

H.B. city attorney race pits Gates vs. Field

Former assistant city attorney who claimed age discrimination when working under Gates is now his challenger.

BY MATT SZABO

Michael Gates has sued the state of California. He's had very public squabbles with Huntington Beach City Council members over the last couple of years regarding his role.

Now, to keep his job, the city attorney has to beat a challenger who sued him.

Welcome to Surf City, where political storylines with juicy plots are the norm. And so it will go again this November.

Gates, 47, is running for a third term. He's opposed by Scott Field. Both filed their paperwork last week and were officially certified for the ballot.

Field, a longtime assistant city attorney, with Neal Moore, a former deputy city attorney, filed an age discrimination suit against Gates and the city in 2019. It was settled last year for a total of \$2.5 million. The city also spent \$1.5 million fighting the case.

Field, now 66, no longer works for the city, but he's not content sitting on the sidelines.

Gates was first elected city at-

See *Race*, page A2

NMUSD reforms its virtual learning model

School district officials adjust TK-12 Cloud Campus access according to safety guidelines, family needs.

BY SARA CARDINE

At the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Newport-Mesa Unified School District crafted a re-opening plan to segue students from remote learning into brick-and-mortar schools in either a hybrid or fully in-person model, based on transmission rates of the coronavirus.

Many families lauded the plan. But others, fearing the risk of sending at-risk kids back to campuses where they might be exposed to the virus or bring it back to a compromised family member, sought a 100% virtual learning option.

District officials complied, and the TK-12 Cloud Campus was born. Teachers were reassigned and coursework retooled to accommodate a format where kids learned together on Zoom for a part of the school day and worked independently on assignments

See *Learning*, page A2

CIF SOUTHERN SECTION



Raul Roa

CIF SOUTHERN Section Commissioner Rob Wigod smiles from behind his desk at the CIF office in Los Alamitos on Wednesday.

Retiring CIF commissioner continues his mission to boost high school athletics

BY ANDREW TURNER

After four decades in education — and more than half of that time spent with the CIF Southern Section — Rob Wigod, the section's commissioner of athletics, announced earlier this month that this year will be his last in the position.

Wigod, who grew up in Long Beach and coached baseball at Los Alamitos High School prior to going to work as an administrator with the CIF, has headed the state's largest section since Aug. 2, 2011.

During his time as commissioner, Wigod

Rob Wigod, the CIF Southern Section's commissioner of athletics since 2011, plans to step down at the end of the 2022-23 school year.

said there was no doubt in his mind what the biggest challenge of his tenure was: the coronavirus pandemic. The restoration effort to bring back high school sports, including the section and state playoffs, "energized" him, he said.

"I started this journey a long time ago as a high school teacher and coach," Wigod said. "... I would never have thought of walking away and leaving a brand-new commis-

sioner with having to try to pick up these pieces. It was very important to me that we were able to reestablish."

Wigod joined the CIF as an assistant commissioner on Sept. 1, 2000. He plans to step down on Aug. 1, 2023, at which time he will be retiring with the third-longest service time as the CIF commissioner.

See *Athletics*, page A7

Union Market tenants face uncertain future



ABOVE: Owner Chong Bok Manalo behind the counter at Braga, located in the Union Market.

RIGHT: Co-owners Leonard Chan, left, and Dominic Iapello at Stowaway.

Photos by Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

Ambiguous legal situation leaves a handful of remaining business owners at Union Market in Tustin wondering what's to come after Aug. 31.

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Recently, Chong Bok Manalo has taken to blasting music from her bakery stall, Braga, at the Union Market at the District at Tustin Legacy to get customers' attention.

"I make loud music to show we are in here," said Manalo. "Just follow the music."

Positioned at the back of the food hall, Braga is among the few tenants left at the nearly abandoned market.

The space, which opened in 2014, is described as an "industrial-chic market with an open plan offering food stalls, restaurants and boutiques" on its website, but after a shaky opening and a high turnover rate, the Union Market may be on its last legs.

"Around the beginning of March, the market was served with a pay or quit," said Leonard

Chan, co-owner of the market's popular tiki concept, Stowaway. "It wasn't directed at any of us, it was directed at our landlord at the time, Andrea Young."

Young subleased the space from master landlord and owner of the District, Vestar/Kimco, and then rented spaces to other businesses. Now a lawsuit between the two parties may prevent the market's current tenants from finishing out those subleases.

Chan said legal notices continued to arrive, but he and his Stowaway business partner, Dominic Iapello, were assured by Vestar that the matter was being resolved.

"In fact, the one thing we did hear was someone from the Vestar office told a tenant here, 'We are going through some legal things, we can't talk about it, but

See *Market*, page A7

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Scott Smeltzer / Kevin Chang | Staff Photographers

INCUMBENT City Atty. Michael Gates, left, and challenger Scott Field, right, are candidates in the Huntington Beach city attorney race...

RACE

Continued from page A1

torney in 2014, beating incumbent Jennifer McGrath by nearly 14 points. He ran unopposed in 2018, after potential challenger Jerold Friedman was disqualified...

Now Gates, a Republican, finds himself in a contested election to retain his seat. He said his initial reaction was surprise when Field, a Democrat, decided to run.

"For two years, the city had viewed it as a frivolous lawsuit, and suddenly [Field] gets a settlement at the 11th hour," Gates said. "So, sort of taking advantage of the process, he gets a ton of money from the city, which is taxpayer money. Now he's trying to run against a city attorney that really, by any measure, has community support. We've done a good job. I don't really have any issues with results."

"It's peculiar. It's very dramatic, but whether there's any real substance to it? I think it's light on substance, high on drama."

Both candidates are long-time Huntington Beach residents. Gates graduated from Marina High and lives in Huntington Beach with

his wife and five children. Also married, Field has lived in the city since 1989 and started working for the city attorney's office six years later. He and his wife are the parents of two adult children who are graduates of Huntington Beach High.

Field said he was demoted twice after Gates took over.

"He sought to clean house," Field said. "That would be safe to say. I think he just wanted everybody gone."

Field said he felt compelled to run after he read a report, commissioned by the City Council, that was critical of the city's handling of his own lawsuit. The 69-page report by Craig Steele of the Richards, Watson & Gershon firm was released to the public last month.

The report found no evidence that Gates or members of his staff had broken the law, but Steele did find that Gates practiced an "overly aggressive assertion of the authority of his office."

It also recommended changes to the city charter, so that the city attorney's role could be more clearly defined. Though Gates said he recused himself from the beginning, the report alleges that he sat in on nu-

See Race, page A7

LEARNING

Continued from page A1

the rest of the time.

The virtual school gave families the flexibility to travel without interrupting instruction and ensured students could continue learning online without the disruption of shifting from hybrid to in-person learning, and potentially back again, as coronavirus infections ebbed and flowed.

Newport Beach resident Missy FitzSimons enrolled son Owen and daughter Zoe in the Cloud in the fall of 2020 after finding they'd done well at distance learning the previous semester.

"We wanted more consistency and also a safer environment at that time," she said Friday. "We got them organized on a schedule at home. They were able to work without distractions and be done by noon — they loved it."

Cloud Campus enrollment reached a peak of 1,800 students during the 2020-21 school year, according to district figures. But now that in-person learning across NMUSD campuses has fully returned to pre-pandemic levels, participation in virtual classes has, consequently, shrunk.

In 2021-22, Newport-Mesa Unified recorded 415 students in grades K-12 attended the online school, while so far, about 336 students have committed for the upcoming school year, which begins Monday.

Instead of scrapping the online learning model, school and district officials are rebranding Cloud Campus as an option for families who may not have the same health and safety concerns they had at the peak of the pandemic but whose children may still benefit from online learning.

"Virtual school is the new way of doing independent study," Principal Racquel Stephens said of the online delivery model. "It serves a very unique

population of parents who would like to educate their children in the home environment but who also want a connection to the district."

Stephens on Wednesday led an online information session for families who might still be interested in enrolling students in the Cloud Campus this fall. Unlike previous school years, students are not required to commit to an entire semester and have the flexibility of moving between virtual and in-person learning.

She emphasized the many clubs and electives offered through the school — from cooking and astronomy to book clubs and computer coding — and said parents often organize optional in-person field trips and get-togethers. In June, students participated in in-person graduation and promotion events.

Cloud students additionally benefit from the technology they learn and use in the classroom, which could potentially put them at an advantage in college and the workplace, Stephens told parents.

"After a very short time at Cloud, our students become experts at tech," she said, reciting a list of platforms and programs used during a typical school day. "You'd be surprised at how fast they learn them — they run circles around us."

FitzSimons said while her family initially decided to enroll for health and safety reasons, she was surprised at the unintended benefits the Cloud Campus brought with it.

Owen, typically shy in social situations, felt more emboldened to make friends and join clubs online.

"The next thing we know, he's in ASB, he's in book clubs and all these extracurricular activities he would have been too shy to participate in in an in-person setting," she said.

For Zoe, the change was even more remarkable.



Courtesy of Newport-Mesa Unified School District

A CLOUD CAMPUS student follows along with a school assignment while working from home during the 2021-22 school year.

Having struggled for years with dyslexia and seeking accommodations in the classroom, FitzSimons said the technological platforms at Cloud Campus made learning and communicating easier for her. She quickly became a straight-A student.

When the family sat down this summer to talk about enrollment in the upcoming academic year, Owen decided to shift back to in-person learning for his freshman year at Corona del Mar High School, so he could attend the school's Academy of Global Studies and play on the tennis team.

About to enter the seventh grade, Zoe decided she'd rather continue learning online.

"It was a game changer for her. Now she's this total wizard who knows how to email teachers when she needs help," her mom said. "It's just given her an access to the curriculum she didn't have before. That's why she's deciding to stay at Cloud Campus."

To operate a fully online K-12 learning model cost just over \$4.3 million during the 2021-22 school year, with about 95% paid for by state and federal sources, including COVID-19 relief funds, according to figures provided by the district.

More than \$4.7 million has been budgeted for the 2022-23 school year so far. But even if federal and state pandemic assistance recedes, NMUSD is likely to continue developing the Cloud Campus into a new tool for students and families.

"Most of the districts in Orange County have a fully virtual option, so in establishing a virtual school at Newport-Mesa, we are going with the times," Stephens said in an interview Thursday. "Online learning isn't going away — it's just about how are we going to use it and how are we going to position ourselves?"

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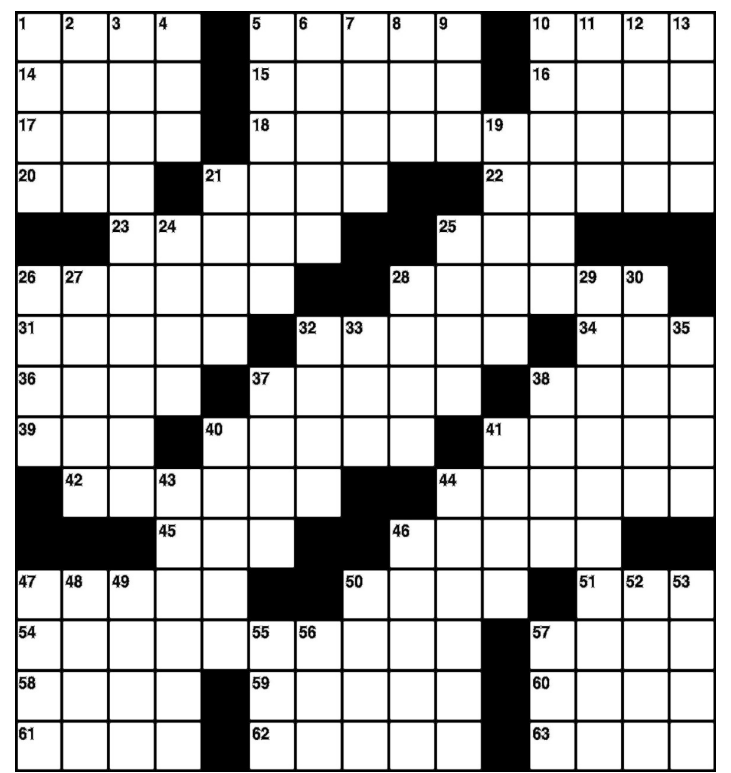
THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Jacqueline E. Mathews

ACROSS

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32 Upright or grand
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41 Overuse the mirror
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62 Bury
63 Not relaxed

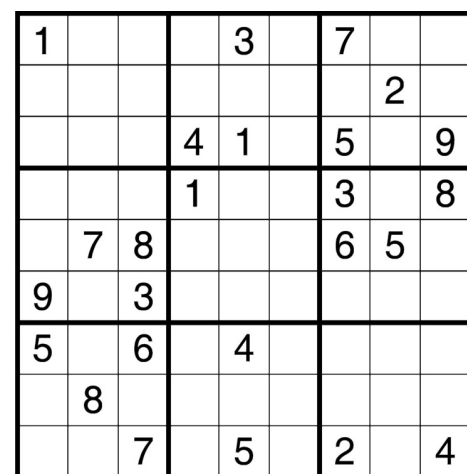
DOWN! Out of danger
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SUDOKU

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.



For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A4.

- 3 Diagnostic imaging method
4 Go from brown to blond
5 Energetic
6 Perfect
7 Jay or swan
8 Hither and _
9 TV's "One Day _ Time"
10 Droops suddenly
11 "Old King _"
12 As wise _ owl
13 Bookish fellow
19 Egypt's capital
21 Actor Christian
24 Conway & Allen
25 Transmit
26 Breakfast order

- 27 Andrea McArdle role
28 Colorado resort
29 Not guided; aimless
30 Stitched joinings
32 U.K. social spots
33 Wrath
35 Use a keyboard
37 Tall tales
38 Boring event
40 Golf course
41 Tiny body of water
43 Most urgent
44 Obstruct
46 Gave the old _-ho to; fired
47 Sailor's mop
48 Mah-jongg piece
49 Poems of praise
50 Dissolve
52 Björn of tennis
53 Agile
55 Sorority letter
56 _ after; chased
57 Feminine pronoun
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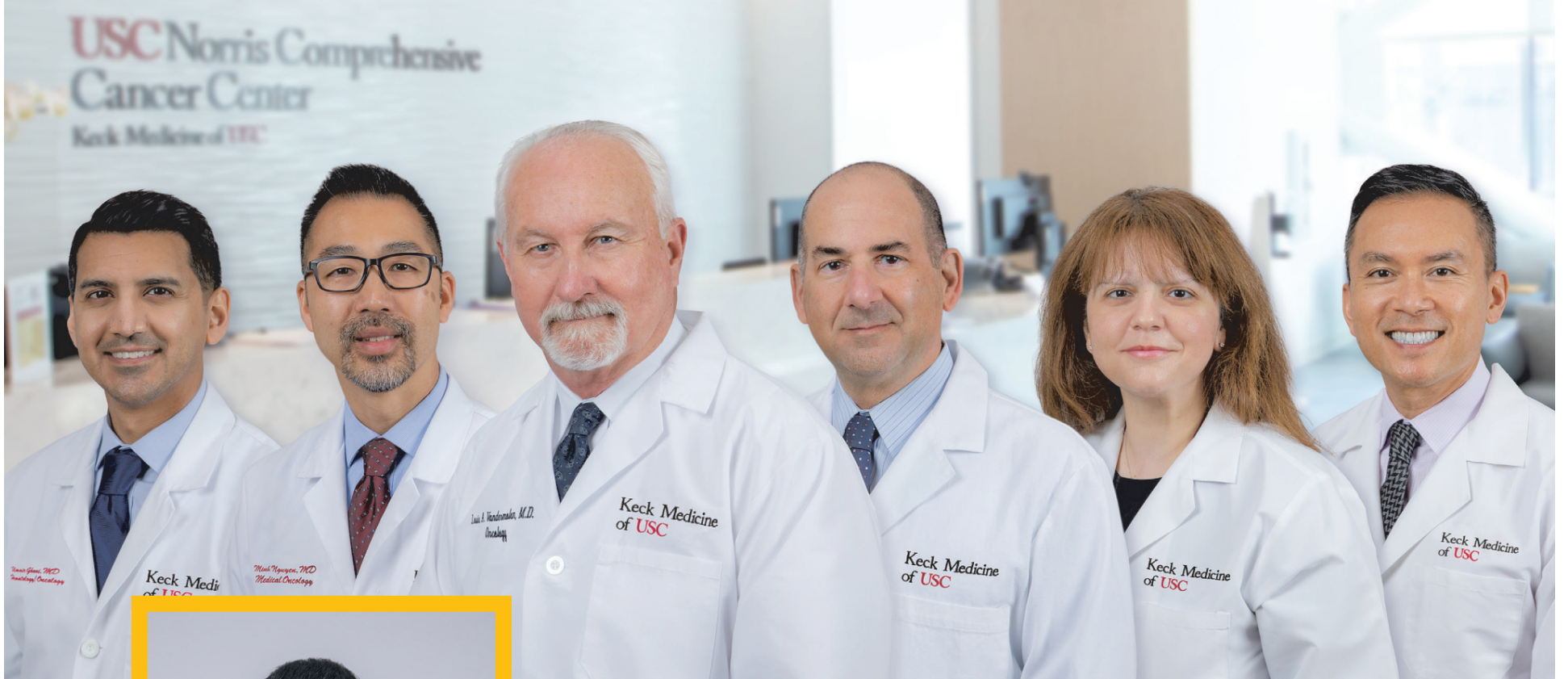
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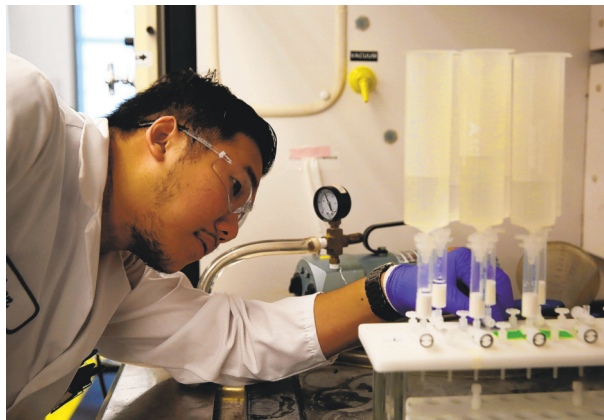
COMMENTARY | SCOTT M. BARTELL, PHD

PFAS are ‘forever’ chemicals contaminating our water sources and affecting our health

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine recently released its nearly 300-page *Guide on PFAS Exposure, Testing and Clinical Follow-up*. After more than 15 years of experience studying PFAS chemicals in our drinking water and their health effects, I believe that action is long overdue to minimize the serious health effects of these toxic chemicals.

PFAS, also known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are largely unregulated man-made chemicals that have been used widely since the 1950s to manufacture and/or to improve various types of everyday products such as nonstick cookware, stain-resistant clothing and carpets, and food packaging. Everyone has been exposed to these “forever” chemicals by consuming PFAS-contaminated food or by using products made with PFAS, but scientific studies show that PFAS exposures can cause decreased vaccine response, testicular cancer, kidney cancer, ulcerative colitis, thyroid disease, high cholesterol, hypertension during pregnancy and other health conditions.

Another source of PFAS exposure for some communities is contaminated drinking water. PFAS have been detected in many water supplies around the world, including right here



Dania Maxwell | Los Angeles Times

TWAN NGUYEN examines a machine testing water for chemicals at the Orange County Water District.

in Orange County. The Orange County Groundwater Basin provides 77% of the water supply to north and central Orange County and has tested positive for a variety of PFAS chemicals that likely originated from wastewater treatment facilities upstream on the Santa Ana River. While I applaud the work that the state of California, Orange County Water District and our local water providers are doing to reduce PFAS exposures, including restricting PFAS in food packaging and cookware sold in California after 2023, requiring manufacturers to consider PFAS alternatives for stain-resistant treatments of carpets, upholstery, clothing and shoes, more closely monitoring common PFAS chemicals in our water supplies, shut-

ting down affected wells, using alternative water sources and building new or enhanced water treatment systems, *we should do much more*.

Although reducing current and future exposure is important, some of the most notorious PFAS chemicals accumulate in the body and remain there for years or even decades after exposure, and these PFAS have been shown to cause serious health problems. In its report, the National Academies recommends offering PFAS blood testing to people with a history of elevated exposure to PFAS, for example from drinking water containing PFAS chemicals, and that doctors should consider those blood test results and past exposures when providing

See *Chemicals*, page A5

COMMENTARY | JOSEPH KLUNDER



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

THE COLLEGE CENTER building at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa. A contributor to the Pilot extols the value of a community college education.

Local community colleges can ensure real-world survival, success

The last three years have seen drastic social changes. Lockdowns stifled movement, income dried up, pursuing new opportunities was difficult, even impossible. Many workplaces, schools and everyday social activities must still be online. Everyone wishes for life to return to normal.

But when the pandemic ends for good, whether in a few months or years, how can we best situate ourselves for the near future? Local community colleges build a strong foundation and bridge gaps during common challenges ordinary people face.

Despite its hassles, the lockdown has provided an opportunity to catch up on reading, practice specific skills that need improvement or take community college classes. Coastline Community College, for example, offered a well-functioning system for online courses, even as top-ranked schools like

Yale charged full tuition for Zoom classes.

Many prisoners, military personnel outside Orange County or the elderly in nursing homes have benefitted from online coursework from Coastline or Orange Coast College. Food pantries, computer loaning services and even mobile Wi-Fi have ensured that lockdowns do not necessarily mean time without material and electronic access to the outside world. I have even seen full courses completed in as few as three days, especially with ample professor support.

Further, our community colleges have strengthened partnerships with relevant organizations to ensure a transition to four-year colleges is seamless and inexpensive. With enough planning and hard work, around 75% (90 units) of a typical bachelor's degree can transfer to a California public university. Even colleges outside California,

including Arizona State University, Louisiana State University and dozens of lesser known 100% online bachelor's programs accept local California community college classes.

Under the current environment, if everything goes perfectly, a student could go from finishing high school to completing an online bachelor's degree in under two years and \$10,000 before financial aid.

More broadly, how do we ensure all this university-level education leads to real-world success? One of the most viable answers comes from Career and Technical Education programs at community colleges.

For those unfamiliar, CTE is a descendant of traditional vocational education once seen in high schools and colleges. However, unlike vocational education of the past, CTE is better funded and

See *Colleges*, page A5

MAILBAG

Expensive desalination plants are not the right response to drought

There is no doubt that California is experiencing a major drought, however this does not mean that drastic means such as ocean desalination with marine environmental harm needs to be implemented. On May 12, the California Coastal Commission rejected Poseidon's plans to build a \$1.4-billion desalination plant in Huntington Beach, on the grounds of increased costs to the ratepayers, lack of necessity and the potential for severe marine environmental damage. Poseidon had touted its Carlsbad plant as proof of a successful operation and since then it has been reported that the Carlsbad plant is in need of millions of dollars in repairs being passed on to the ratepayers. Poseidon spent millions of dollars contributing to the campaign funds of office holders including the governor to gain their support.

At the present time the Orange County Water District is able to recycle 130 million gallons of fresh water daily, and this will continue to provide sufficient water to counteract



AN ABANDONED almond orchard in Newman, Calif. A reader writes that California doesn't need to build desalination plants in response to the drought.

Terry Chea AP Photo

the drought. The remainder of the state should do the same.

Richard C. Armendariz
Huntington Beach

Most people who run for City Council in Newport Beach seem to have a political agenda in mind. Consequently, it is refreshing to see someone like Jim Mosher step forward who only wants to fulfill what he perceives as a civic duty.

No one in the city knows more about city government than Mosher. He answers most questions you pose to him immediately or he will refer you to the specific source where you can find the answer. He frequently comes forward to offer advice to the council because it is of

utmost importance to him that our city and council members abide by the rules and regulations set for them.

Unlike any other candidate in Newport Beach, Mosher regularly attends every meeting, not only of council, but of every other official meeting of the city. You would think frequent council attendance would be a major prerequisite to running for that body as well as of personal interest to the other candidates.

Referring to the minutes of past council meetings, one would be hard pressed to find evidence that Mosher's opponents have attended any of them, much less made a recommendation to the council

See *Mailbag*, page A6

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A WORD, PLEASE | JUNE CASAGRANDE

Back-to-school grammar tips for the students in your life

Know someone who is heading back to school this fall? Here are some grammar tips I compiled for you, my dear (not-school-aged) reader, to pass along to that special student in your life.



Don't write "it's" in place of "its."

When you want to show possession, as in "The dog wagged its tail," don't use an apostrophe. Instead, use "it's" only when you mean "it is" or "it has": It's raining. It's been nice talking to you.

Don't write "your" in place of "you're." If you want to tell someone "you are right," the shorter form is "you're right." The one without an apostrophe, "your," shows possession: Is that your phone?

Don't write "who's" when you mean "whose." With an apostrophe, "who's" means "who is" or "who has": Who's there? Who's been eating my porridge?

"Whose" deals with possession: Whose car is that?

Know the difference between "they're," "their" and "there." Seeing a pattern here? Apostrophes cause a lot of confusion. "They're" with an apostrophe



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

STUDENTS RETURN to Costa Mesa High School on the first day back to school for students in the Newport-Mesa Unified School District in 2020.

means "they are": They're nice. "Their" shows possession: Their grades got better. "There" is a location, "Put it there," or a way to say something exists, "There are a lot of people outside."

Be careful with "let's" and "lets." "Let's" is a contraction meaning "let us": Let's eat! Without an apostrophe, it's a verb conjugated for a third-person subject: Troy lets his dog off the leash.

Don't use an apostrophe to make a plural. Words ending in vowels — like tuba, tsunami, boo, hello and bayou — look weird when you put an S at the end. But that's how you make them plural: tubas, tsunamis, boos, hellos, bayous. That applies to proper names, too. Jane and Sam Newberry are the Newberrys. No apostrophe, unless you want to put one after the S to show joint possession, like "the Newberrys'

house."

Use "could have" or "could've," never "could of." It may sound like your friend is saying "I could of eaten that whole pizza," but he's not. He's saying, "I could've."

Use "affect" as a verb and "effect" as a noun: Caffeine doesn't affect me. That drug has bad side effects. (In rare cases, "effect" can be a verb meaning to bring something about: "to effect positive change." Even rarer, "affect" can be a noun meaning mental state. But you'll probably never need those.)

Use "led" when you want the past tense of "lead." George Washington led his troops. Don't get confused by the metal lead, which is pronounced like "led."

Don't double-space between sentences unless you think your teacher expects it. Professional publishing stopped double-spacing after periods a long time ago, but some educators didn't get the memo. So use only one space after a period unless your teacher wants to see two.

"Between you and me" is proper English. Avoid "between you and I" in schoolwork.

Try dropping "Joe and" to choose between "Joe and I" and "Joe and me." To know whether to write "Thanks for meeting with

Joe and I" or "Thanks for meeting with Joe and me," try the sentence without Joe. You'd never say, "Thanks for meeting with I." So just as "Thanks for meeting with me" is correct, so is "Thanks for meeting with Joe and me."

Don't be afraid of grammar jargon in Spanish or French class. When you feel panic rising in your chest because a language teacher starts talking about indirect object pronouns or past participles, relax. You're already a master. You use these things perfectly every day in English — for example "I sent him an email" uses the indirect object "him" and the direct object "an email." Your teacher will give English translations so you'll see instantly what these terms mean. You've got this!

Check a dictionary to learn plurals and past forms. Not sure if it's "dreamed" or "dreamt"? Just look up "dream" in the dictionary and you'll see both are correct. Want to know the plural of "species"? Look up the word and you'll see the note: "plural: species."

JUNE CASAGRANDE is the author of "The Best Punctuation Book, Period." She can be reached at JuneTCN@aol.com.

CHEMICALS

Continued from page A4

patient care. This is a good start to what, I believe, needs to be a much stronger strategy to address this public health hazard.

Orange County residents can take their own action by requesting information about PFAS levels in their own water through their water provider's mandated annual water quality report, also known as a consumer confidence report, which is often available online. If PFAS chemicals are detected in their water, they

can reduce their exposure to PFAS by installing home water filters that are approved for PFAS removal. UCI is currently part of a national multisite study on PFAS, designed to help scientists better understand the health effects of PFAS exposure. Some residents of Anaheim, Orange, Yorba Linda and Garden Grove, areas that are close to the Santa Ana River recharge basins for our groundwater supply, are participating and have had their blood tested for PFAS chemicals, as well as for cholesterol, thyroid function and other health markers, at no cost.

We can take action to reduce our exposures to these chemicals, learn more about their health effects and ensure that people with elevated exposures get the appropriate medical care. Learn more about the UCI PFAS Health Study by visiting the website at <https://sites.uci.edu/pfas/>.

SCOTT BARTELL is a professor of environmental and occupational health with the Program in Public Health at the University of California, Irvine, and is the lead investigator for the UCI PFAS Health Study.

COLLEGES

Continued from page A4

streamlined into the Department of Labor classification system. Contrary to popular belief, CTE education has a *lower turnover* and *higher return on investment per credit hour* than traditional liberal arts education.

These factors become even more powerful when someone must know what to do next.

The energy industry presents a relevant example. The early days of the pandemic nearly shut

down the lucrative petroleum industry, but now efficient sources of oil supply are in great demand. With gasoline prices still high at the pump, skills in renewable energy will undoubtedly be higher than the commendable pre-pandemic demand of 20% annual industry growth.

How should an eager person take advantage of this immediate demand for skills?

Orange Coast, Golden West and Coastline's courses on renewable energy installation provide one answer. Likewise,

taking the three years of calculus, physics, linear algebra, etc., for transfer to Embry Riddle's 100% online accredited two-year engineering fundamentals program provides another pathway. When someone becomes employed, earns a regular paycheck and believes their experience makes them a good fit, a four-year college becomes more relevant, desirable and "definitely worth it."

JOSEPH KLUNDER is a native of Newport Beach and now works as a high school teacher and counselor in China.

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MARKET

Continued from page A1

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ATHLETICS

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RACE

Continued from page A2

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