

Daily Pilot & Times OC

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Autumn gets its due in Newport

In its biggest fundraiser, the Fall Faire & Pumpkin Patch sprouts at the Environmental Nature Center next weekend.

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

The 49th annual Fall Faire & Pumpkin Patch returns to the Environmental Nature Center in Newport Beach, and the center is prepared to let the gourd times roll.

The autumn event, happening on Oct. 13 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., will include a pumpkin patch where families can pick out a pumpkin and enjoy live music by the Sweetwater Creek Band. ENC members can shop for pumpkins early on Oct. 11, and those that join or renew memberships on Oct. 13 can take home a free pumpkin.

The Fire Circle stage will feature interactive entertainment throughout the day, beginning with a family fitness class at 10:30 a.m. At 11:30 a.m. attendees can enjoy a snake presentation from the Bolsa Chica Conservatory followed by an improv show at 12:30 p.m. The event will close with Mr. Skyler & his Amazing Animals at 1:30 p.m. and a capella

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KIDS CAN pick out pumpkins at the 49th annual Fall Faire and Pumpkin Patch event at the Environmental Nature Center.

Courtesy of the Environmental Nature Center

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Diversity stance at Boys & Girls Club brought pushback

Public records obtained by TimesOC show that Aliso Viejo Mayor Mike Munzing targeted the nonprofit over its Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging position statement and references.

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

Earlier this year, Aliso Viejo Mayor Mike Munzing closed out a Feb. 7 City Council meeting with a quick roundup of his community activities.

He briefly mentioned having attended the Boys & Girls Club of Capistrano Valley's annual Youth of the Year competition held in Rancho Santa Margarita.

"That was very exciting," Munzing said. "I do love that our council, more than other councils it seems like, we always love being out there and supporting them."

But, according to records obtained by TimesOC, Munzing had already texted Nicole Watson, a Boys & Girls Club of Capistrano

Valley executive staffer, the day after the Jan. 26 competition with concerns over its embrace of the concept of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

"We do need to have a bit of a chat regarding this big DEIB stuff that y'all [were] pushing hard last night," Munzing texted Watson. "It is a deeply political issue and a new emphasis for the club, so I'd like to know who's pushing it."

By April, Aliso Viejo City Atty. Scott Smith stepped in with a letter to club executive staff clarifying that an unnamed council member's comments that the city's agreement with the club "could be in jeopardy" due to its

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Don Leach | Staff Photographer

ANGELS AND DUCKS broadcaster Kent French with his wife, Michelle, and daughter, Everly, 7, will embark on a trip abroad for a year as part of a project to chronicle on a website designed to help inspire others.

Sports broadcaster hangs up the mike to travel the globe

BY SARA CARDINE

In the past two decades, Kent French has become a recognizable face in major league sports in Orange County, serving as a broadcast journalist for both the Ducks and the Angels.

Having worked his way through a series of radio and cable TV sports gigs, the San Clemente resident almost lucked into covering the Angels during the 2002 World Series and, one year later, the Stanley Cup Finals.

French produced broadcasts in front of a live audience at the Disney-owned sports-themed restaurant ESPN Zone, where he was flanked by his own Kent French Orchestra, produced and managed NHL's first webcast,



KENT FRENCH, left, with commentators and former MLB players Tim Salmon and Mark Gubicza on the field at Angel Stadium.

Courtesy of Michelle French

Ducks TV and covered the team when it finally won the Cup in 2007.

He eventually transitioned to Bally Sports, formerly Fox Sports West, and began regularly host-

ing Ducks and Angels pre- and post-game shows. Despite the obvious perks, the commitment entailed, at one point, traveling

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ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



Sarah Mosqueda

LOGAN BARRIO REMEMBERED BY ARTISTS, ARCHIVISTS AND LONGTIME RESIDENTS PAGE A5

New law closes campaign finance loophole

Assemblyman Avelino Valencia championed the bill to have politicians convicted of crimes pay back any campaign funds used for criminal defense.

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

California politicians convicted of a crime will no longer be able to use campaign funds to cover legal expenses.

On Sept. 25, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed AB 2803 into law, which closes a campaign finance loophole that former Anaheim Mayor Harry Sidhu used last year to pay his criminal defense attorney amid an FBI political corruption probe.

According to campaign finance documents, Sidhu made a \$300,000 payment to attorney Paul Meyer in 2022 from funds raised for his reelection.

Before that, he resigned as mayor a week after an FBI affidavit accused him of bribery, fraud, obstruction of justice and witness tampering.

Assemblyman Avelino Valencia (D-Anaheim), who had publicly called on Sidhu to step down when he served on Anaheim City Council alongside him, introduced the bill in February.

"What Sidhu did was unacceptable and unethical considering the crimes that he was being charged with," Valencia said. "I don't think supporters of candidates intended for their money to go towards defending politicians against criminal charges."

Sidhu eventually pleaded guilty to four felonies, including charges connected to the attempted sale of An-

gel Stadium, at the Ronald Reagan Federal Courthouse in Santa Ana last September.

"Yes, I'm guilty," Sidhu said when he entered his plea. "I did lie to the FBI."

But the former Anaheim mayor is not the sole politician in the state to have exploited the campaign finance loophole.

Former state Sen. Leland Yee paid his legal team \$128,000 from campaign committee funds for his secretary of state bid before pleading guilty to racketeering in 2015.

Sean McMorris, ethics program manager for Common Cause, noted the new law as one that is narrowly tailored but important in strengthening the Political Reform Act that was first enacted 50 years ago.

"There are bad actors," he said. "If you do want to deter them and make ethics laws more important, one way to do that is not allow them to use campaign funds to pay off legal fees or penalties. This is good in that it's expanding that for felonies as well as bribery."

Under the new law, if politicians are convicted of a felony among other select crimes, they will be required to pay back donors for any funds diverted to legal expenses.

The law doesn't cover legal defense funds, which politicians are legally allowed to open and raise money for without contribution limits.



Genaro Molina | Los Angeles Times

ASSEMBLYMAN AVELINO VALENCIA has pushed several good government measures since being elected in 2022, including a bill to have politicians convicted of crimes pay back any campaign funds used for criminal defense.

Former state Sen. Ron Calderon and former state Sen. Roderick Wright raised funds through such committees.

"That's still a loophole," McMorris said.

The bill, which was co-sponsored by state Sen. Tom Umberg (D-Santa Ana) and Assemblyman Phil Chen (R-Yorba Linda), marks another anti-corruption effort for Valencia, who chairs an Assembly accountability and oversight

subcommittee.

He previously ordered a state audit of contracts between Visit Anaheim and the Anaheim Chamber of Commerce after an independent corruption report alleged the two organizations engaged in a grafting scheme involving \$1.5 million in COVID-19 relief funds.

Newsom also last month signed into law AB 2946, a Valencia-backed bill that requires a majority vote by

the Orange County Board of Supervisors before discretionary funds can be awarded.

The legislation comes in the wake of a political corruption scandal involving \$13 million in public funds directed by Supervisor Andrew Do to Viet Society America, which a county lawsuit now alleges was embezzled by the nonprofit that also employed Do's daughter.

In closing the loophole

exploited by Sidhu, Valencia hopes to protect the intent behind campaign contributions.

"It's another step in ensuring good government, transparency and ethics in public service," he said of the new law. "It doesn't solve some of the gaps still kept in the system, but it's a step closer for sure."

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Laguna Beach opts to return to fireworks next summer

Traditional displays are less costly, more popular than the drone show the city staged this year.

BY ANDREW TURNER

After receiving mixed reviews about its drone show this past Independence Day, Laguna Beach plans to return to a traditional fireworks display for its Fourth of July celebration.

The city debuted a drone show on a one-year trial basis this summer. A fleet of drones of approximately 300 in number took to the sky above Heisler Park, morphing through various Laguna Beach-themed and patriotic formations.

"There were some people who really liked it, thought it was cool we were doing something different," Michael Litschi, the city's director of transit and community services, said of the drone show. "We're happy that the impacts on pets ... and people with aversions to loud booms and explo-



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

DRONES TAKE the shape of the city's landmark lifeguard tower on the Fourth of July over Main Beach Park in Laguna Beach. The city plans to return to having a more affordable traditional fireworks display in 2025.

sions, that they were happy, but the drone show is not a fireworks show.

"It's not the same thing. It never will be. It's not omnidirectional, so you can't see it the same from all sides, so folks who were in North Laguna, who were used to having a great view of the fireworks, are looking at kind of the back of the drone show. It's more like a movie screen."

Litschi said the city had heard from residents that they were able to see the drone show from as far as 3 miles away up in the hills.

Music meant to accompany the drone display could be accessed through the local radio station or streamed, although some found it difficult to tune in due to the internet buffering. In the event of another drone show,

Litschi suggested that the city could look into having speakers in select areas.

Councilman George Weiss opened discussion among the panel by noting environmental impacts to the ocean, as well as air quality, with various fireworks displays in the area, including nearby Emerald Bay.

"I hate to say I want to go back to the firework show, but I feel that way," Weiss said. "I feel it's not about me, though. It's about what the residents want."

Resident Greg Viviani was among those calling for the return of professionally run pyrotechnics, expressing a belief that "destructive tourism" in beachgoers leaving trash presents a larger issue.

"I hope we bring the professional fireworks back," Viviani said. "The drone show — [I] didn't like it. I live in south Laguna Beach, and we could barely see it off of our patio. I've been here 40 years, and every Fourth of July, I love watching the fireworks and enjoy

it. I think it brings the community together."

Another member of the public wrote in to say that they were "underwhelmed" after the initial moments of the show, adding, "It was ... difficult to tell when the finale was since the drones mimicked a small firework display."

The 300-drone, 15-minute show came at a cost of \$75,000, and city officials said that additional drones would incur further expense. The cost of the fireworks would have been \$42,000.

Regarding the possibility of an expanded drone show, Mayor Pro Tem Alex Rounaghi said, "We're not Disneyland."

"We need to focus on the basics of public safety, infrastructure, mitigating the impact of tourists, and so I agree with George in going back to the fireworks," Rounaghi added. "If there's ways that we can mitigate the environmental damage, I think we should look into it."

"I ultimately think that

the way that we create cleaner ocean water is what we're doing with the coastal treatment plant. That's how we're going to really clean up our ocean. This is one day a year, and it's really such an important celebration of our country."

Councilman Bob Whalen conceded that there were "people on both sides" of the issue, but he pondered what a collaboration with hotels might be able to bring about in terms of multiple drone shows in town.

"I do wonder about an alternative, where maybe, could we approach some of the hotels, like Montage, Surf and Sand, Pacific Edge, and maybe have multiple drone shows down the coast, where you have one south and one north," Whalen said.

City staffers said hotels could be contacted regarding partnership opportunities.

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AUTUMN

Continued from page A1

stylings from Circle of Fifths at 2:30 p.m.

The Savor OC restaurant showcase will feature food offerings from local restaurants Mi Casa Mexican Restaurant & Bar, Shirley's Bagels, Soho Taco, Bluewater Grill, Kean Coffee, Indarra Modern Indian Cuisine and Penelope's Perfections.

Kids can join the Craft Crawl for \$5 and get a reusable ENC bag and a hand stamp to walk along the trail, completing five different fall crafts like nature crowns and wreaths and a

pumpkin leaf collage, organized by the ENC Nature Preschool teachers. The event will also feature pony rides and a petting zoo.

The sustainably designed, 5-acre Environmental Nature Center, at 1601 E. 16th St. in Newport Beach, was founded in 1972 and contains plants native to California, habitats and walking trails. The site is also home to the ENC Nature Preschool and the ENC Tucker Wildlife Sanctuary.

The annual Fall Faire event is the ENC's largest fundraiser of the year, and the funds earned go toward supporting its mission of serving more than 28,000 students and thousands of

visitors annually.

In keeping with the center's policy of sustainability and zero waste, attendees are encouraged to bring their own reusable cups, plates and utensils to the event to enjoy the food offerings. Those who bring their own complete set of eating tools will be entered into a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate for the ENC gift shop or toward an ENC Tucker Nature Camp.

For more information about the Fall Faire & Pumpkin Patch, visit enccenter.org.

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A "CRAFT CRAWL" along the Environmental Nature Center's trails is part of the 49th Annual Fall Faire and Pumpkin Patch event.

Courtesy of Environmental Nature Center



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Newport Beach Film Festival set to mark 25 years

BY ERIC LICAS

Todd Quartararo and Gregg Schwenk saw a deep well of untapped potential when they decided to put on the first Newport Beach Film Festival 25 years ago. Coastal Orange County boasts a wealth of fine dining and amenities, often set against some of the most inspiring scenic views on the West Coast. And many people who work in the film industry and serve on awards panels have homes in and around Newport Beach.

But they never predicted it would grow into one of the largest celebrations of cinema in California. And they still don't take anything for granted.

"I still have those first-year jitters, and I think it's healthy," Quartararo said. "I would stand out on opening night, I remember this clear as day, standing out on the red carpet going, 'I hope somebody shows up.' And I still have that feeling. I have that feeling of younger me 25 years ago, and I think it keeps us on our toes."

He said that when they started out they were hardly noticed and couldn't attract a first-run film. This year, the opening night of the Newport Beach Film Festival

on Friday, Oct. 17, hosts the world premiere of "Old Guy," a comedy starring Oscar-winner Christoph Waltz. Over the years the guest list has included names like Tony Hawk, William Shatner, Adam Sandler and Terry Crews, not to mention the recipient of this year's Icon Award and the face of countless memes, Nicolas Cage.

Well over 50,000 people are expected to flock to Newport Beach to attend the festival, which runs through Oct. 24. They'll have their pick of 112 films of practically every genre: the culinary arts, action sports, history and world events, fashion, architecture and more.

Highlighted works this year include "Nightbitch," an adaptation of Rachel Yoder's novel about an artist who takes a break in her career to become a stay-at-home mom and then finds herself regressing into an animal-like state while trapped in a cage of domestic life. "The End," starring Tilda Swinton, tells the story of a family living in a bunker two decades after an apocalypse. "Lost and Found in Cleveland" is a 24-hour slice of life of five people whose paths cross when an an-

tique appraisal show comes to town.

"We're building this for everyone to participate," Schwenk said. "Whether you want to watch one of our great culinary docs or maybe one of our architecture and design films or come out to one of our international showcase celebrations, all of these things are open to the public ... everyone's on the VIP list."

Orange County stories and talent have a major presence at the festival. The documentary "The Wedge" shares firsthand accounts of people who have experienced the ferocity of Newport Beach's world-renowned surf spot. A 35-minute short, "SoCal Snowy Owl" captures the excitement of the local birding and wildlife community after a rare arctic species somehow wound up in Cypress.

On Saturday, Oct. 19, Regal Edwards Big Newport will screen one collection of films by Cal State Fullerton students and another from filmmakers at Cal State Long Beach. Those are followed by two other showcases of work from Saddleback College and Orange Coast College on Sunday, Oct. 20. Meanwhile, the Lot



Eric Licas

NEWPORT BEACH Film Festival co-founders Gregg Schwenk and Todd Quartararo pose for a photo inside the soon-to-be reopened Lido Theater on Thursday.

theater will feature a compilation of shorts made in California all weekend.

Cinema goers interested in breaking out of the domestic scene also have plenty to look forward to. The Triangle will showcase movies from Brazil and Mexico on Monday, Oct. 21, European films on Tuesday, Oct. 22 and work from

China, Japan and Korea on Wednesday, Oct. 23.

"The opportunity for our community to interact with these filmmakers and creators from around the world is really special," Schwenk said.

A total of 22 special events are scheduled over the course of the eight-day festival. Most screenings are

\$20 and discounts are available for students and seniors. Tickets for special events cost \$50 and include screenings, live presentations from filmmakers, food and drink. To learn more, visit newportbeachfilmfest.com.

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ANGELS BROADCASTER

Kent French with wife Michelle and daughter Everly, 7, attend a game at Angel Stadium.



Courtesy of Michelle French

TRAVEL

Continued from page A1

up to 150 days per year, covering 78 Ducks games and 80 Angels games each season.

On top of the formal job duties, the married father of one young daughter also makes regular appearances at charity events and auctions, where he serves as emcee.

"It's a dream job, it truthfully is. This is what I wanted to do," French, 55, said in an interview Wednesday. "You're working weekends, holidays, all that stuff. On the road, you're not necessarily working every day but

you're gone every day — there is no break."

Until now, French delivered his last broadcast on Sept. 28, wishing his audience a fond farewell as he embarks with wife Michelle and 7-year-old daughter Everly today on a yearlong journey around the world.

The couple packed up their home and leased it out in August, temporarily bunking in French's parents' home in Costa Mesa as they finalized plans for the first stage of their globe-trekking adventure — from LAX to New York City and then on to Portugal, Greece and Croatia before arriving in Malta by Christmas.

The Frenches plan to

spend weeks at each stop, which they hope will give them enough time to get a feel for the people, culture and the daily rhythms of life.

Whatever comes out of the journey will be chronicled on the family's new web platform Frenchivity, which will feature a travel blog, photos and video interviews with the people they meet along the way.

"It will be like a travel guide in certain ways and will also celebrate culture and community in each of those different spots," Michelle, 47, explained Wednesday, describing days book-ended by medi-

See **Travel**, page A8



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Longtime residents help share history of Logan Barrio

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

When Helen Parga Moraga and her neighbors started hosting potlucks in their neighborhood, they had no idea they were starting a tradition that would continue for decades. Logan Barrio in Santa Ana is one of the oldest Mexican American neighborhoods in Orange County, and each year the community hosts a reunion inviting neighbors, both past and present, to bring a dish to share and celebrate the history of Logan.

"I was born and raised here in this barrio," said Moraga. The 99-year-old leaned against her walker as she snacked on fresh pineapple from the potluck spread and took a break from talking to old friends. "They all remember me."

Logan Barrio was founded in the 1880s and by 1910 nearly 40% of the neighborhood's households had Spanish surnames, according to historian Mary Garcia, author of the book "Santa Ana's Logan Barrio: Its History, Stories and Families."

The neighborhood is home to "Chepa Park" at 1009 Custer St., named for the late longtime Logan resident and Santa Ana

activist Josephine "Chepa" Andrade. The park was also the site of the 25th Historic Logan Barrio Reunion, held on Sept. 28. Andrade is noted for her contribution to preserving Logan from industrialism and freeway expansion during her lifetime. In 2021, the Santa Ana City Council declared Dec. 16, 2021, as Josephine 'Chepa' Andrade Day, which would have been her 95th birthday.

Andrade's daughter, Cecelia Andrade Rodriguez, recalls her mom coordinating with the other women in the neighborhood for the reunions when she was a young girl.

"They started out at somebody's home," said Rodriguez. "They would call everyone up and say, 'Hey, let's get together and everybody bring a dish.'"

"Any family that you talk to down here that has a long history in Logan, not only are they proud but they can also talk about Santa Ana in different manner."

— Santa Ana Mayor Valerie Amezcuca

Today, Rodriguez has taken up part of her mother's legacy, organizing the reunion each year.

"My mother said, 'As long as you live I want you to keep up the reunion,' and I said, 'I will,'" said Rodriguez.

Rodriguez begins plan-



Photos by Sarah Mosqueda

LONGTIME LOGAN BARRIO resident Helen Parga Moraga, left, attended the 25th Historic Logan Barrio Reunion. Moraga was part of the group of women that started the reunion tradition.

ning in June for the September event, securing permits and getting the word out. Live music, a classic car show and a raffle are now part of the annual event. She was accom-

panied this year by her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

"Any family that you talk to down here that has a long history

in Logan, not only are they proud but they can also talk about Santa Ana in different manner," said Santa Ana Mayor Valerie Amezcuca. "They can talk about how it was, how it is today and what they want

See *History*, page A10



FAMILY PHOTOS on display at the Historic Logan Barrio Reunion on Sept. 28. The photos and newspaper clippings are part of Michael Andrade's Logan Barrio Archival Project.

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APODACA

Continued from page A6

Indeed, nuclear power is undergoing a renaissance as it benefits from an image makeover as a climate-friendly energy alternative.

But is anyone else just a teensy bit nervous about this voracious appetite for energy intended to fuel a technological tsunami? Experts are warning that even the nuclear power that's available won't be enough, and that all these data centers will also spur enormous demand for natural gas — which is certainly not a renewable, climate-friendly alternative.

That's not the only way these companies are likely to trash their stated sustainability goals. The data centers will also gulp enormous amounts of water required for cooling. And that's not even counting the water that will be used for all their additional energy demands.

Where will this water come from on our increasingly thirsty planet? It's an important question that lacks anything close to a good answer.

Turning from the environmental impacts of AI, I also worry about other



Jeff Fusco | Getty Images

THE THREE MILE Island Nuclear Plant is seen in the early morning hours March 28, 2011, in Middletown, Penn. Infamous for a 1979 meltdown, the plant is set to be reopened by Microsoft to power its artificial intelligence data centers.

potential costs.

Maybe I'm naive. Or paranoid. Or both. Nonetheless, I know I'm not the only one who is concerned about the impact AI might have on our essential humanness.

We already know about the negative effects that stem from people spending an increasing amount of their lives online: Kids' brains' warped by social

media. Interpersonal communications reduced to bits and bytes. The proliferation of misinformation and disinformation. Growing divisiveness.

Too many of us are distracted and lonely, sleep-deprived and image-obsessed. Students can barely focus in class, which is why Gov. Gavin Newsom just signed a new law that will require schools to restrict

the use of smartphones by July 2026, and some districts like Newport-Mesa Unified have already instituted cellphone bans.

Meanwhile, some valued institutions might struggle to fit into our shiny new world of AI.

Libraries are a prime example. For the most part, public libraries have done an admirable job of evolving and managing to sur-

vive the advent of mass communications and the internet.

But it's a constant battle, one that's been further complicated as they've come under siege by the book-banning crowd. We need look no further than the Huntington Beach City Council's efforts to impose an extreme ideology on the city's cherished library system to understand the pressure that libraries are under.

Now a new challenge has appeared, and it's fair to wonder if AI will at last render public libraries obsolete. Some experts say no, and that AI can be used to help libraries operate more efficiently; again, it's seen as a matter of adapting to the times. And yet, will something be lost — the human element, that essential ingredient that makes libraries more than just repositories of information and instead vital community hubs?

Consider another community staple—the local YMCA. I recently had a long conversation with two executives at YMCA in Orange County, who talked about the many ways that organization, with roots dating back 180 years, is constantly looking for new

opportunities to provide the kinds of services their members need.

They spoke at length about “the bond we're creating and bridges we're building with this community.”

A great deal of interpersonal connectedness has fizzled out in recent years, they said, so they focus their efforts on programs and activities that bring the community together because they're convinced that is still what people crave.

It's an appealing message. I wonder if it will continue to resonate as we venture into the unknown.

AI is poised to change everything. That's what we keep hearing, and I don't doubt it. Maybe those changes will make our lives better in many ways, but we need to be aware of the potential costs — to the environment we rely on to survive, and to those qualities that keep we humans in touch with what it means to be human.

PATRICE APODACA is a former Los Angeles Times staff writer and is coauthor of “A Boy Named Courage: A Surgeon's Memoir of Apartheid.” She lives in Newport Beach.

MAILBAG

Continued from page A6

our local government. The same is true for other coastal communities in our area. The previous time Surf City voters elected a “celebrity citizen” MAGA candidate with no experience to a council seat, Tito Ortiz, it did not go well. Imagine three new MAGAs and a brand-new and inexperienced city clerk added to a City Council with no guard rails and a rogue city attorney (Michael Gates) with a penchant for taking on state and county authorities. What could go wrong? Plenty.

Added to the mix is the tendency of the current City Council majority to propose charter amendments that

are not only poorly drafted, insultingly overbroad and unconstitutional but threaten to get the city in financial and legal hot water. Proponents won't tell you the risk that we will not only suffer lawsuits, penalties and restrictions but also the loss of local control if Sacramento has its way with us. In H.B., the deceptive Measure U is environmental posturing at its most egregious and will surely draw challenges if implementation is attempted. It flies in the face of competent decision-making. And speaking of “flies,” the propensity of the MAGA majority to reward partisan cronies like Code Four with the Pacific Airshow settlement terms is fiscal malfeasance at its most outrageous and the root cause of our current

financial and budget crisis.

Regardless if you are a conservative or a liberal, it is important to have a civic framework which serves and protects the citizenry. It is also important not to gratuitously invite municipal mayhem and resulting legal and financial punishments. Institutional knowledge and experience should be valued not denigrated, especially if it is replaced by grievance-driven direction which, we have learned in courtroom dramas, is “incompetent, irrelevant, and immaterial.”

Tim Geddes
Huntington Beach

My recommendation to the Huntington Beach council majority is to check your fanaticism at the door before entering any meet-

ings involving settlements.

We deserve better than your reckless spending under the guise of an airshow settlement. While I support the concept of an airshow, the meager funds allocated to Code Four must be audited by accounting professionals, state auditors or criminal attorneys. These are taxpayer dollars, and we still lack a clear explanation of the damages incurred or why the oil company responsible wasn't held accountable initially.

Huntington Beach taxpayers are now footing the bill for air show permits, while Code Four gets the revenue on parking and camper fees. Fire and police services will also be provided at taxpayers' expense, and the environmental

impact statement? Once again, H.B. residents are left holding the bag while Code Four profits. And to top it off, the airshow company retains the right to sell the event for further profit.

Was the council majority mentally present when this disastrous deal was struck? How could anyone with even basic negotiation skills allow such a blatant giveaway?

Do you think we are fools? Stop hiding behind the term “charter city” as an excuse for your pathetic leadership. This is nothing short of a betrayal of public trust.

Andrew Einhorn
Huntington Beach

Ken Inouye's recent letter to the editor offers the best recommendation yet for

combating the chaos created by our Huntington Beach City Council majority. Simple: Any member of the City Council must obtain a written yes-no opinion from the city attorney as to whether an action they intend to propose violates any federal, state and local laws. If the proposal is contrary to existing laws, then the city attorney would have to sign and report back estimates of the cost of litigation and possible fines. This proposal is a reasonable and transparent way to do business. It would help preempt the city from expensive lawsuits with state or federal governments. The Inouye idea would let the public know when a council member's proposal is likely

See **Mailbag**, page A9

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MemorialCare Joins All of Us Research Consortium in Southern California

MemorialCare, UC Irvine and LLU Health partner to transform the future of precision health research.

MemorialCare received funding from the All of Us Southern California Consortium at University of California, Irvine to join the National Institutes of Health's All of Us Research Program nationwide consortium. The goal of All of Us is to gather health data from 1 million or more people living in the U.S. to build a health database that will accelerate precision medicine research.

Fady Youssef, M.D., principal investigator at MemorialCare, will join lead Consortium investigator Hoda Anton-Culver, Ph.D., a Donald Bren Professor and Distinguished Professor of medicine at UC Irvine, and Dr. Dmitry Abramov from Loma Linda University Health to lead the All of Us Southern California Consortium. All of Us aims to enroll participants that reflect the diversity of the United States, including people who identify with communities historically underrepresented in research, such as those who identify as with racial and ethnic groups, have lower education or income levels, are LGBTQIA+, live in rural communities, those with disabilities, are over the age of 65, or have limited health care access.

Eligible adults in the U.S. can join the program. Enrollment locations at MemorialCare's three acute adult hospitals in Long Beach, Fountain Valley, Laguna Hills, and UCI Health and LLU Health make it easy and accessible for patients and residents.

“MemorialCare's expansive network — from primary care offices to three acute care hospitals and a children's hospital — will help us bring greater All of Us Research access to the communities we serve,” said Dr. Youssef. “I'm thrilled to be part of a study that is moving to bring more health equity to research by representing those often not a part of previous research to improve health outcomes in underserved communities.”

Launched in 2018, the All of Us Research Program is building one of the most diverse health databases in history to accelerate precision medicine research and improve health by considering individual differences in lifestyle, environment and biology. By participating, individuals can contribute to a repository of data

for researchers to better understand health and disease and potentially develop more personalized approaches to treatments and interventions.

The All of Us Research Program has already enrolled more than 830,000 participants nationwide. It is one of the largest, most diverse databases of its kind, with over 85% of participants identifying with a community underrepresented in biomedical research, including approximately 45% who are underrepresented by race and ethnicity. Joining the All of Us Southern California Consortium builds upon MemorialCare's dedication and efforts to provide equitable care to patients.

Nearly 12,300 researchers nationwide are registered to use the All of Us data. The goal of the All of Us Research Program is to build a new body of knowledge that has the potential to advance health care for all people.

Accredited by the Association of Human Research Protections Programs, MemorialCare is a leader in conducting scientifically sound research. With over 300 ongoing research projects at any given time, MemorialCare's research program brings the latest clinical devices and treatments to the community, ensuring that innovative treatment options are always available closer to home.

“This nationwide research will provide tremendous opportunities for collaboration among researchers, health care providers, and institutions, accelerating scientific discoveries and innovations,” said Dr. Youssef.

Want to learn more? Visit joinallofus.org.



MemorialCare
Orange Coast Medical Center

LLUH's work on the All of Us Research Program is funded by a subaward from the University of California, Irvine, which is funded by National Institutes of Health award OT2OD036428. All of Us is a service mark of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Casa Romantica marks another recovery milestone

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

The shimmering chandelier, whitewashed arches and Spanish-tiled floor of Casa Romantica's main salon that have remained locked away for the past year and a half are ready to be enjoyed by the public again.

A landslide left parts of San Clemente's beloved cultural center and gardens in tatters in April 2023. An ocean terrace and garden path that offered stunning panoramic views of the ocean broke off and crumbled down with the bluff.

But with \$8.5 million budgeted in repairs to stabilize the damaged slope, the historic estate's resplendent salon is ready for its comeback.

"It's such a huge milestone to have it reopen," said Kylie Travis, co-executive director of Casa Romantica's nonprofit. "Things can only get better from here. Our team is prepared and ready for that."

A ribbon-cutting ceremony



Courtesy of Casa Romantica

AFTER BEING yellow-tagged for many months, Casa Romantica's resplendent main salon is back.

ny on Friday marked the main salon's official, long-awaited return.

For several months, it remained yellow-tagged amid worries that the shifting earth below could damage the estate beyond the still red-tagged ocean terrace that abuts it.

The city-owned Casa Romantica partially reopened over Memorial Day weekend last year, when another

landslide hit its already hammered hillsides.

With rows of tiebacks completed by construction crews, city officials considered the slope stabilized and removed the yellow tag.

That allowed the Toast to the Casa, an annual fundraiser, to return to the center last month. The Renaissance theme seemed as timely as ever as guests at the Sept. 21 event got a

sneak preview of the main salon.

The nonprofit raised about \$205,000 at the event.

With a key area of the property reopened again, staff is hopeful that Casa Romantica's financial recovery will receive a much-needed boost.

"It was challenging financially for us to operate for a whole year and a half with only an outdoor space, especially as last year had so many rainstorms," Travis said. "We still are experiencing financial challenges with our budget because we had no interior space to move events or shelter guests during public hours if it was raining."

Last April, as staff marked a year since the landslide, Travis estimated the nonprofit lost \$500,000 in revenue due to canceled cultural events and weddings.

The off-limits main salon was a key reason why.

It turned into a makeshift storage facility for tables, chairs and event equipment during its period of

dormancy.

As staff and volunteers readied the space to reopen, the main salon became reimagined as more of a museum. A permanent art collection that was previously housed in the nonprofit's staff offices now finds a new home in the salon.

California Impressionism and plein-air artworks join historical photos of early surf culture and Casa Romantica's past residents, like San Clemente founder Olé Hanson, in giving guests more to peruse.

"Now the Casa Romantica experience is filled with all these wonderful learning opportunities, exhibitions and displays," Travis said. "Our hope is that we will continue to rotate these out throughout the year, so that every time someone visits there's something new to see."

With the main salon reopened to the public, Casa Romantica's full recovery from the landslides it has suffered through is that

much closer to reality.

The nonprofit's staffers recently met with city officials about next steps. Re-grading the stabilized slope could take up to a month. Plans to restore the ocean terrace and other damaged areas would have to go before the California Coastal Commission for approval.

"Everyone wants the quickest approval possible to keep working," Travis said, "but it's really hard to predict when that will happen."

Until then, Casa Romantica's event calendar is busy, a good problem that staff is happy to have. Film screenings, concerts and weekly classes are all set to take place inside the main salon's splendid quarters in the weeks and months to come.

"We're just so excited," Travis said. "We're ready to hit the ground running and use the space."

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TRAVEL

Continued from page A4

tation and mindfulness practices with time carved out for writing, video editing and building out the platform.

More than mere Instagram fodder, the end result as they see it now will be a tableau of experiences, interviews and insights gained from the places they visit, activities they engage in and the people they meet.

"We want to have adventures, be a family having an amazing time, then summarize that so it's of value to someone else," Michelle said. "Our guiding principle, our North Star, is to provide value."

The overarching idea is to try and find a new way of living, the couple says,

apart from days occupied by the daily grind and routines that can become almost etched into an individual's DNA over time.

What began as casual conversations about taking time out of busy schedules to travel and learn together as a family morphed into a more formal process of planning, plotting and saving after Michelle wound down her own event-planning business, Sunday Sol Events, in 2022.

After taking a much-needed pause, during which time she earned her yoga certification, Michelle began talking with Kent about taking the leap and going on a journey large enough to spark authentic change in their lives, applying their natural talents and skills in a process guided by equal parts intuition and curiosity.

They placed a large world map on the wall of Michelle's office and began researching points of interest as a family. The move involved notifying a lot of people, figuring out how to pack up and rent out their San Clemente home and finding a solid homeschooling program for Everly. But they figured, if not now, then when?

"It's like make believe," Kent said. "This is something where you sit around the fireplace with a glass of wine and say, 'If I could dream up a trip, this is it.' And now, here we go."

Not every stop in the family's journey has been fully booked, and that's intentional. If a chance encounter leads them to a new destination, or a group of people, they want to make space for that.

Everly, whose travels with

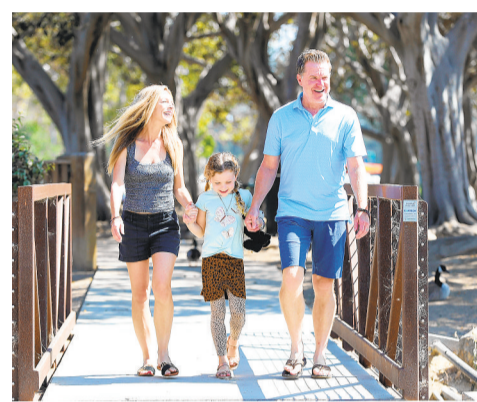
mom and dad have already taken her to several U.S. destinations as well as to London, also had a hand in the travel planning. For example, New York City was her idea.

"I wanted to see the Statue of Liberty," the 7-year-old explained.

Other travel goals include petting an elephant for her birthday in February and maybe, just maybe, considering a trip to China when the family plans to be in Asia early next year, so she can visit in person a panda, Hua Mei, that she adopted through a nonprofit earlier this year.

Everly hopes to share photos of some of the international cuisine she encounters along the way in a segment on Frenchitvity called "French Fry," a nickname her friend coined.

The sky's the limit for the



ANGELS AND Ducks broadcaster Kent French with his wife Michelle and daughter, Everly, 7.

Don Leach
Staff Photographer

French family, which only has one goal for the year ahead.

"I hope that we come back better as individuals, better as a family, stronger, and have a better appreciation for what's important in our lives," Kent said. "That's the biggest thing — we're going to come back in a better place, no matter what."

"I completely concur exactly with that sentiment," Michelle agreed. "We're traveling away to come back home, to ourselves, who we really are and who we want to be in this world."

Follow their journey on Frenchitvity.com.

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Every Wednesday, get the news that matters most to your community in the TimesOC newsletter, with the latest on issues from business and immigration to food and what to do this weekend. It's the top local stories from the Daily Pilot, the L.A. Times and TimesOC — all delivered straight to you.



California State Parks seasonal lifeguard Sierra Fockler discovered a 14-inch Pacific football fish around 2:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 13, near the lifeguard station located at Crystal Cove State Park in Orange County. It's the second such case of the fish washing ashore over the last three years. (Courtesy of California State Parks)

Good morning. It's Wednesday, Oct. 25. I'm Carol Cormaci, bringing you this week's TimesOC newsletter with a look at the latest local news and events.

Watch where you're stepping on O.C.'s famed sands, because you may encounter a rare specimen of marine life. One, in fact, that has very sharp teeth.

That's what happened on a recent afternoon to lifeguard Sierra Fockler, who found a spookily-looking black angler fish, specifically a Pacific football fish, while she was walking near the lifeguard headquarters building on Moro Beach, located within Crystal Cove State Park.



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STANCE

Continued from page A1

DEIB position statement were unauthorized and incorrect.

"The city's relationship with the club would never hinge on the constitutionally protected value statement or mission statement of the club," Smith wrote.

Watson, who now serves as the club's chief executive, told TimesOC the letter pertained to a conversation Munzing had with her on March 8 that included "threats to cancel the contract if he shifted the council to a more conservative alignment."

The Boys & Girls Club of Capistrano Valley may seem like an unlikely organization to be targeted in the political polarization surrounding DEI programs at corporations, nonprofits and college campuses.

In South Orange County it provides a number of services, including after-school programs and summer day camps. The nonprofit maintains "neighborhood-based" youth facilities in San Juan Capistrano, Aliso Viejo and Rancho Santa Margarita.

According to 2024 statistics, the club serves more than 1,100 youth, 59% of whom are Latino, across all three locations every year.

An archived version of the club's website shows a link to its past position statement that has since been deleted.

"We reject any and all forms of racism, inequity or unkindness," the statement read. It also pledged equal access to club programs, among other stated principles.

The club's board adopted the position statement in October 2020. Similar DEI stances are found at the Boys & Girls Club of America's national website.

After the city attorney's letter, Munzing continued to voice his disagreements. He turned down an invitation to the club's bocce ball championship at Doheny State Beach.

"With your radical new DEI stance, I can no longer participate," Munzing texted Watson.

TimesOC reached out to Munzing, who did not immediately respond.

In May, Munzing took his anti-DEIB stances to Rancho Santa Margarita when its City Council considered

a one-year extension with the club for services at the Bell Tower Regional Community Center.

"This new direction ... will only hurt the kids and encourage them to be bitter victims," he said in emails where he identified as an O.C. GOP Central Committee representative for Rancho Santa Margarita. "Do what's right for the kids."

Councilman Jerry Holloway followed up with Munzing and asked what he meant by that.

Munzing pointed to a list of books that he claimed accompanied the club's DEIB position statement that had been posted on their website.

"Every one of these authors are focused on making everything about 'race,' which is inappropriate for the young minds that are under their care," he wrote. "Kids should be allowed to be kids and they are too young to have to deal with curriculum that is based on a political agenda."

The book list included titles such as "White Fragility," "How the Irish Became White" and "Race Matters." Cornel West, James Baldwin and Toni Morrison were among the authors.

Holloway responded by



Screenshot by Gabriel San Román

MAYOR MIKE MUNZING spoke during a Feb. 7 Aliso Viejo council meeting about attending a Boys & Girls Club function.

asking Munzing if he knew how many kids, if any, were being directed to read from the book list.

"They are certainly teaching them something," Munzing claimed.

Watson told TimesOC that the reading list on the website was never intended for the youth members.

"It was developed as a resource for adults — parents, staff and community members — who wanted to further educate themselves on topics related to diversity, equity and inclusion," she said. "Our goal was to offer a tool for thoughtful reflection and understand-

ing, not as a directive for our youth."

Munzing's concerns found favor with Councilman Tony Beall, who referred to DEIB as a "toxic" ideology and railed against the book list.

"It's wrong for our City Council to support spending any more taxpayer dollars to hire an organization to provide after-school care to the children of our community when that organization proudly promotes this type of critical race theory," Beall said at the May 8 council meeting.

But support for ending the agreement with the

club failed to find favor elsewhere.

Councilman Bradley McGuirr pointed to five schools in the Saddleback Unified School District that would be without an after-school program if the agreement expired without renewal in July.

"I don't agree with the reading list, but to me that's secondary to the needs of the children and the parents in this community," McGuirr added.

Rancho Santa Margarita City Council voted 3-1 to grant a year extension to the club, with Beall opposing and another council member absent.

Watson hasn't had any conversations with Munzing about the club since but said she is looking forward to strengthening its partnership with Aliso Viejo.

"We remain committed to looking toward the future and finding new ways to address the needs of our community," she said. "Together, we are shaping a brighter future for our youth and our community — this is where our attention and focus lie."

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MAILBAG

Continued from page A7

to lead to lawsuits. Lastly, it will help restore some of the integrity lost since Tony Strickland, Gracey Van der Mark, Casey McKeon and Pat Burns came into office. Huntington Beach is hemorrhaging money and faces a deepening budget shortfall. The nefarious debacle of the multimillion-dollar air show settlement coupled with the ever-growing list of unwinnable lawsuits with the state is moving our city into bankruptcy.

Nora Pedersen Huntington Beach

Praise for pastor's reminder

Kudos to Rev. Paul E.

Capetz and his Sept. 29 Pastor's Perspective in the Pilot. The bedrock of this nation's founding is "freedom." Freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, etc. etc. If you look at other nations around the world, you would be hard pressed to find one with the amount of religious diversity and freedom that the USA has. So-called Christian nationalists and the religious right want a nation where everyone adheres to their unique beliefs. That is not freedom. This nation needs more Christian leaders like Rev. Paul E. Capetz who understands that this nation was founded on the principle of religious freedom, not religious conformity.

James Dowling Huntington Beach

E-bikers should be insured, licensed

One evening two weeks ago my wife and I were taking a stroll along the Newport Beach Back Bay when a 20-plus-year-old male on an e-bike was heading toward us. There was nobody around and he was speeding at full throttle with plenty of margin in both lanes. The e-biker moved toward the center of the road and seemed like he was trying to maneuver his left handle bar to whack my arm. I felt a gush of air as he passed by missing me by an inch. Had he hit me, I would have been in the hospital or morgue. He then sped off.

On a more recent Friday morning, I was pedaling my bicycle down the Santa Ana

River bike path toward the beach minding my own business when a couple of teenage e-bikers driving in the opposite direction headed toward me. As they passed, one of them decided to cough up a large spit wad and aim it at my face, missing me by a few inches. They both sped off.

Both of these attempted attacks were completely unprovoked and unexpected. Had either of them been successful, it would be considered assault and battery.

Could these types of e-bike incidents be a new variation of the "knockout game," where instead of a sucker punch to the face, it's a hit-and-run or germ-infested salvo of saliva?

How many of us have witnessed the reckless driving behaviors of e-bikers

ignoring the traffic laws and almost causing an accident? If you hit one, then you have to defend yourself. How long before someone with road rage takes matters into their own hands?

It's time to speak out and demand that the same regulations applied to motorcyclists be applied to e-bikers. I fully support any law requiring a minimum age, a driver's license, liability insurance, and proper training before anyone is permitted to ride an e-bike on public roads.

B. Friedland Costa Mesa

Strident visit at the door

My College Park home has enough left-leaning decorations on it that I don't

get many Republican canvassers on my doorstep. And I really don't get many who ask me if I'm a Satanist, so imagine my surprise when a campaign volunteer for Costa Mesa mayoral hopeful James Peters did exactly that this weekend!

My dogs alerted me to the man in the campaign T-shirt standing at my open French door. He recited Peters' "Faith, Family, Freedom" slogan to me, and I told him through the barking that candidates with mottos like that weren't generally my speed.

"Oh, so you don't believe in God?" he asked.

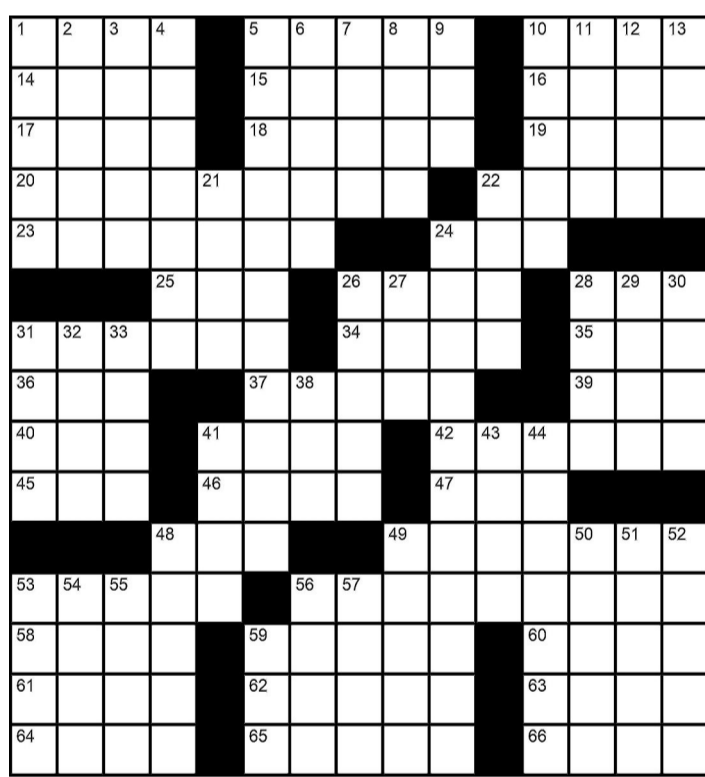
"I think I probably believe in a very different kind of god from your candidate," I said.

See Mailbag, page A10

THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Stella Zawistowski

- ACROSS 1 Skinny fish 5 Tub soaks 10 Chimpanzees, e.g. 14 "Aw darn!" 15 Kindle download 16 Volcano output 17 Clinton's veep 18 Comic Sales 19 Showy spring flower 20 Exciting experience 22 Dressy shoes 23 Pragmatic person

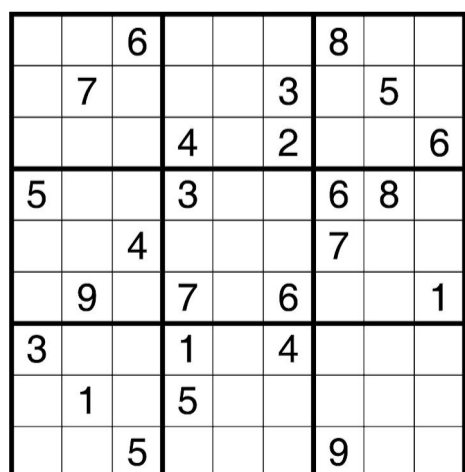


- 24 Number of years in a decade 25 _ out a living 26 Actress Sorvino 28 Atlanta-based TV channel 31 Whiskey container 34 Got 100% on 35 Consume 36 _ Miss (university nickname) 37 Tahoe and Huron 39 Alias letters: Abbr. 40 Got a gold medal 41 Nothing but 42 Bit of hail 45 Harden 46 Greek war god 47 Bitter beer 48 That guy's 49 Helps out 53 Eagle's claw 56 Farrier's item 58 Taken by mouth 59 Gentle push 60 Pakistani language 61 Mail 62 Baking need 63 Cincinnati MLB team

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 A6.

- 64 NYC department store 65 Entices 66 Ice cream brand DOWN 1 _ Rice Burroughs 2 Eat away at 3 Immature insect 4 Pittsburgh

- 13 Insolent talk 21 "Swoosh" brand 22 Department leader 24 Unwelcome visitors 26 Creates 27 Put frosting on 28 Blue-green 29 Use an oven 30 "Now," in the ER 31 Gift decorations 32 Medicinal plant 33 Monthly payment 38 "Our days _ numbered" 41 Most important 43 If not 44 Free time 48 Hangs on to 49 Quarrel 50 Tear to bits 51 Winter cocktail 52 Dr. _ (kids' author) 53 Chuck 54 Neighborhood 55 Tall and skinny 56 "The Bear" streaming service 57 Bad smell 59 Seahawks' group: Abbr. Tribune Media Services

Advertisement for Philharmonic Society of Orange County 2024-2025 Season. Features Modigliani Quartet & Fabio Bidini on Oct 25 at 8PM at Irvine Barclay Theatre, and Ray Chen on Oct 27 at 3PM at Renee & Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall.

HISTORY

Continued from page A5

for the future of their children and their grandchildren.”

An effort to preserve the history of the neighborhood for coming generations is being led by the Logan Barrio Archival Project, with Michael Andrade, grandson of Josephine “Chepa” Andrade at the helm.

“I have been doing this for about 15 years now. When my grandma was still alive she asked me to put all this together and this is really me trying to keep it going,” said Andrade.

Andrade arranged a display of family photos, newspaper clippings and other documents like old census records at the event and welcomed attendees to bring their own items to add to the archives.

“This was my grandmother’s house that my

great grandfather had built, and that was always a sanctuary,” Andrade said, pointing out a black and white photograph of a small clapboard house.

In conjunction with the 25th anniversary of the Logan Barrio, Andrade’s project is the featured exhibit at Santa Ana’s Crear Studio.

On view now through Nov. 9, “Historical Logan Barrio: A Tapestry of Culture and Community” features historic photographs spanning 138 years collected by Andrade, Garcia and the Logan Reunion Committee. Additionally, a documentary film “Finding Logan: Santa Ana’s Original Barrio,” by Lena Luna will also be screened at Crear Studio on Oct. 19 at 4 p.m.

The film is intended to help advocate for National Historical recognition for Logan federally, Luna said.

The film, which Luna made at L.A. City College, includes an original song with lyrics written by Luna

and scored by her father, who lived in Logan before he was adopted at a young age.

“I wanted to show the political, cultural and artistic aspect of this beautiful place called Logan,” said Luna.

Moraga said Logan has always been a place of community.

“Everybody took care of each other,” Moraga recalls. “When I was a young girl we would all be at a dance hall and the young boys would say, ‘Behave yourself.’ They really took care of us girls.”

Moraga is happy the tradition of the reunion continues while Amezcua assures that Logan Barrio will be here for many more years to come.

“This neighborhood that we call Logan Barrio, it’s not going anywhere,” said Amezcua.

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Sarah Mosqueda

LONGTIME LOGAN resident Cecelia Rodriguez, left, with Santa Ana Mayor Valerie Amezcua.

MAILBAG

Continued from page A9

“So you don’t believe in Jesus Christ?” he demanded.

I told him we were done talking and began to shut the door, which is when he said “So — Satan, then?”

“What I believe is that it’s time for you to get off my porch,” I replied.

I phoned the Peters campaign, and to his credit, James Peters himself returned my call and apologized for the interaction. “I think I know who that is,” he said when I described my location and the volunteer’s appearance. “I’ll talk to him.”

Respectfully, Mr. Peters, you need to do a lot more than “talk to him.” You need to dismiss him from your volunteer efforts, have a training session with your entire team to discuss why it’s poor policy to go to people’s homes to berate them, and do some serious introspection to figure out why your campaign would attract or tolerate someone so appalling.

You brought your hatred to the wrong house, my dear. We won’t allow Costa Mesa to turn into Huntington Beach. If you don’t

want the bigots on your doorstep, John Stephens is the only acceptable choice in this race.

Eliza Rubenstein
Costa Mesa

Thoughts on the NMUSD election

In a recent letter to the editor, Margaret Mooney of Costa Mesa wrote that the challenger to incumbent NMUSD trustee Leah Ersoylu, “newbie” Robin Mensinger, has no applicable experience for the position, will not denounce the far-right group Moms for Liberty or answer whether she supports them or not.

Moms for Liberty also ran candidates that had no experience for the school board seats they ultimately won, and this should be a bright, flashing red light for Area 1 voters. Their candidates crashed several school districts around the country and won elections with their obnoxious and radical right-wing platform. Fortunately they have since been defeated or recalled in many of those same districts.

Robin Mensinger also happens to be the wife of Steve

Mensinger, a former hard-liner Costa Mesa councilman. His extreme conservative views along with the conservative majority at the time brought chaos and a high degree of tension to the city before voters saw through their agenda, and they were either booted or term-limited out. Does she hold views similar to her husband? Let’s not find out!

I too encourage all NMUSD Area 1 voters to reelect Leah Ersoylu as MNUSD trustee.

Mike Aguilar
Costa Mesa

I have been actively involved as a parent in the Newport-Mesa Unified School District since 2010. This year, as our youngest child graduates in June, I reflect on the opportunities our public schools have provided for all three of my children.

I support my friend and current board trustee Krista Weigand because I am passionate about our public schools. I feel deeply saddened by the toxic environment surrounding this election cycle.

When my husband and I moved to this area in 2008, we quickly decided to enroll all

three of our children in NMUSD schools. Over the years, I’ve witnessed significant changes — curricula, administration, superintendents and a pandemic. Throughout this time, I have actively voiced my concerns at board meetings on various topics that impact all students in our district. I’ve engaged with board trustees, superintendents and administration to discuss ways to enhance both the academic and social environments of our schools.

I’ve been fortunate to educate myself on several issues and to persistently reach out through emails and by attending school events where board members or the superintendent speak. I have taken the initiative to connect with those in leadership, regardless of our differing views. I have always felt there is accessibility to our elected school board members.

Now, regarding the upcoming election and my friend Krista Weigand, I am appalled by the misinformation and negativity surrounding her record and character. I can state with full conviction that Weigand is a dedicated mother with children in our schools, who has shown

remarkable strength and resilience on the board over the past four years. She fights for all our children and is an incredibly kind and knowledgeable parent and friend. This is precisely why she deserves reelection.

In contrast, Weigand’s opponents are out of touch and running negative campaigns against her based on falsehoods. Yet she remains a class act, standing firmly by her record without resorting to retaliation. She embodies integrity by taking the high road.

Before election day, I urge you to ignore the “white noise” and hateful rhetoric. Vote for someone who prioritizes kindness, involvement and truth in our schools. I personally do not support candidates who lack deep ties to our school community or whose children no longer attend our schools.

I am voting for Krista Weigand — an educated, fair, transparent, and kind candidate who embodies conservative values and genuinely cares about the well-being of every student in the Newport Mesa School District.

Kate Malouf
Newport Beach



Water Grill ©2024 South Coast Plaza

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Marugame Udon · Miàn · Morton’s The Steakhouse · Moulin · Outpost Kitchen · Paradise Dynasty
Petrossian at Tiffany · PhoHolic · Populaire · Quattro Caffé · Royal Khyber Fine Indian Cuisine · Seasons 52
Tableau Kitchen and Bar · Terrace by Mix Mix · Vaca · The Vox Kitchen (Opening Soon) · Water Grill · Yu Cake

partial listing

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