among those to make the trek, with the dual goal of getting their products to market

and seeing what everyone else was doing — all in a hedonistic atmosphere in the theme of what is now called "revenge travel," after so many trips were postponed or canceled due to the pandemic.

Celebrities abounded at CES 2023, with Paris Hilton pitching herself as the Queen of the Metaverse, Paula Abdul launching a line of audio glasses, Project Venkman pitching Bill Murray NFTs and Twisted Sister's Dee Snider representing new Sennheiser earbuds that might be seen as pseudo hearing aids. Imagine Dragons performed at a private concert for Dolby, while Snoop Dogg served as DJ at an Amazon party.

But for many local O.C. companies, the focus was a bit more

See *CES*, page A2



Courtesy of Targus

**ATTENDEES AT** the first day of CES 2023 in Las Vegas gather near the Targus booth. The convention is back in full swing this year.

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Courtesy of Disneyland Resort

**THE DISNEYLAND** Half Marathon will return to Disneyland Resort in Anaheim Jan. 11 through 14, 2024. The weekend will include three endurance events, a challenge and more that are sure to be filled with miles of memorable moments.

## Half marathon to dash back to Magic Kingdom

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

This week, Disney announced the popular Disneyland Half Marathon Weekend will return next year as a part of the runDisney race schedule.

"We're so excited to bring runDisney races back to the West Coast in 2024 and are even more excited for the return of the fan-favorite Disneyland Half Marathon Weekend," Disney Sports Social Community Manager Sarah Harris said in a post on the Disney-Parks Blog.

RunDisney is the race se-

ries featuring runs at Disney Theme Parks worldwide.

While the Disneyland Half Marathon Weekend isn't scheduled until Jan. 11 through 14, 2024, general registration opens Feb. 14, 2023, and the event is expected to sell out.

The Disneyland Half Marathon Weekend will be the first runDisney race at Disneyland since 2017 and will be made up of a 5K, 10K and half marathon. RunDisney is also known for its "challenge" races, a 10K and half marathon combined over two days.

Details about the local race course have yet to be announced, but past marathons have included several miles on the streets of Anaheim and Downtown Disney. The route typically features music, live entertainment and sightings of Disney characters. Runners also receive uniquely themed medals for completing the course.

The 2023-24 runDisney race season begins in November with the Disney Wine & Dine Half Marathon Weekend Nov. 2 through 5 at Walt Disney World Resort, and continues with the Walt Disney World Marathon Weekend on Jan. 3 through 7, 2024, at Walt Disney World Resort. The season continues with the Disneyland Half Marathon Weekend in Anaheim Jan. 11 through 14, 2024, followed by the Disney Princess Half Marathon Weekend Feb. 22 through 25, 2024 at Walt Disney World Resort. The season ends with the Springtime Surprise Weekend, also at Walt Disney World Resort, taking place April 18 through 21, 2024. Since race weekends will take place on both the East and West coasts, runDisney also plans to bring back the Coast to Coast Race Challenge in 2024, with medals awarded to runners who participate in select races on both sides of the country.

In conjunction with the in-person events, runDisney will host a virtual series for runners of all ages from June 2023 until August 2023. Registration for the virtual series opens April 25, 2023.

Disney anticipates over 100,000 runners from across the country will participate in the 2023-24 race season.

"With entertainment, beloved characters and Disney magic at every mile, runDisney races are memorable experiences for runners of all ages and skill levels," said Harris. "They're also the only opportunity for runners and Disney fans alike to run unique courses through Disney parks."

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## CES

Continued from page A1

conventional.

### A RAINBOW-HUED FUTURE

Fountain Valley-based gaming and esports product company HyperX launched a variety of new offerings this week at CES, from Xbox gear to mice.

"HyperX engineers and designers are constantly listening to today's gamers and working to innovate and drive the industry forward with new, impressive and exciting solutions," said Mark Tekunoff, the company's public relations manager.

But the company's biggest announcement was its HX3D initiative, which takes advantage of the new relationship forged by last year's acquisition of HyperX by HP. HyperX will use HP's 3D color printing technology to allow gamers to create custom 3D gear and accessories like keycaps for keyboards, headsets, mice and other products.

"CES is an ideal venue for HyperX to showcase its latest solutions, providing the opportunity for one-on-one time with industry media, partners and more," Tekunoff said.

HyperX also has a special relationship with Las Vegas outside of CES week via its famed HyperX Arena, a 30,000-square-foot venue for esports competition inside the landmark Luxor pyramid that's the first such permanent space on the Las Vegas Strip.

HyperX is also heavily involved in the Southern California community, sponsoring local school esports teams and working with Riot Games and the SoLa Technology and Entrepreneurship Center for underserved students. HyperX helped craft an esports arena at the center filled with their peripherals.

### 'ROOTED IN ANAHEIM'

Targus, which became a household name as the first company to start making laptop bags in the 1980s, is celebrating 40 years in 2023. This year, Targus' prime location in the busiest part of the CES show floor was the perfect place to launch a bevy of new devices and bags including a zero-waste backpack.

Targus got its roots in the United Kingdom before moving to Anaheim.

"We've been in Orange County for more than 20 years," said Andrew Corkill, Targus' vice president of global marketing and e-commerce. "We're really rooted in Anaheim; that's our worldwide headquarters and where most of our employees are based."

Targus employees stay involved in the community through participation with hunger relief nonprofits and partnerships with the Wounded Warrior Project.

As with many other companies, at the start of the pandemic, the Targus office emptied out and white-collar employees began working from home. "But all of our warehouse workers still went into work every single day during COVID," Corkill said. "Those guys were the frontline workers for us, because they didn't skip a day; we were able to keep the warehouse running."

Corkill said the Targus

# UCI Health

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CEO initially took the "old school" approach that work-from-home wouldn't allow the company to keep up, but he was pleasantly surprised by how productivity was maintained. "So now we have a very flexible working schedule," he said. Employees can choose to work in the office or from home; the office layout was redone to suit this new hybrid model.

Targus products are all designed by an in-house global design team. The company was an early adopter in sustainability and has focused for over a decade on eco-friendly laptop bags made from recycled water bottles.

In addition to its dominance in laptop bags, the company has spent the past decade expanding into another avenue.

"We've always made some mice and some keyboards," Corkill said. "But in the last 10 years we've really focused on entering the tech market. We've been making docking stations, which allow you to improve your productivity by using multiple monitors."

The docks are especially popular with enterprise customers, which have seen an uptick in productivity.

"This is the first time that our tech sales have actually surpassed our bag sales," Corkill said. "We have a huge, huge bag business. Now we have a huge tech business."

As with its laptop bags, Targus also has moved into sustainably produced tech accessories, including keyboards made from 85% post-consumer recycled materials.

"We're really focusing on sustainability, making sure that we're reusing our products; we're recycling products and just trying to help the environment," Corkill said.

Targus also has begun focusing on antimicrobial products since the pandemic began.

"When COVID kicked off, we had already been discussing antimicrobial, so we just went straight into launching antimicrobial mice and keyboards," Corkill said. "We also made antimicrobial tablet cases and a backpack made from



A CUSTOMIZED HyperX mechanical gaming keyboard on display at CES 2023 in Las Vegas.

antimicrobial material. All of those products launched just shortly after the pandemic hit. We wanted to make sure people had something that they felt safer with. Even our eco-products have antimicrobial material."

Targus was acquired in October by B. Riley. "That's

really got us all excited, because that's a whole new adventure, right?" Corkill said. "You've got a whole new team of people that are helping you now, and helping guide you, and helping to expand what you've already got."

Despite the acquisition, Corkill says Targus has no

Candice Yacono

plans to leave Orange County.

"What we are planning to do, though, is to make sure the company continues to grow," he said. "There's tons of opportunity for us." The company will focus on growth, mergers and acqui-

See CES, page A3

## forum

## MAILBAG

## Singer sentenced, his damage will last

It's hard to believe that William "Rick" Singer's college admission bribery scandal first came to light nearly four years ago. I always wondered when he would be sentenced and now we know. Singer ruined numerous lives. I'm glad he has been sentenced to 42 months in jail, but I'm not sure that will undo the long term damage his "Varsity Blues" scheme left in its wake.

**Denny Freidenrich**  
Laguna Beach

## School's HVAC system wasteful

Please be advised the HVAC units on five portable classrooms have been running continuously since the start of the break on Dec. 23, starting at 7 a.m. and continuing late into the evening. The campus is closed and no one is inside. This grotesque waste of energy and disregard for taxpayer money is outrageous and unacceptable. Why won't the school district install and use thermo-

stats like responsible Californians? Of course the school and district offices are closed so this disgusting waste of resources and tax dollars will continue throughout the break. If this is how the district visibly wastes taxpayers' funds, one can only imagine what other waste, fraud and abuse is going on in not visible places.

Nor is this the first time this has occurred at Andersen: The HVACs routinely run after hours, on weekends and during breaks despite complaints made to the school and district offices.



Scott Eisen | Getty Images

**WILLIAM "RICK" SINGER** leaves Boston Federal Court on March 12, 2019 in Boston, Mass.

Apart from the gross waste, the HVACs are noisy and unpleasant for neighbors trying to have a quiet holiday. The school and district need to start acting like a

respectful neighbor instead of a thoughtless, energy-wasting bully.

**Roman Darmer**  
Newport Beach

## CES

Continued from page A2

sitions in markets such as Europe, Australia, Canada and Latin America.

## DOING WHAT THEY LOVE

Yorba Linda-based EZQuest was founded in a garage in Anaheim Hills. Its current bread-and-butter line is its range of USB-C docks, cables and adapters; it was one of the first companies to bring accessories using this connectivity to market.

The new USB-C hubs EZQuest announced at CES allow for screen mirroring, data transfer and charging. They were designed based on customers' real-life needs and preferences.

"The latest laptops and computers are becoming thinner and lighter every year; it can leave users wanting and needing extra ports to make multitasking easier," said Ebrahim Zmehrri, founder and CEO of EZQuest. "These are exciting times for us, so we can do what we love, which is to make what customers need."

Zmehrri honed his gift for intuiting what people want while working for another local company.

"I graduated in Iran with a degree in electronics," Zmehrri said. "I came to the U.S. in 1990. I worked as a technician at VCP computer products. After VCP was shut down, I decided to open my own company in 1994 out of my garage focusing on the external storage market."

EZQuest got its start manufacturing external hard drives with the then-popular FireWire connectivity. The products were an immediate hit, winning awards and receiving "Best Of" nominations from Macworld magazine and IBM.

From there, as technology changed and cloud-based storage became popular, the company pivoted to tech accessories harnessing the new USB-C standard.

Zmehrri said the pandemic has actually helped his company, since the need for accessories due to remote work grew.

"What I have learned since I have been in the U.S. is that you won't know what you are capable of unless you are cornered in and there is no way to escape," Zmehrri said. "Suddenly you will see talents and develop a stronger will to do things that you did not know you had in you."

In the future, the company will continue to focus on innovative USB-C hubs and products, including a dock that takes charging and powering devices to the next level.

## 'IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITIES'

All of the Orange County companies interviewed agreed that CES is absolutely integral to their business.

"CES is an opportunity to get a pulse on what is happening in the electronics industry and which direction technology is heading," Zmehrri said. "It is also a forum to meet with people face-to-face to discuss and share ideas for the present and future ... The more you put into this event, the more you can



## CONTRACT

Continued from page A1

highest level of compensation ever offered to the city's officers, and would make theirs the second highest-paying police department in Orange County.

"At its core, this agreement is about supporting public safety," Laguna Beach Mayor Bob Whalen stated in the city's release. The City Council will consider the agreement at its regular meeting on Tuesday.

Most of the raise comes in the form of a 15% salary increase for officers that will be staggered over the course of three years. It also includes an increase in the city's contribution to their retirement fund and a 12% pay boost for non-sworn support staff.

The announcement of successful negotiations between the city and the Laguna Beach Police Employee's Assn. came four months after the City Council unanimously approved temporary hiring and overtime incentives in an effort to recruit and retain more officers. Those included a \$15,000 bonus for new hires through the end of 2022, as well as double pay for overtime in September and November, and were expected to cost about \$100,000 funded by the department's overtime budget and the city's general fund contingency account.

The department had experienced a rise in resignations and retirements in recent years, due at least in part to "changes in legislation that have placed more pressure and scrutiny on officers," Laguna Beach Police Chief Jeff Calvert said during a City Council meeting on Aug. 2. There had also been numerous officers who had either tested positive for COVID-19 or taken leave for other injuries.

At that time, the city had budgeted for 55 sworn officers, but only 43 were available for duty, Calvert said.

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take away from it."

"Targus has been coming to CES for many, many years," Corkill said. The company has experimented with different modes of engagement, from big booths on the convention floor to private showcases in luxury suites. But Targus found customer engagement was highest when it went with a "big bang" approach on the show floor.

"CES ends up being something that's a lot of fun for people. They can see the excitement that is happening here," Corkill said. "I think CES is really worth it. You get to meet a lot of different people and it opens up your horizon a lot. Plus, we take advantage of meeting not only our partners, but our competitors. Even though we compete with a lot of the companies here, there are lots of times when you may end up partnering with those companies. Plus, we get to see everything from telescopes to race cars."

**CANDICE YACONO** is a contributor to TimesOC.



**HYPERX GAMING** mice and controllers debuting at CES 2023 in Las Vegas.

Candice Yacono

A WORD, PLEASE | JUNE CASAGRANDE



Ken Hively | Los Angeles Times

MANY READERS find reference to a "moist" sponge repugnant but are not bothered by a piece of "moist" honey ginger sponge cake, as pictured.

# 'Moist' and other words people don't like

Some time around the early- to mid-2000s, countless thousands of people decided they hate the word "moist." Some had probably hated it all along. Others were clearly jumping on a bandwagon — like middle school girls deciding some person or thing should be shunned. "Eww, Tammy's so gross!"

By 2007, linguists were penning analyses of why people hate the word "moist" and why they don't have the same reaction to "hoist" and "foist": The answer, it seems, is that people associate "moist" with bodily fluids, much like the way those middle-school girls associated Tammy with the one time she had spinach in her teeth.

Interestingly, when someone is talking about cake, the word "moist" doesn't elicit the same revulsion.

Respondents in a 1946 survey published in the 1977 "Book of Lists"



didn't include "moist" among the worst-sounding English words. Back then, people were cringing at cacophony, crunch, flatulent, gripe, jazz, phlegmatic, plump, plutocrat, sap and treachery. So tastes change, apparently.

I was curious whether our newfound hatred of "moist" was spilling over into the world of professional publishing, so I searched in Google's Ngram Viewer, which shows how often words appear in published works over time. Turns out "moist" has been in steady decline for over a century but took a big dip around 2010. Even more telling: Also around 2010, the words "damp" and "wet" jumped in popularity, apparently serving as pinch-hitters (even though you could argue they're just as icky).

It's unclear whether writers are avoiding the word "moist" because they dislike it or because they know readers do, but either way there's a

lesson here: When writing, choose your words carefully.

Case in point: I always liked the word "impactful." It's efficient and clear — simpler than saying something "has an impact." Then a reader teased me about using it. The gibe got to me. Now I shy away from using "impactful," and I cringe when I see it in print or hear it spoken. I'm not proud that I was so easily prejudiced against "impactful," but any writer who wants to keep me focused on their message instead of their word choice would be wise to avoid it.

You don't have to accommodate every reader's aversion to every potentially off-putting word. But you should keep the reader in the back of your mind at all times. If you're writing crime fiction or horror and you want to elicit a visceral response, by all means use "moist." But if you're writing a memo to your staff about

See **Moist**, page A9



TYLER BURTON'S sculpture "The Archaeology of Every Day" will be on display through 2024.

Courtesy of the Newport Beach Arts Commission

## SCULPTURE

Continued from page A1

looking forward to having the community join us in June to enjoy the sculptures of Phase VII and new ones for Phase VIII."

Votes can be cast at [sparkoc.com/nb\\_sculpture\\_poll](http://sparkoc.com/nb_sculpture_poll). Voting is allowed only for Newport Beach residents; votes with ZIP codes outside of the city will not be counted. Only three votes — meaning voters can choose three sculptures total — can be cast per individual voter.

The survey will close on Tuesday.

Cultural arts assistant Camille Escareal-Garcia said last week that the sculptures up for voting were chosen by a curatorial panel that included the city's arts commission and two guest judges — Lisa Berman and Matteo Tanat. The panel voted on each sculpture individually, the highest of those moved on to the public survey.

Sculptures were selected based on artistic merit, durability, practicality and site appropriateness. Once the survey

closes, the commission will review the results and are expected to present the 10 finalists and their three alternates — in the event that a sculpture is no longer available or if there are issues with installation and safety — to the City Council on Feb. 14.

Pending approvals, the sculptures will be installed in different parts of the park based on their dimensions, weight and base requirements by Arts Orange County, a non-profit arts council that also oversees the poll itself.

The revolving sculpture exhibition began in 2013 after the completion of Civic Center Park. Pieces are loaned for two years and sculptors are granted a small honorarium for loaning their works. Artists are required to maintain and repair as necessary. This installation follows Phase VII, which was approved last February and put into place over the summer. Those will be on display until summer 2024.

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# Amy Tan

In Conversation



January 23 • 8 pm

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# Monthly restoration improves park's native habitat

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

The new year is a time for restoration, and the same goes for Peters Canyon Regional Park, where volunteers lend a helping hand to improve native habitat there.

"Restoration Day is a monthly opportunity for members of the community to contribute to OC Parks' efforts to improve the habitat in Peters Canyon Regional Park," said OC Parks resource specialist Kelley Brugmann.

Each month, park staff and volunteers dedicate a morning to seasonally appropriate restoration, such as planting and watering native shrubs and removing invasive weeds.

"Native plants have adapted to survive and thrive in our climate and provide habitat and resources for wildlife," said Brugmann, suggesting that happy plants make for happier wildlife.

"A healthier ecosystem in the park provides more habitats and resources for many plants and animals who depend on these areas to survive and provides a more enjoyable visitor experience," Brugmann said.

OC Parks officials have announced Restoration Day will not take place in January due to weather but expect the program to resume next month.

Peters Canyon is 340 acres that include coastal sage scrub, riparian, freshwater marsh and grassland habitats. The 55-acre Upper Peters Canyon Reservoir is home to waterfowl, while smaller amphibians, mammals and reptiles live along the creek. Cactus wrens, gnatcatchers and rufous-crowned sparrows make their home in the park's coastal sage scrub and grassland. The animal population also includes mule deer, bobcats, coyotes, opossums, raccoons and the occasional mountain lion.

The wildlife thrives

alongside recreational opportunities in the park, with trails for hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians. The East Ridge View Trail, for example, is a moderate hike that rewards hikers with a panoramic view of Peters Canyon and the surrounding area.

The park has a rich history and was part of the original Spanish land grant Rancho Lomas de Santiago. During World War II it was used as a training area for the U.S. Army, and in 1992, the Irvine Co. dedicated the land to the county to be preserved as open space, which became known as Peters Canyon, named for James Peters, who farmed the area more than 120 years ago.

Restoration Day at Peters Canyon Regional Park occurs monthly and is open to participants ages 12 and up, although volunteers under age 16 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

The day begins at 7:30 a.m., and parks staff recommend volunteers bringing strong gardening gloves and wear clothes they don't mind getting dirty.

Taking stewardship over our wilderness areas is important not only to maintain areas used for recreation but also for the long-term survival of native plants and animals, Brugmann said.

"Events such as Restoration Day offer the chance to make a tangible contribution to preserving our parks, habitats and wildlife for the future," Brugmann said. "These events also provide participants a chance to deepen their connection with OC Parks, build community, get outside, stay active and learn about habitat restoration."

Space is limited and advance registration is suggested. Volunteers can register at [ocparks.com/events](http://ocparks.com/events).

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Courtesy of OC Parks

**AN OC PARKS** volunteer plants a tree at Peters Canyon Regional Park. Staff works to improve the native habitat at the park every month, though organizers canceled this month's meeting due to recent rains and a continued wet forecast.

## THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Jacqueline E. Mathews

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## 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).

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

For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A9.

- 1 Remedy
- 2 Fifth & Pennsylvania: abbr.
- 3 Unselfishness
- 4 "\_ , drink and be merry"
- 5 Crab Louie & coleslaw
- 6 Nest materials
- 7 Cereal grains
- 8 Raw metal
- 9 Part of MPG
- 10 On the go
- 11 Navy or indigo
- 12 Rudely brief
- 13 Observes
- 19 Skilled
- 21 Spaces; openings
- 24 Leave out
- 25 Kicked oneself

- for
  - 26 Average
  - 27 Anklebone
  - 28 Stitched joining
  - 29 Says again
  - 30 Bundled hay
  - 32 False front
  - 33 That lady
  - 35 National League team
  - 37 Filled with wonder
  - 38 Sticky strip
  - 40 Horse's place
  - 41 Lies
  - 43 Electrical flashes
  - 44 Outer edge
  - 46 Sifting device
  - 47 "Oh, \_ in England" (Browning)
  - 48 Kiwifruit's shape
  - 49 Semester or quarter
  - 50 Very short play
  - 52 \_ colada
  - 53 Univ. teacher
  - 55 \_ whim; impulsively
  - 56 Clumsy fellow
  - 57 R-V center
- Tribune Media Services

  
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# Kontrapunktus keeps baroque music alive

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Baroque music may not strike the average casual music fan but the 17th- and early 18th-century style of music has certainly struck a chord with a group of young musicians known as Kontrapunktus.

“Kontrapunktus, which means counterpoint in English, is a baroque chamber orchestra. It is rare in that it is a chamber orchestra comprised of young musicians — student musicians for the most part,” said R. Douglas Jacobs, founder and executive director of the orchestra.

However, Jacobs notes its members prefer not to be considered student musicians since most have performed professionally for years while attending some of the country’s most prestigious music conservatories, like Colburn, Juilliard and Yale.

“They are essentially professional musicians that are going to school,” he said.

The nine-piece classical ensemble has been keeping baroque music alive since the group formed in 2015. Its current lineup has been playing since last May, and the orchestra returns to Orange County today and Jan. 14 to perform “Bach & Handel: Soli Deo gloria.”

“We play an eclectic repertoire of music, so we don’t play the standards that you are accustomed to experiencing,” said Jacobs. “We venture away from that and play something that is going to be unique, gripping, emotional.”

“Soli Deo gloria” is a series of early 18th-century musical compositions written “in praise of God alone” by the baroque era’s two master composers, Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frideric Handel.

“I call baroque music prehistoric jazz. In fact, a lot of the classic jazz players were heavily influenced by Bach, so his music transcended music as we know now,” Jacobs said. “We capture the spirit of that music in the way we present it on stage live.”

A love of baroque music is what initially united the nine musicians, and friendships have been fostered from that love.

“This music we feel is very important to us and it speaks to



Photos by Sarah Mosqueda

**CHAMBER ORCHESTRA** Kontrapunktus performs a repertoire of baroque music at rehearsal at St. Andrew’s Catholic Church in Pasadena.

us, very deeply,” said cellist Osheen Manukyan.

“After COVID, I think any opportunity we can get to play with each other and for anybody is something that we really treasure,” said violinist Cameron Alan-Lee.

The group is also proud to continue an old tradition while bringing it new life.

“I think us being so young, we add a certain energy to baroque music that is not normally there,” said Cassie Drake, who plays the viola, “and that makes it really exciting for the audience to be able to hear that kind of music in a different way.”

This season’s performances will

See *Baroque*, page A9



**CHAMBER ORCHESTRA** Kontrapunktus from left, features concertmaster Hannah White, violinist Cameron Alan-Lee and second principal violinist David Chang.

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# O.C.'s COVID-19 metrics appear stable

BY CITY NEWS SERVICE

Orange County's COVID-19 metrics remained relatively stable again this past week, but 32 more fatalities were logged, according to data released Thursday by the Orange County Health Care Agency.

Hospitalizations of COVID-19 infected patients have been going up and down since a steady rise ended on Dec. 7.

On Dec. 29 there were 348 patients, and that number fell to 315 as of Dec. 31, but it has been on the rise since then with 352 recorded as of Wednesday. The number of patients in intensive

care dropped from 34 to 30.

"I was pleased to see ICU numbers down week on week," Andrew Noymer, a UC Irvine professor of population health and disease prevention, told City News Service.

"I'm pleased to see hospitalization is essentially stable. It's bouncing up and down, but it's still in the 300s," Noymer said.

The epidemiologist noted, however, that a new strain of Omicron — XBB — has started surfacing in Orange County and that variant is more vaccine evasive.

"Whether or not that drives a major wave remains to be seen," Noymer

said. "That's something I'm keeping an eye on."

The agency logged 32 more fatalities, increasing the overall death toll to 7,706. All but three of the fatalities occurred last month, increasing December's death toll to 75. Three of the fatalities occurred in November, increasing that month's death toll to 45.

Of those hospitalized in the county, 64.4% are unvaccinated or partly vaccinated. The ICU patients are 65.8% partly or unvaccinated.

The number of residents fully vaccinated increased from 2,363,227 to 2,363,581. The number of residents who have received at least one dose is

223,392. The number of booster shots administered increased from 1,435,527 to 1,437,959.

The number of children up to 4 years old who have received at least one dose inched up from 17,546 to 17,700, with 10,454 fully vaccinated. Just 5.6% of the county's population in the age group is fully vaccinated.

For 5- to 11-year-old children, 97,203 are fully vaccinated, about 36.7% of the age group. In the 12- to 17 age group, 69.7% are fully vaccinated.

The test positivity rate went from 13% to 15.1% and decreased from 13.7% to 13.6% in the health equity quartile, which mea-

sures the communities hardest hit by the pandemic.

The daily case rate per 100,000 decreased from 14.1 to 13.7 on a seven-day average with a seven-day lag, and went from 15 to 15.1 in the adjusted daily case rate per 100,000 on a seven-day average with a seven-day lag.

The county logged 3,195 new cases of COVID-19, hiking the cumulative to 700,624.

The positivity rate for those fully vaccinated with a booster, which was 17.9 on Dec. 25, remained the same on Jan. 1.

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## MOIST

Continued from page A4

keeping the office kitchen clean, you might want to avoid talking about a "moist" sponge.

Unlike "moist" and "impactful," the most-hated words are despised not because people think they're disgusting, but because people think they're wrong.

"Irregardless" is a prime example. Ask 100 people what they think of this word and 99 will tell you "It's not a word!" Not true. Even made-up words are words. What these folks mean is that it's not a proper word or a correct word. They logically assume that, because "regardless" already says the same thing, adding "ir" renders it nonsensical. A fair point, but language doesn't always evolve logically, which is why you'll find "irregardless" in most dictionaries as a synonym of "regardless."

"Orientate," like "irregardless," includes an unnecessary syllable. It means "orient," as in to orient yourself to your surroundings. The only difference is that tacked on "ate." For that reason, "orientate" is despised, but that doesn't mean it's wrong.

"Orientate," like "irregardless," includes an unnecessary syllable. It means "orient," as in to orient yourself to your surroundings. The only difference is that tacked on "ate." For that reason, "orientate" is despised, but that doesn't mean it's wrong.

"It is not uncommon for words in English to have variants which are slightly longer than they need to be," Merriam-Webster dictionary editors write. "Some of them make people very angry ("irregardless," "conversate," "preventative"), while others ("commentator") seem to elicit little more than a shrug."

As a writer, you shouldn't worry too much about whether commonly used words are wrong. But you should always consider whether you want to anger or disgust your readers.

**JUNE CASAGRANDE** is the author of "The Joy of Syntax: A Simple Guide to All the Grammar You Know You Should Know." She can be reached at [JuneTCN@aol.com](mailto:JuneTCN@aol.com).

## Keep your umbrellas handy



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

A COUPLE STROLL the boardwalk at Main Beach in Laguna Beach as clouds come ashore last week. More rain is expected tomorrow and Tuesday.

## BAROQUE

Continued from page A7

take place at St. John's Lutheran Church in Orange on Jan. 8 and Laguna Presbyterian Church in Laguna Beach on Jan. 14.

The group rehearses at St. Andrew's Catholic Church in Pasadena, though the musicians come from all over. Second principal violinist, David Chang, for example, is originally from north Tustin.

"I am from the O.C., so performing in my hometown is kind of nice," said Chang.

Kontrapunktus has found followers in Orange County, particularly in the south county cities of Newport Beach, Laguna Beach and San Juan Capistrano, where previous performances have taken place.

The group plays on vintage instruments, giving the sound a historical accuracy that only amplifies their talent.

"All their instruments are on loan from various patrons, and they are all antiques," said Jacobs.

"Being able to play on them is a blessing," said Chang.

The harpsichord, for example, is a double-manual Italian replica of a harpsichord made in 1743 and is tailored for Kontrapunktus' performance.

A precursor to the piano, the harpsichord is a keyboard musical instrument, which has strings that create sound vibrations by



Sarah Mosqueda

**BOGANG HWANG**, a member of the Kontrapunktus orchestra, plays the harpsichord at rehearsal.

plucking, rather than hammering like a piano. The harpsichord used by Kontrapunktus is on loan to the orchestra for the season and is played by Bogang Hwang and was built by Curtis Berak, a well-reputed Southern California harpsichord builder.

This season, members of the orchestra are most looking forward to sharing their love of baroque music and also, in a way, pre-serving it.

"As a group, we are doing our part to keep this music

alive," Manukyan said. "This is music from centuries ago, and it is still very relevant today, and it still speaks to people."

Alan-Lee agrees. "When I am playing and I see some one in the crowd looking up and really enjoying it, that to me is rewarding," he said.

Details about the orchestra and its shows can be found at [kontrapunktus.com](http://kontrapunktus.com).

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## CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

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

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**GIRLS' WATER POLO**

# Schneider sisters make their mark

BY MATT SZABO

Lauren Schneider has been a mainstay of the Laguna Beach High girls' water polo team the last four years.

The senior goalkeeper, bound for USC, has been starting since she was a freshman. Her résumé is unmatched.

The Breakers won CIF her freshman year, and were big favorites to do so again her sophomore year before the coronavirus forced a cancellation of the playoffs. Last year Laguna Beach was young, after graduating an 11-player senior class, but Schneider helped lead the Breakers back to the Open Division title match before falling to Newport Harbor.

The Schneiders seem to be multiplying on the pool deck this year.

Lauren's twin sister Jordan, a one-two side attacker headed to the University of Michigan, has stepped into a much larger role as a senior. And even freshman Brooke, one of the program's top junior varsity players as a four-five side attacker, also sometimes plays on varsity.

"I think we really balance each other out," Lauren said. "Jordan is like calm and serious, and Brooke is a mix of us. I'm a little bit more out there. It's like the perfect combo."

The sisters moved with their parents, John and Caroline, from El Paso, Texas when Lauren and Jordan were 9 years old. They had been swimmers in Texas, but quickly found the sport of water polo.

A year later, Brooke started playing at the age of 6.

By the time the twins got to high school, Lauren made a difference right away. Even with the COVID-19 year that lim-



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**TWIN SISTERS** Lauren and Jordan Schneider, center and left, are key players for the Laguna Beach High girls' water polo team. Lauren, bound for USC, is a four-year varsity starter at goalie. Jordan, bound for Michigan, is a senior attacker, while youngest sister and freshman Brooke, right, is also on the team.

ited teams to three weeks of games, she came into her senior season with 514 saves in her career, fifth in the program's all-time annals.

"[Starting as a freshman] was something I was working for my whole middle school career," said Lauren, who has 82 saves already this season through Thursday. "I was really nervous. I didn't want to let the older girls down. I'm this freshman, and I didn't want to be the reason that they lose or anything. It was a lot of

pressure, but it was amazing."

Jordan, meanwhile, was on JV until last year. But she has really blossomed as a senior, where her speed aids the Breakers' counterattack. Through Thursday, she accumulated five goals and 11 assists for Laguna; the assists total is second on the team.

"Last year was definitely a lot of learning," Jordan said. "The practices were always really intense, and I feel like I was able to influence a lot in practices. This year, I've been work-

ing toward doing stuff in the game. I like making a lot of connections with Charlotte [Riches] in set, and it's fun to make plays with Lauren on the counterattack. I feel like that's my biggest role, the counterattack, and creating on offense."

Brooke said her older sisters have been an inspiration growing up. She played mostly set defender before entering high school, which worked out well whenever the sisters would train together. Jordan would be the attacker, Brooke the guard and Lauren the goalkeeper.

"I always wanted to be as fast as Jordan," Brooke said. "It was just nice to relate to them. If I was the only person playing water polo [in the family], that would just kind of suck."

Lauren said with a smile that she's jealous of Brooke because she has her own bedroom at home, while Lauren and Jordan have always shared a room with two twin-sized beds. Still, she notes with pride that her freshman sister is the class president at Laguna Beach High.

"She's making her own path," Lauren said. "She don't need our name. She's a social butterfly."

The twins both admit the season has been up and down so far for Laguna Beach (5-4), but with glimpses of potential. The Breakers finished fourth in the Bill Barnett Holiday Cup last weekend, yet none of the team's four losses so far has been by more than two goals.

The Breakers open Surf League play at defending champion Newport Harbor on Wednesday at 3:30 p.m.

Though Orange Lutheran (9-0) has established itself as the top team, Laguna Beach is one of several other contenders.

"We all know that we can do it," Jordan said. "It's pretty much the same



**LAGUNA BEACH** goalie Lauren Schneider makes a stop during the Bill Barnett Holiday Cup on Dec. 30.



**JORDAN, LAUREN** and Brooke Schneider, from left, moved to Laguna Beach from Texas several years ago.

team as last year, and I would say last year's teams were a lot stronger. With this year, if we play our game, then we've got it. Obviously other teams can play better, but recently we haven't been playing to our potential."

Lauren is now the player with the most varsity experience, and the Breakers know that they don't have to worry about her play in goal. Her quirky personality — often joking and smiling — can create light moments, yet her teammates know that she has their back.

"I think I'm just honest," she said. "I'm just real about it. You know where you're at with me ... The craziness helps a little bit. You kind of need to be a little crazy to be really good at water polo."

Coach Claire Sonne, in her first year guiding her alma mater at Laguna Beach, is certainly glad to have the Schneider twins on the deck for one more year.

"As much as they are different, I think they're the same in the sense that they have huge hearts, all three of them," Sonne said. "They bicker like sisters do, of course, but at the end of the day you know that they have each other's back, and the team's back. They're willing to put everything on the line for the good of the team."

"I feel really lucky to have their leadership, their hard work, their heart, as a core part of this team."

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**LAUREN SCHNEIDER**, a USC commit, stands up to thank her parents for all the support during National Signing Day ceremony at Laguna Beach High School in November.