

# Daily Pilot

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2020 /// Now including Coastline Pilot and Huntington Beach Independent /// dailypilot.com



Allen J. Schaben | Los Angeles Times

**KEITH TRAN** of Santa Ana plays a guitar while wearing a mask at the Asian Garden Mall in Westminster, which is closed to indoor shopping.

## How culture is helping to curb coronavirus in Little Saigon

The low numbers of COVID-19 cases in the Orange County community are tied to cultural habits such as respecting elders, authorities and masks.

BY ANH DO

Dr. Quynh Kieu has a three-part theory to explain why Little Saigon has been relatively successful in stemming the COVID-19 pandemic.

One factor is a months-long project to test 1,900 people for free in the sprawling Vietnamese American community that spans the cities of Westminster and Garden Grove, as well as parts of Fountain Valley and Santa Ana. It's believed to be among the first ethnic-specific testing effort in the nation.

A second factor is luck. And a third, said the Fountain Valley pediatrician, is a host of ingrained cultural habits: respect for authorities, reverence for elders and a belief in the importance of the collective welfare.

"The Vietnamese are very compliant — and very consistent," said Kieu, who conducted the tests under the umbrella of the Project Vietnam Foundation, her nonprofit that organizes medical missions to the Vietnamese homeland, serving many of the rural poor.

"In many families, they have a representative member who does the outside tasks, say someone who runs errands on behalf of their kids and the grandparents, instead of each person going their own way," Kieu continued. "They're consciously avoiding risks."

Of equal importance, she suggested, is that Vietnamese Americans — like people in most



**XUAN NGUYEN** wears a face shield while visiting the Asian Garden Mall in Westminster.

Asian countries — are long accustomed to putting politics aside and strapping on a mask, to protect themselves, their loved ones and their fellow citizens.

"Those who have traveled to Asia have witnessed people wearing masks to ward off pollution and dust," she said. "Now we transferred that mentality to fighting germs — it's totally acceptable."

As California has struggled with some of the nation's highest number of coronavirus

infections and deaths, Little Saigon has stood out for its relatively low rates of both — although not all residents and businesses follow recommended protocols for social distancing.

"Sure, the numbers are a lot lower in the Vietnamese community and yes, the reasons behind this are cultural," said Dr. Clayton Chau, a Vietnam native who is director of the

See **Culture**, page A6

## With coronavirus still looming, health, public officials urge people to get flu vaccinations

BY ANDREW TURNER

Coastal Kids Pediatric Care, an Orange County-based medical group, stresses the importance of flu vaccinations every year.

That message has not changed in the face of the challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic, although the way those shots are administered may look different at times.

"We've already administered a few thousand flu vaccines," said Dr. Steven Abelowitz, the medical director of Coastal Kids. "For us, [how] we've changed the course in order to keep our patients safe and the public safe, we're doing our flu clinics as drive-up flu clinics."

"That, we feel, as a drive-up, out-of-the-office [option] in the parking lot, is safer for our children and their families and the public, at an added cost to us, but we're definitely OK with that because there's more staffing."

Mike McEnery, the chief administrative officer for Coastal Kids, said that flu shot clinics are set up in the parking lot once a week from noon to 4:30 p.m. at each of Coastal Kids' five locations: Laguna Hills (Monday), Irvine (Tuesday), Ladera Ranch (Wednesday), Newport Beach



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

**HALLE BLACK**, 8, holds onto Piper, her dog, as she sits on her mother Liz's lap after receiving a flu shot from Kristen Goode, a BSN, RN, on Friday outside the Coastal Kids Pediatric Care location in Laguna Niguel.

(Thursday) and Laguna Niguel (Friday).

Abelowitz said that everybody above the age of 6 months

should consider getting a flu shot. He added that patients will want to avoid dealing with COVID-19 and influenza at the

same time, noting that the coronavirus pandemic has not

See **Flu**, page A7

## O.C. still on track for third tier for reopening

The county's metrics concerning transmission of the coronavirus remain on a pace to move to the orange level.

BY ANDREW TURNER

The Orange County Health Care Agency reported 10 deaths and 165 new coronavirus infections in the latest set of numbers released on Saturday.

The death toll in the county due to COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, now stands at 1,214. Total cases in the county climbed to 53,069.

Patients who required hospitalization because of the virus were at 156, with 47 of those patients being treated in intensive care units.

An additional 9,986 tests were reported, bringing the total number of tests administered during the pandemic to 838,045.

The county estimates that 47,742 residents have recovered after a battle with the virus.

Currently in the second, red tier, Orange County's transmission tracking metrics put it on pace to progress to the third, orange tier.

In order to move into the third tier, designated "moderate transmission," a county can have between one and 3.9 new daily cases per 100,000 residents and a testing positivity rate of 2% to 4.9%.

As of Saturday, the county had seven-day averages of 3.6 new

See **Tier**, page A7

## Laguna reports revenue shortfall of \$7.4M

BY LILLY NGUYEN

Ahead of what the city expected would be a \$12-million loss in revenue, the Laguna Beach City Council made significant cutbacks to its budget in April in an effort to curtail the effects of COVID-19.

At the start of the pandemic, city staff predicted that the city would see significant changes in its transient occupancy tax and sales tax with hotel tax revenue to drop by \$3.5 million, sales tax by \$1.3 million and community development fees by \$1.2 million less than initial budget estimates when the budgets for both the 2019-20 and 2020-21 fiscal year were adopted in June last year.

On Tuesday, city staff reported the revenue losses for the 2019-20 fiscal year was actually \$7.4 million.

See **Laguna**, page A2

## ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



Raul Roa | Staff Photographer

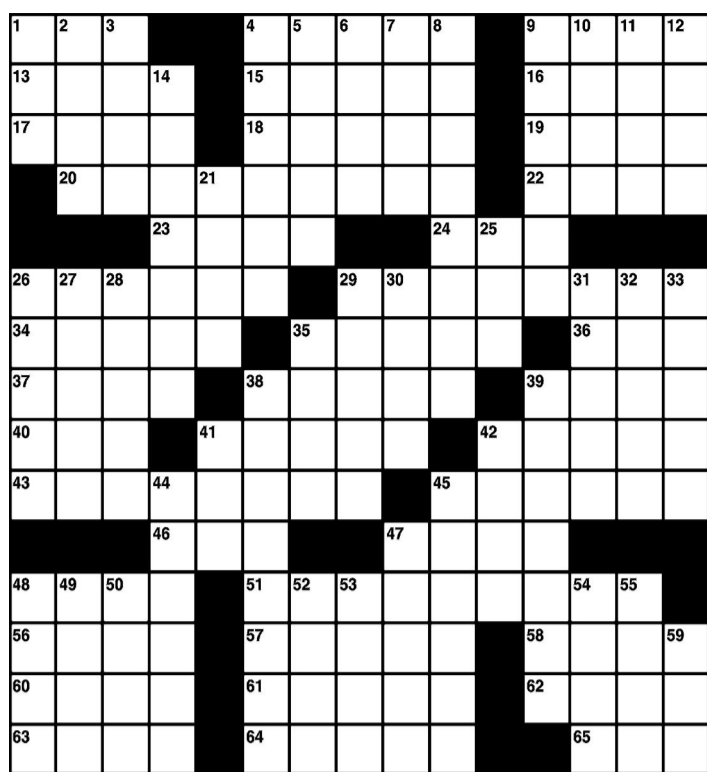
**SAWDUST FESTIVAL OPEN FOR BUSINESS** PAGE A8

**COMMENTARY: NOTES ON REOPENING SCHOOLS FROM A PASTOR AND A PARENT** PAGE A5



**THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE**

By Jacqueline E. Mathews

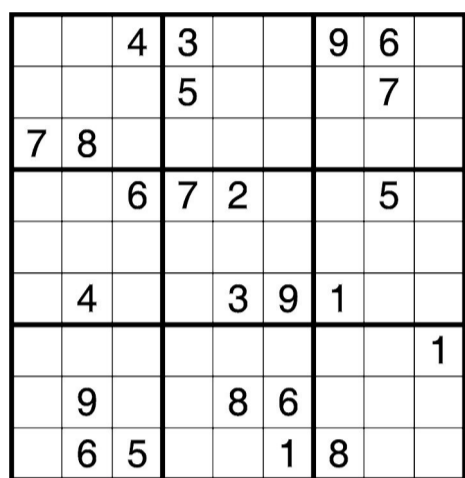


- ACROSS**  
 1 "Little Women" girl  
 4 Tropical island trees  
 9 Likelihood  
 13 No longer alive  
 15 Apparent  
 16 Lacerated  
 17 Business transaction  
 18 Fonda or Finch  
 19 Talk up; promote  
 20 Bandit of the Old West  
 22 Coat parts  
 23 \_ for; buys  
 24 Precept  
 26 Have high hopes  
 29 Fall down  
 34 MapQuest suggestion  
 35 Rosé & Riesling  
 36 Spring month: abbr.  
 37 Battering wind  
 38 African nation  
 39 Leading lady  
 40 Close-; zoomed-in shots  
 41 Ice cream concoctions  
 42 Princess Charlotte, to Harry  
 43 Cosmetic kit item  
 45 \_ around; gave orders to  
 46 Roll-; deodorants, often  
 47 One of three tenses  
 48 Cougar  
 51 In another place  
 56 \_ incline; slanted  
 57 Neighbor of India  
 58 Lion's cry  
 60 Take a fancy to  
 61 Hollandaise, for one  
 62 Unexceptional  
 63 " \_ the Rainbow"  
 64 Stopped  
 65 1-800-Flowers competitor

**SUDOKU**

By The Mephram Group

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit [sudoku.org.uk](http://sudoku.org.uk).



**For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A6.**

- DOWN**  
 1 Want \_; newspaper section  
 2 Anthropologist Margaret  
 3 Ivy League school  
 4 Olive lover  
 5 Declares positively  
 6 " \_ Smile Be Your Umbrella"  
 7 Talking horse  
 8 Baby transport  
 9 Canada's capital  
 10 Entryway  
 11 Percussion

- instrument  
 12 \_ upon; attacks  
 14 Regardless of  
 21 Remove apple skins  
 25 Lou Gehrig's disease  
 26 Bicker  
 27 Like a bubble bath  
 28 Sign of life  
 29 Groucho's prop  
 30 Small bills  
 31 Cracker spreads  
 32 Part of NASA  
 33 Got it wrong  
 35 "W" in shoe sizes  
 38 Foolishness  
 39 Nuns  
 41 Stealing or coveting  
 42 Have a snack  
 44 Temporary car  
 45 Cried hard  
 47 Calmness  
 48 Explorer Marco  
 49 Duke or Rice: abbr.  
 50 Manufacture  
 52 Containing very little fat  
 53 Potato  
 54 Santa's landing spot  
 55 Sunrise direction  
 59 Fishing pole

Tribune Media Services

**LAGUNA**

Continued from page A1

lion across all funds, including \$3.5 million in the general fund. April projections initially saw a \$6-million loss in the general fund.

Overall, all funds beat estimates. Property taxes came in \$53,000 higher than expected and sales tax similarly beat its estimates by \$200,000. The transient occupancy tax also beat estimates by \$1.4 million and city departments saved more than \$2.5 million.

City Manager John Pietig said that though the city is in a "bad" situation in comparison to pre-COVID, it is not as bad as staff believed it could have been earlier this year.

City staff said that current projections assume that the coronavirus pandemic wouldn't have further impacts on public health and require closure of businesses and services, but acknowledged that if such a situation should change that it will affect the city's finances.

"The uncertainty surrounding the spread of the coronavirus as businesses and schools reopen, the flu season, a potential vac-

cine, recession and pre-coronavirus pressures on retail make the remainder of the fiscal year nearly impossible to predict," staff said in a report prepared for the council meeting.

Up for consideration Tuesday was for the City Council to carry over revenue from the last fiscal year and subsequent appropriations thereof such as the setting aside of \$1.5 million to balance the current fiscal year's budget without impacting the general fund reserve to preserve such funds for future downturns and economic recovery.

In addition, other actions taken Tuesday were the establishment of a CARES Act Assistance fund, addition of a systems analyst position to the Community Development department, authorization for a \$30,000 contract to retain interim public works director Manuel Gomez and addition of a defensible space inspector.

All actions were approved unanimously.

The City Council also moved to fund the position for a defensible space inspector to the city's budget through the end of the current fiscal year, acknowledging wildfire concerns as 25 major blazes continue

to burn up and down the state. Most of Laguna Beach is designated a severe fire hazard severity zone.

Mayor Pro Tem Steve Dicterow said that he felt it was important to move forward with hiring a defensible space inspector. Councilman Peter Blake agreed, adding that he felt the city needed to move forward with clearing dry brush and creating a plan.

"Not a plan that's wrapped around emotions and politics, but a plan that's actually wrapped around keeping us safe," Blake said. "With five of the six greatest fires in our history burning right now, we have to be looking at this."

Residents spoke in favor of the defensible space inspector and the systems analyst positions, complimenting city staff for how budget issues have been handled in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gavin Curran, the city's director of administrative services, said that the next financial report will be scheduled for February. Discussions for next year's budget are set for May and June.

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**ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:**



Photo by Spencer Grant

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Twice a week, we bring you the latest on Orange County from Orange County, with the best of all the journalism from the Daily Pilot, the Los Angeles Times and TimesOC. The TimesOC newsletter keeps you up to date on the county's diverse communities and shifting political landscape, its coastlines and environment and how it's grappling with issues from immigration to education, from housing to healthcare. Every Wednesday and Friday, expect us to deliver the news that matters most to your community — from business to entertainment to science to food — and explore what it means for you. We also equip you for your weekends in Orange County, from its beaches to the future of high school sports. You can sign up at [latimes.com/oc-newsletter](http://latimes.com/oc-newsletter).

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## forum



William Eric Darling

October 8, 1948 - August 30, 2020



Bill was born in Whittier, California to Lawrence and Norma Jean Darling. He spent his first 6 years in Whittier.

In 1954 Larry & Norma moved their family to Newport Beach. Bill certainly loved the beach life, surfing, fishing, boating, etc. He attended many of the local schools and graduated from Corona del Mar High School.

He attended Orange Coast College as well, but life experiences were more important to Bill. He spent some time in Costa Rica working for the Tico Times. And later he moved to Maui for a few years and worked for the Maui Sign Shop. He made many dear friends there. Lots of surfing and fun!

When he returned to California he held a variety of jobs, always artistic as he was a great artist. Bill enjoyed painting with watercolors, acrylic and oil paints as well.

He married Penny Myers on Cinco de Mayo 1979. He adopted her son, Christopher and they had two more sons, Michael and John. He always called each one his favorite son, as he loved them all.

Bill was also very musical and played in different bands over the years including the local band, The Fabulous Nomads. He enjoyed playing his piano and ukulele at home in his later years. He also loved drawing cartoons with his acerbic wit and also wrote several stories. Just had a great imagination.

Bill was a member of Blackie's Classics Longboard Association for many years and enjoyed surfing and competing up and down the coast with the guys and wives of the club. He was known as "Willy D" to most of his friends. And let's not forget golf, it was a favorite pastime.

Bill and Penny opened two businesses together over the years. West Side Graphics and Newport Frame Co. in Costa Mesa.

Bill passed peacefully with his family by his side. He was loved and we will miss him so very much.

He was predeceased by his parents, Larry and Norma, and his son, Christopher.

He is survived by his wife of 41 years, Penny, sons Michael (Kelly Rangel) and John Darling, sister Sue Naber (Dan), nieces Amy Loveless (Tom) and Laurie Anderson (Chris), sister in law Pamela Canfield (Lew) and granddaughters Gwen Smith and Naomi Bozeman. There will be a Celebration of Life at a later date.



Myrtle Yoshioka Asahino

April 14, 1933 - September 11, 2020

On September 11, 2020, Myrtle Yoshioka Asahino, loving wife, mother and grandmother, passed away at the age of 87.

The third of five children born to Masato and Shige Yoshioka in Kaunakakai on the Friendly Isle of Molokai, Myrtle spent a happy childhood on the rustic Hawaiian island, with fond memories of eating peanuts and "talking story" with friends and siblings on the town's pier. To help supplement her father's income as the butcher in Misaki's Store, she would sometimes work in the pineapple fields, preferring to be outdoors rather than working indoors as a seamstress.

Myrtle was very independent. Against the strong advice from her father, she left home and family at the age of 14 for the bright lights of Honolulu, with the understanding that greater opportunities existed in the big city. She attended McKinley High School, then graduated from the University of Hawaii in 1955 with a degree in Home Economics with a concentration in Dietary Institutional Management, all the while supporting herself on a tight budget.

Soon after graduation, her big adventure began. She moved to Boston and proudly worked at the renowned Massachusetts General Hospital as a hospital dietician. The big eastern city was such a spectacular delight for the tropical island girl. Actually watching Ted Williams play at Fenway Park instead of listening about it through the static of the radio was astonishing.

The adventure continued on to St. Luke's Hospital in Chicago. Through mutual friends, she met the love of her life, Steve Asahino, an orthodontics student at Loyola Dental School. The two were married at the University of Chicago in 1959 and soon got busy building a home and family. They moved to Newport Beach in 1960 because it was reminiscent of their beloved native Hawaii, and because Dr. Asahino understood the growing area was an ideal location to start his orthodontics practice. Before long, they had four children: Steven, Karen, Kathryn, and Kenny. They found the time to explore the world together, travelling throughout the U.S., Europe, Hong Kong, and Japan, where Dr. Asahino helped introduce orthodontics to his ancestral home.

Myrtle's generous Aloha spirit was infectious, and she made friends far and wide. Many are blessed to be in her Ohana. Her philanthropic work at Bowers Museum through MEDELLAS with other Asian American women brought out the best of her fundraising skills. She was active in Cal State Fullerton's Oral History program, recognizing the importance of preserving stories from the Issei, first generation pioneers who settled in the LA and Orange County area.

Mostly though, she loved a good party. Their home was often filled with the Hui Aikane (a close group of island transplants) and a wide group of other friends, bringing tasty potluck dishes, ukuleles, and raising the spirit of Aloha.

When Dr. Asahino unexpectedly passed away in 1985, her large Ohana became all the more important to Myrtle. She was a charter member of "The Walkers," a group of fellow lady volunteers from the 1984 Olympics who can still be seen to this day walking the early morning streets of Dover Shores and solving the world's problems. Her family grew with the arrival of her grandchildren Paul, Cole, Malia, Claire, Eliza, and Nuala. She was a loving and nurturing grandmother, being an integral positive influence in each of their lives. Their kind and generous hearts are Myrtle's legacy.

Myrtle's generous spirit and positive outlook knew no limits. When she was given lemons, she would literally make a delicious lemon meringue pie and return it as a gift. She couldn't stand to see anyone lonely. If she knew a remote acquaintance who would be alone during the holidays, she would invite them over for one of her famous Christmas parties. She was always quick to laugh, and to make us laugh with her unique insights and good humor. We were blessed with her charming smile up until the very end.

We are saddened to see her pass, but comforted knowing she is reunited with her departed loved ones. The angels and the saints are going to love her lemon meringue pie.

Myrtle is survived by brother Isamu (Ruth) Yoshioka, sisters Janet Nagasako and Cherry (Jerry) Kobashigawa; children Steven, Karen (Dan) Selleck, Kathryn (Rich) Tait, and Kenny (Catherine); grandchildren Paul Selleck, Cole Tait, Claire Selleck, Malia Asahino, Eliza Tait, and Nuala Asahino; plus numerous nieces and nephews. She is preceded in death by parents Masato and Shige Yoshioka, beloved husband Steve Asahino, and sister Misao "Sue" Rivera. Her life will be honored with a private grave side ceremony. Once restrictions are lifted, Myrtle's life will be celebrated with a large party, as she would have liked.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a contribution to the Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County in memory of Myrtle at [https://www.yourfooddrive.org/drive.php?myrtles\\_food\\_drive](https://www.yourfooddrive.org/drive.php?myrtles_food_drive)



## MAILBAG

## Let's offer support and gratitude for first responders

As Election Day nears, trying to keep track of who is endorsing which candidates running for office can be quite confusing.

But one thing is certain in these challenging and uncertain times, and that is how important our fire, police and first responders are to protecting our country at large and our local communities.

The dedicated men and women who serve us tirelessly day in and day out, protecting us from harm and peril at every turn, are really the modern-day unsung heroes of our childhood. You don't appreciate who is there providing consistent and much-needed services until there is a crisis in our midst.

Thus, it should come as no surprise we are seeing signs sprout up all around our neighborhoods proclaiming our uniform support and appreciation for their great service.

As we have learned firsthand over the past six months, Newport Beach is not immune to the many challenges confronting our civil society today — the impact of the pandemic, business closures, smoke and ash covering our neighborhoods, not to mention the mostly peaceful protests this summer.

These are but a few examples of events that illustrate why support and praise of first responders is well-deserved. Hence, I was not surprised to see Mayor Dixon and a few others on City Council thank them at a recent City Council meeting.

Clearly our first responders are doing a great job protecting us and our community. That is why I plan to support first responders by voting for a candidate endorsed by them, Noah Blom. Everything I have learned about Noah is authentic and above board.

Please learn more for yourself, and I think you will find the same.

**Barbara Ann**  
Balboa Island

## All of this on Herdman's watch

I am a native of Newport Beach and my family has been on Balboa Island since 1926. Never have I been more dismayed with our city leadership.

I have watched helplessly as eight beautiful almost 100-year-old lemon-scented gum trees were destroyed on Marine Avenue, then four more removed even after the Balboa Island Preservation Assn. got involved to try to slow down the carnage. To add insult to injury we were told by the city that the trees had to come down because they were diseased, which scientific testing has shown was categorically false. At the same time, prominently displayed in the city's website was their vision of the future of Marine Avenue —

## Newport Beach native Paris-bound



Raul Roa | Staff Photographer

**MAX MCKENNON**, 18 of Newport Beach, prepares at the Racquet Club of Irvine on Wednesday for the upcoming French Open. The tennis tournament begins Oct. 4.

which could best be described as Palm Springs on a bad day.

All of this happened on Councilman Jeff Herdman's watch. Doesn't he have an appreciation for the charm and character that makes Balboa Island special? How could he allow this to happen?

The Board of Supervisors just voted on the John Wayne Airport Initiative

time with him to dispel that notion. Any dissension created over the last four years happened on his watch. Fortunately, we have a great alternative in Noah Blom, who is running for City Council.

I will be voting for him and look forward to the start of his watch.

**Edward Black**  
Balboa Island



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**A HELICOPTER** makes a drop on a brush fire up the hill toward Top of the World school and Alta Laguna Beach in 2018. A reader writes about being grateful for first responders.

that will have a profound adverse effect on our quality of life. Newport Beach received no material concessions that will reduce airport noise. Herdman is the chairman of our city's airport committee. How could he allow this to happen on his watch? In a similar situation, the city of Lake Arrowhead sued the FAA for flight path changes and won. Jeff Herdman could learn something from this little town in the mountains with nowhere near the resources of Newport Beach.

Herdman says he laments the formation of grassroots organizations like the BIPA and the Balboa Island Merchants ASSN. and doesn't understand why they are needed.

He should look in the mirror. They formed over the last four years because he pursues an agenda the vast majority of his constituents don't want. He claims that he is open to dissenting points of view, but you only have to spend a short

## Steel signs in the wrong place

Yesterday I saw a multitude of Michelle Steel signs planted in the divider between Newport Boulevard and the frontage road which runs parallel, approaching 17th Street. Since I always put up flags where my election partner advises, never daring to break any sign rules, I was cognizant of the possibility that this is one of those places where election campaign signs should not be.

I am well aware that Ms. Steel may not be the person who planted signs there, but now that she is informed, I am assuming that, if illegally placed, they will be removed. I was going to counter with the placement of some Harley Rouda signs in the same location, citing that if the Steel signs were not removed, it must be OK to put signs there.

But someone in Rouda's organization must know more than I, because I was told not to place any Rouda signs there. Nice to know that they are trying to go by the rules in this tumultuous race.

On another front last week, Supervisor Don Wagner from Irvine asked President Trump to bypass the state and send future coronavirus relief money directly to the counties. He contends that counties have the right to come up with their own plans if they follow guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on topics such as physical distancing and masks.

Is he kidding? The Board of Supervisors is the same body that, just a few months ago, sided with anti-maskers with conspiracy theories and in addition to not speaking up for the health officer who was getting death threats at her home, dropped the mask mandate. Supervisor Steel on tape sympathized with the anti-maskers. Fortunately Gov. Newsom

quickly restored the mandate.

And hasn't the CDC become politicized by Trump and corporate interests?

As much as the Newport Beach City Council and the Board of Supervisors have tried to make COVID-19 a political issue, we are much better protected by rules that guide the rest of the state, while recognizing regional differences.

**Lynn Lorenz**  
Newport Beach

## Jeff Herdman is a special interest candidate

Keith Curry is endorsing Jeff Herdman for Newport Beach City Council because he's not a "special interest" candidate. Oh, really?

Let's start with the proposed plan for the Mariners Mile expansion. The primary owner and proponent of the project is Manouch Moshayed. Jeff Herdman took thousands of dollars from Mr. Moshayed, his wife and Keith Curry — all disclosed on the same campaign disclosure form.

Amazing what just a little research can yield. It doesn't stop there ...

According to campaign contribution forms submitted to the city clerk's office, Herdman has also taken hundreds of dollars from Todd Ridgeway, who led the effort to build housing on the car wash site in Fashion Island. Herdman happily accepted a maximum donation from the California Real Estate PAC and took more money from the Apartment Assn. of Orange County, the California Apartment Owners' Assn. of Orange County, the National Assn. of Industrial and Office Properties, a Political Action Committee called "Taxpayers and Residents United For Newport," and the Building Industry Assn. of California.

Herdman has taken money from "Shopoff Land Fund II," "TSG Parcel 1, LLC" and "Uptown Newport Jamboree." All are companies associated with the high-density Shopoff project along Jamboree. He's taken money from CAA Planning, Inc., the political consultant behind the failed Porsche dealer design along Mariners Mile.

So, Mr. Curry, who exactly is the special interest candidate? Here's a hint: You just endorsed him.

If you're looking for independence un beholden to actual special interests, your vote is simple. Vote for Noah Blom.

**Jodi P. Bole**  
Chair, Balboa Island Preservation Assn.

## Costly playground is unnecessary

Once again, the Huntington Beach City Council has been fooled by a contractor (Daily Pilot, "Playground Gets OK in Central Park," Sept. 23). Members approved a \$1.2-million playground to be installed in

See **Mailbag**, page A7

## Daily Pilot

A Times Community News publication incorporating the Huntington Beach Independent, Coastline Pilot, Orange Coast Daily Pilot and the Newport Harbor News Press combined with Daily Pilot

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## COMPANY INFO

The Daily Pilot, established in 1907, is published Wednesday through Sunday by Times Community News, a division of the Los Angeles Times. Subscriptions are available only by subscribing to the Times, Orange County.

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**COMMENTARY | THE REV. DR. SARAH HALVERSON-CANO**

# Notes on reopening schools from a pastor and a parent

On any normal Sunday I'd be preaching, and for 14 years I did that from the corner of Fair Drive and Fairview Road at Fairview Community Church. However, this Sunday my pulpit was in a parking lot.



Courtesy of Rev. Dr. Sarah Halverson-Cano

How fortunate that I am in transition as I conclude my ministry at Fairview before beginning ministry at Irvine United Congregational Church, because it meant I could spend my sabbath Sunday morning with our community. While I've spent much of my ministry in solidarity with those seeking justice, this time I wasn't just advocating for others, because I myself am affected by the district's decision to return to in-classroom learning.

My daughter is in kindergarten at Whittier Elementary school in the bilingual immersion program. I have witnessed the incredible dedication of her teachers, as they have pivoted, enacted creative teaching and learned new technology with great attitudes every day as they maneuver this difficult beginning to a new school year. I am impressed at how well they engage students and the fact that our kids actually are learning.

However, I'm frustrated because there has been a consistent lack of information from the school district. Just before school went in session we were given a short amount of time to decide whether or not we would send our kids to a "cloud school" or a hybrid program.

We had very few details about the hybrid program but were told that if we chose the online option it would be for the entire year. Unfortunately, there was no dual immersion option for the cloud school, so we only had one option.

Now we're told our kids are heading back. I'm filled with questions and don't feel like we have adequate answers.

Once again we have not gotten enough information and I feel incredibly worried about sending my daughter to school. I am fearful not only for her sake, but for the sake of the teachers and employees, their families and the other students and their families. This affects our entire community.

Clearly, I'm not the only one fearful and frustrated by a hasty decision to quickly get kids back in the classroom. There were 250 cars participating in a safe caravan throughout our community to raise awareness about this public safety issue. While we were met with some jeers and name-calling, we were overwhelmingly encouraged by the support within our

**A CARAVAN** to protest in-person school opening in the parking lot outside the Newport Mesa Federation of Teachers headquarters in Costa Mesa.

neighborhoods: Our community wants to ensure the most vulnerable among us are safe, and that starts with our children.

The reality is that the virus is more prevalent in our community than it was when we shut down last spring. We're more at risk of sharing it. Children can get the virus and spread it. In our own community we have seen adults incapable of keeping a 6-foot distance while refusing to wear a mask. How can we expect children to do this? (And my child's age group is not mandated to wear a mask — putting everyone even more at risk.)

It's time for the Newport-Mesa Unified School District to do what it asks kids to do: their homework. Please watch the numbers in Orange County and wait. Put together a plan and convey it to teachers, parents and students. You have been entrusted with the most sacred of tasks: to care for our children. All we ask is that you do it with intention, do it carefully and put the safety of our community first.

Look, none of us like the situation. Many of us are struggling to find childcare for our kids and are stretched thin trying to make this work. But as much as I hate it, I hate the idea that putting kids, teachers and staff back in a classroom without a comprehensive plan could mean that more people in our community will get sick and die.

Please, NMUSD school board, listen to the overwhelming number of parents and teachers who simply ask you to wait, answer all of our questions, and don't make our kids the guinea pigs.

**THE REV. DR. SARAH HALVERSON-CANO** is senior pastor at Fairview Community Church in Costa Mesa.

**COMMENTARY | DIANE DIXON, JEFF HERDMAN AND KEVIN MULDOON**



Courtesy of John Wayne Airport

**RUNWAYS AT** John Wayne Airport. Three Newport Beach City Council members comment about the recently approved general aviation plans for the facility.

## New leases, relationships secure protections for communities in John Wayne Airport flight path

When Orange County introduced plans in 2018 to update the general aviation facilities at John Wayne Airport, the city of Newport Beach and other communities under the flight path were alarmed by the project's potential to increase traffic from larger, louder general aviation aircraft and to squeeze out the smaller, quieter piston aircraft.

More than two years later, thanks to the combined advocacy of the city, local community groups, neighboring communities and the support of the O.C. Board of Supervisors, there are now plans and agreements in place that will provide critical protections for our residents.

The project is a far cry better for Newport Beach than what was originally proposed.

In response to our concerns, in 2019 the supervisors agreed to limit the number of service operators to two, not the three that airport staff had recommended. And, there will

be about 40% fewer aircraft parking spaces than there are today. Most importantly, the supervisors approved a land-use plan for the project that sets aside the majority of the general aviation space available at JWA for the smaller, quieter aircraft. This was unprecedented.

Then, on Sept. 15, the supervisors voted to approve 35-year leases with Clay Lacy Aviation and ACI Jet, the companies the county selected to build and operate the airport's new general aviation facilities. The deals are significant for several reasons, including:

- The supervisors prohibited any commercial airline from using the space reserved for general aviation. This will ensure that commercial airlines cannot expand into the general aviation facilities.
- The supervisors included lease terms that lock in the land-use plan that preserves significantly more space for smaller, quieter aircraft for more than three decades.

Based on the advice of

their legal counsel, board members chose not to include lease terms that restrict the operating hours of Clay Lacy and ACI Jet. However, both companies voluntarily agreed to set hours that will encourage their customers to arrive and depart the airport at times that align with the airport's commercial curfew. They have publicly committed to that and have assured the city more than once that they intend to maintain good communication with us and our community.

The adopted project and new leases represent the first time that Newport Beach has had a voice in the county's general aviation operations. The county heard our residents' concerns and responded with a less intensive project and lease provisions that secured important protections for Newport Beach for decades to come.

**DIANE DIXON, JEFF HERDMAN** and **KEVIN MULDOON** are Newport Beach City Council members.

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**CULTURE**

Continued from page A1

Orange County Health Care Agency. In August, Chau was also named health officer for Orange County, becoming the area's highest-ranking public health official.

As a Vietnamese American raised to revere the elderly, Chau does have some concerns about the isolation of Asian seniors, wondering if they have regular access to the latest science or medical news in their native language. A recent campaign launched by immigrant health professionals tried to fill that gap.

He feels there's still "misinformation in this same community."

"I continue to see businesses not posting mandatory prevention guidelines," he added, "and I constantly worry that everyone isn't as aware as they need to be."

As of Sept. 1, the number of COVID-19 cases among Asian Americans in the four cities that compose Little Saigon was much lower than that of other ethnic groups, according to data from the Orange County Health Care Agency.

The reasons why aren't entirely clear. Health data and numerous studies have repeatedly shown that Latinos and Black people have been heavily hammered by the virus. Among the factors often cited to explain this discrepancy are subpar medical care, high rates of underlying health issues such as obesity and diabetes, and a greater risk of exposure to the virus by workers in service industries, whose ranks are disproportionately filled by Black and Latino people.

Little Saigon has suffered lower infection rates than its share of the population might indicate. The county does not keep statistics specific to the business and cultural district. But in Westminster, for example, with a population of about 91,000 — and where Little Saigon was founded — 940 total cases of coronavirus had been recorded as of Sept. 1. Even though nearly 50% of the city's residents are Asians, according to the census — primarily Viet-



Allen J. Schaben | Staff Photographer

**DR. QUYNH KIEU**, left, founder and president of Project Vietnam Foundation, receives masks from Vivian Cao, a representative of state Sen. Ling Ling Chang (R-Diamond Bar). "They're consciously avoiding risks," Kieu said about Vietnamese families.

namese — Asians accounted for only 141 of those cases, or about 15%.

Little Saigon's response to the virus has fostered civic pride, mingled with caution.

Ted Nguyen, a public relations executive from Laguna Niguel, said there's a "quiet compliance" in the community. "We're following rules based on science and facts. Obviously, it's a fluid situation, but evidence shows us that many Asian countries are able to better fight this virus by weighing the collective good and putting aside personal feelings."

"One reason our community is ahead is that we listen to the experts. The Vietnamese have a deep respect for people in the medical profession," said Michael Vo, mayor pro tem of Fountain Valley, who has helped deliver donations of personal protective equipment to area hospitals. "We put our faith in them and many go to the same doctors through generations."

Vo offers a comparison. "The mentality of the mainstream public, there's some faction of the population thinks the coronavirus is a hoax," he said. "The mentality of the Vietnamese is, 'I should do this to protect myself and my family.'"

Quan Dinh, an economist from Garden Grove, said that what he calls the "disciplined" Vietnamese character helps explain the community's relative success in battling the virus.

"When you're told to stay home for the lockdown, you really stay home, only to go out for groceries," he said.

Moreover, Dinh said, Little Saigon residents "avoid high-traffic areas" such as bars and entertainment spots.

"And third, they get personalized attention when it comes to encouraging them to get tested. People say, 'Bring your wife. Bring your children. Make it a family priority.' As a community, we focus on the collective — not individual needs."

Viviane Nguyen, a high school freshman from Westminster, said that fear of contracting the virus was "so real" that she had virtually stopped pursuing outside pastimes. Her father, a facilities manager, participated in recent testing at a Lutheran church near their home, getting a negative result.

She remains fearful that he's at risk since he has to interact with the public in his job. "When he comes home, right away he is sprayed thoroughly with an alcohol mist" recommended by a family member who is a doctor. "He can't eat until he showers. I wish he didn't even have to work."

Viviane herself keeps "to a bubble."

"I stopped going to the mall, stopped swimming," Viviane said, and she has gone walking only once during the summer

months. "It's weird to watch all these people fighting health rules and refusing to wear masks," she said. "It's pretty stupid that people can't listen to simple directions."

Partly for some of the same cultural reasons that Little Saigon has been spared the devastation afflicting other communities, so has the Vietnamese homeland — at least so far.

Through mid-July, the nation of 100 million hadn't recorded a single coronavirus-related death. It boasted one of the world's most successful quarantining and contact-tracing systems.

But at the end of that month, a sudden outbreak, centered in Da Nang, caught Vietnam, as well as many health experts, by surprise.

Still, as of mid-September, Vietnam's total number of cases is only about 1,100, with 35 deaths, a far lower total and per-capita average than that of the United States.

On the July day that authorities in Da Nang ordered outsiders to leave the bustling port city in central Vietnam, Minh Tran logged onto the internet to check the global status of coronavirus infections.

He clicked on Australia, China, France, Singapore and the United States, stopping in shock at the huge numbers of cases in California, where some of his friends and cousins live, in central Orange County.

"I thought, 'Oh my God, what's happening over there? Why are they fighting not to have to wear masks?'" said the 29-year-old salesman. "I couldn't believe it then and can't believe it now. All the people I know are following the requirement. Hardly any of them are sick."

Tran has kept closer tabs of deaths across Southern California since Vietnam's government began evacuating 80,000 tourists on July 27 from his hometown. He questioned why knowledge gained from medical advances in the Western world hadn't driven home the risks of COVID-19 — and awareness of how to protect oneself more effectively.

"We all think that living in America must have so much advantage. But what we see is citizens claiming freedom to do just what they want, going to parties, going to the beach, not covering up and risking infection to their fellow citizens," he added. "If you asked me what country would top the list of coronavirus cases, I would never have predicted USA."

Hai Tran, his cousin in Garden Grove, said he had tried to comply "every day to help my loved ones stay breathing and stay out of the hospital." The auto repair worker says he uses masks purchased in Asia that are sold by some of his friends and tout a more reliable filter.

Since many California

counties entered the first lockdown in March, he has not gone anywhere except to the car shop for work. His family combines three generations into one household, with his father exiting the front door just once a day for a nightly walk.

"No way would I put them in harm's way," Tran added. "It's OK — we can pause our lives, skip the seven-course beef restaurants and stay home and watch HBO. We're betting to have a vaccine" to counter the virus and, "if I'm lucky, live as long to meet my grandchildren."

To stay as healthy as possible going forward, Little Saigon will continue to rely on the testing program initiated by Kieu, the Fountain Valley pediatrician.

Kieu received serology testing kits from colleague Dr. Michael Dao, an internist at Dao Medical Group in Garden Grove, who bought them from one of the largest biotech firms in South Korea and donated thousands to area groups.

Kieu and her team of 50-plus volunteers recruited nail salon workers, the elderly, members of the media and others to take the blood tests "to find out if our community has immunity," she recalled. Fewer than 0.5% of test results were positive. Those testing positive were sent to their medical providers for a follow-up swab test to confirm results and, if needed, begin treatment.

Quyen Le, Project Vietnam Foundation's director of public health programs, said the group will participate in a behavioral study with UC Irvine's School of Public Health to monitor all those who were tested on their progress six months after the pandemic started.

"I was fully prepared for a really bad outcome in the community," Le said. "I know statistically that if you are a community of color, given the high rates of poverty, you're less likely to be insured and you're more likely to be hit by a raging disease."

But the Vietnamese community has shown that needn't be the case. And although Little Saigon is an outlier, she's hopeful it could become a model for others.

"What I'm optimistic about is our efforts to tailor outreach and testing to a specific group," she said. "Our current healthcare system is very much a one size fits all, and that needs to change."

**ANH DO** is a staff writer with the Los Angeles Times.

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## MAILBAG

Continued from page A4

Central Park West that is garish, unsafe, will be expensive to maintain and is a massive expenditure when every other city, county and state are bemoaning the loss of income because of the coronavirus.

Yet somehow the council feels that \$1.2 million is a reasonable fee for a playground for kids ages 5 to 12. Councilwoman Kim Carr says the facility will bring in people from cities all across Orange County to a park that is already overcrowded on weekends.

Furthermore, Central Park West has a disc golf course, the Shipley Nature Center, the massive Senior Center, Breakfast in the Park and three playgrounds. This park is home to nesting birds and it is a migration stop. It is beautiful with its many trees, the lake and the paths that wind their way through the different areas. Why is it necessary to add in a brightly colored eyesore to attract more people to a park that is set aside to walk, run, picnic and connect with nature in a beautiful natural area?

Looking at the presentation made to the Community Services Commission on Aug. 12, it is impossible to determine exactly how large the new play area will be, nor is there any indication of its location. But based on the flyover video the company generated it will be enormous and will require the removal of 20 or more mature trees in the area. The playground looks high maintenance. The city has been unable to maintain existing structures. Why build an eyesore that will very quickly become rundown?

If you must build this playground find an area that is open, underutilized and uncrowded. Huntington Beach Central Park West is fine and very popular just as it is.

**Cathy Thomson,  
Matt Thomson**

## TIER

Continued from page A1

daily cases per 100,000 residents and a testing positivity rate of 3.1%. Those numbers include a seven-day lag.

Here are the latest cumulative coronavirus case counts and COVID-19 deaths for select cities in Orange County:

- Santa Ana: 10,231 cases; 274 deaths
- Anaheim: 9,090 cases; 263 deaths
- Huntington Beach: 2,387 cases; 71 deaths
- Costa Mesa: 1,799 cases; 30 deaths
- Irvine: 1,666 cases; 12 deaths
- Newport Beach: 1,118 cases; 25 deaths
- Fountain Valley: 507 cases; 16 deaths
- Laguna Beach: 224 cases; fewer than five deaths

Here are the case counts by age group, followed by deaths:

- 0 to 17: 3,744 cases; one death
- 18 to 24: 7,994 cases; four deaths
- 25 to 34: 11,449 cases; 18 deaths
- 35 to 44: 8,493 cases; 33 deaths
- 45 to 54: 8,566 cases; 105 deaths
- 55 to 64: 6,367 cases; 175 deaths
- 65 to 74: 3,175 cases; 246 deaths
- 75 to 84: 1,798 cases; 256 deaths
- 85 and older: 1,435 cases; 376 deaths

Updated figures are posted daily at [occovid19.ochealthinfo.com/coronavirus-in-oc](http://occovid19.ochealthinfo.com/coronavirus-in-oc). For information on getting tested, visit [occovid19.ochealthinfo.com/covid-19-testing](http://occovid19.ochealthinfo.com/covid-19-testing).

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Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

**WORKERS FROM** 360 Clinic collect information during a COVID-19 self-administering drive-through testing site on Aug. 26 at the Orange County fairgrounds in Costa Mesa.

## FLU

Continued from page A1

been experienced during the peak of flu season.

There has been much debate about the time-frame and manner of reopening schools. Abelowitz said he believes that if significant steps to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus are in place like social distancing, wearing masks and screening, it is beneficial for students to be in school. He acknowledged that there may be more risk factors for teachers and family members.

“With what we know about COVID right now, for the kids themselves, it’s beneficial to go back to school because distance learning away from school, all those associated factors, the detriments of that [to] mental health, developmental health [and] social health outweigh their own personal risk regarding COVID,” Abelowitz said.

While Coastal Kids continued to treat patients inside of its practices, some services have been offered



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

**ZACH MURILLO, 11,** gets a flu shot from Kristen Goode as his mother Allison looks on.

outside due to the pandemic, limiting the number of patients indoors and providing a more comfortable environment to others.

“Of course, because of COVID, we were forced to do [some of] our well visits and our sick visits [outside], as we try to minimize

the number of patients in the clinic,” McEnery said. “We were able to do the drive-up visits for those patients that would prefer to get their visits outside.”

For anyone showing COVID-19 symptoms, Coastal Kids would insist that a visit be done as a drive-up visit so as not to

put the staff and other patients at risk, Abelowitz added.

Healthcare experts and public officials in the county are presenting a united front as it relates to the coming flu season, urging the public to spare themselves the trouble of having to worry about two

viruses at once.

The Orange County Health Care Agency has launched a flu shot campaign called, “Don’t worry about the flu, too.”

Beginning Monday, the healthcare agency will be providing free flu shots by appointment only on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at its own flu clinic (1725 W. 17th Street, Santa Ana). To make an appointment, call 1-800-914-4887.

“Even if you never get a flu shot, it’s absolutely vital that you take this important step to make sure we don’t overburden our health system,” Orange County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Michelle Steel said in a release put out by the county healthcare agency on Sept. 17.

“It is essential that we all take the necessary precautions to avoid an outbreak of the flu as we continue to face the COVID-19 pandemic. Orange County wants to make sure every community has easy access to get a flu shot.”

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Susan Samuelli  
Integrative Health Institute

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Photos by Raul Roa | Staff Photographer

**THE SAWDUST FESTIVAL** reopened in Laguna Beach on Sept. 19. Vendors have artwork, photos, paintings, ceramics, glass, garments, jewelry and a variety of other items for sale. With a capacity of 250 people at a time, the outdoor marketplace is implementing safeguards by requiring face masks and social distancing, along with providing hand sanitizing stations.

# Sawdust festival open for business

**T**he Sawdust Art Festival in Laguna Beach has reopened.

The outdoor marketplace features artwork, photos, paintings, ceramics, glass, garments, jewelry and a variety of other items for sale. The festival is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, visitors are required to wear face masks and social distance, and there's a maximum capacity of 250 people.

Admission is \$10 for adults and kids 12 and under are free. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit [sawdustfestival.org](http://sawdustfestival.org).

— Raul Roa



**PAINTER AND ARTIST** Kate Cleaves stands at her booth with hand-painted leather earrings at the Sawdust Festival in Laguna Beach.



**PAINTER TATYANA ZEN**, left, talks to customers at the Sawdust Festival on opening day in Laguna Beach.



**GLASSBLOWER** Mary Ann Guerra greets customers at the festival.



**TWO VISITORS** look at paintings during opening day of the festival.

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