

Daily Pilot & Times OC

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Photos by Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

ACTIVIST SYLVIA MENDEZ, center, and her younger sister, Sandra Duran, standing beside her, celebrate the statue unveiling of Mendez's parents, Felicitas and Gonzalo, at the grand-opening ceremony of Mendez Tribute Monument Park in Westminster.

A new park celebrates a historic civil rights case

BY ANDREW TURNER

WESTMINSTER — Long after her parents fought for an equal opportunity for their children in the school system, Sylvia Mendez gazed upon the gathering before her, filled with pride as she watched a new generation engage in educational activities.

The scene occurred at the grand opening of Mendez Tribute Monument Park in Westminster, where city officials and educational leaders were among a large turnout for the ceremony on Thursday. An effort that got underway in 2017, the park now commemorates the Mendez, et al v. Westminster School District of Orange County, et al case.

The 1947 case, which saw five Mexican American families challenge school segregation, will no longer be a footnote in the history books. City Manager Christine Cordon said. Speakers contended that it was a precursor to the landmark Supreme Court decision.



ACTIVIST SYLVIA MENDEZ, center, and artist Ignacio Gomez, second from left, attend a grand-opening ceremony of Mendez Tribute Monument Park on Thursday in Westminster.

See **Park**, page A2

See **Shop**, page A8

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UCI Health

A WORKOUT facility is part of the Orange County Probation Department's addition to Juvenile Hall.



Scott Smeltzer

Orange County Juvenile Hall tries new approach with gym, auto shop

BY ERIC LICAS

Barbed-wire-lined fencing is what used to greet those visiting youth committed at Orange County Juvenile Hall. Parents would have to line up by a nondescript door in the corner of an open-air plaza just south of UCI Medical Center in Orange

and check in at three different desks in order to see their children.

The last of those desks was inside the correction facility's visiting center, a bungalow with a faded beige exterior that had been in service for over 30 years,

See **Approach**, page A2

Toast Kitchen & Bakery breaks bread

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

TUSTIN — The pie case at Toast Kitchen & Bakery's new location in Tustin is filled with freshly baked pies in aluminum tins. The pies are small and deep, full of flavor and representative of the concept's start. While the pies are not the only delicious treat to be had at the breakfast, lunch and dinner spot, they are what brought business partners chef John Park and Wahoo's Fish Taco co-founder Ed Lee together.

"He was doing a pop-up at another restaurant, and that was how we met," said Lee of Park. "He was making pies and selling pies out of his house."

The two began talking about working together and Lee said he was intrigued by Park's desire to open a food business that wasn't about profit but about serving the community.

"He wanted to make a million dollars to give away," said Lee. "I had a different concept in mind, but John said he wanted to do



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

UBE FRENCH TOAST, pictured at the Toast Kitchen & Bakery in Tustin on Wednesday, Nov. 30, is among the innovative offerings at the eatery.

breakfast, lunch and dinner. I thought I was going to do pies with him."

The first Toast location opened in Costa Mesa in 2018 with an

innovative menu and a commitment to charity. The restaurant donated 10% of proceeds to a

See **Toast**, page A6

Dana Point makes merry at the marina

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

The launch of "Holidays at the Harbor" in Dana Point, which includes the 47th annual Boat Parade of Lights, is making the marina merrier this holiday season.

"Dana Point Harbor Partners is thrilled to bring an array of festive events to the Harbor this year," said Bryon Ward, president of Burnham Ward Properties, which oversees the harbor's commercial core activities.

Dana Point Harbor Partners is a partnership with Orange County that combines Burnham Ward Properties, Bellwether Financial Group, which guides marina operations, and R.D. Olson Development, which leads the hotel redevelopment of the harbor.

Along with the boat parade on Dec. 9, 10 and 11, visitors can enjoy themed light displays throughout the harbor, photos with Santa and a special Santa Paws event with proceeds supporting the Pet Project Foundation.

More than 700,000 LED lights twinkle in the harbor's themed light displays that include a giant whale sculpture, lighted palm trees, beach-ball-like ornaments and the popular "Merry Kiss Me" arch leading down a giant candy-cane-lined lane. Dana Point Harbor Partners has also partnered with the Chabad Jewish Center of Dana Point to present a 12-foot Menorah in the Harbor for the duration of Hanukkah from Dec. 18 to 26.

"Dana Point Harbor Partners'

aim is to bring the community a festive season by adding new lighting elements and installations to the Harbor for locals and visitors to enjoy each year," said Ward. "This year guests can enjoy the larger-than-life ornaments along with other 'Instagram-worthy' installations."

If visitors do snap any 'Instagram-worthy' pics, they are invited to tag @danapoint_harbor on Instagram and use the hashtag #HolidaysattheHarbor to be entered in the Dana Point Harbor's "Holidays at the Harbor" social media contest, running now through Dec. 22. At the end of the campaign, one winner will be randomly chosen for a special Dana Point Harbor package.

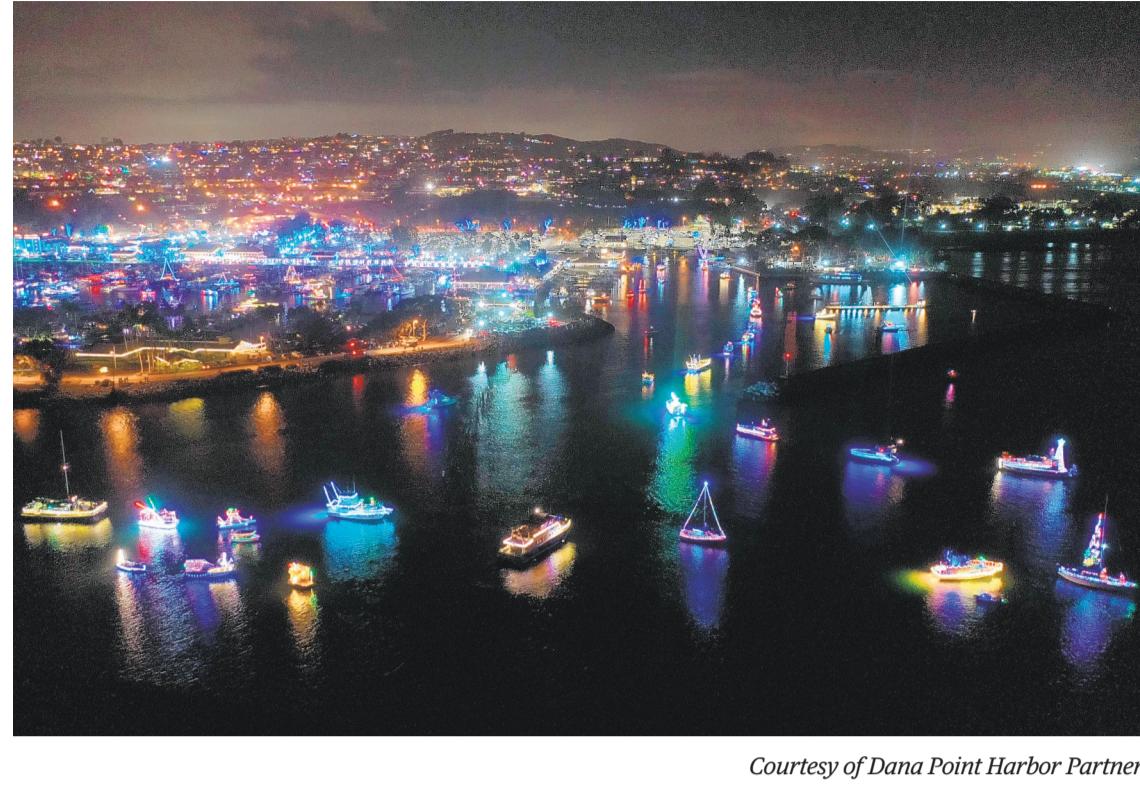
On the weekend of Dec. 9, the 47th annual Boat Parade of Lights takes to the seas with a "Surfin' USA" theme.

"The theme for this year's annual Boat Parade of Lights pays homage to all of the water-centric activities that are a part of the harbor's culture, including paddle boarding, surfing, sailing, boating, dolphin and whale-watching," said Ward.

Vessels of all kinds will be decorated in the theme for the chance to win up to \$10,000 in prizes for categories like Best Use of Theme, People's Choice, Supervisor's Cup and Mayor's Cup.

The parade will begin at 7 p.m. on Dec. 9 and at 6 p.m. on Dec. 10 and 11.

Santa Claus will visit the harbor on Dec. 10 from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. in front of a holiday-themed



Courtesy of Dana Point Harbor Partners

THE 47TH ANNUAL Boat Parade of Lights will take place Dec. 9 through 11 in Dana Point Harbor. The event's theme will be "Surfin' USA."

photo op created by Style My Holiday in Clock Courtyard. Visitors can book professional photos for that day, but the themed photo op will remain up throughout December.

Festivities will return to Clock Courtyard on Dec. 17 and 18 when Pet Project Foundation will host the 10th annual Santa Paws from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Pet photos will be offered for a small donation

with all proceeds supporting the Pet Project Foundation, a rescue partner and San Clemente-Dana Point Animal Shelter.

"Holidays at the Harbor" has been drawing visitors and locals for years, and Ward said Dana Point Harbor Partners hopes to continue the tradition for years to come.

"Holidays at the Harbor" is a signature event that truly cap-

tures the essence of the Dana Point community and will remain an annual tradition for all to enjoy," said Ward. "We love seeing families come back to visit year after year to take their family photos and enjoy the parade and light displays, as many of them did when they were younger."

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PARK

Continued from page A1

sion in Brown v. Board of Education that ruled separate but equal educational facilities to be unconstitutional in 1954.

"Just take a moment to think of the significance of what we are celebrating today," Jeff Hittenberger, an education professor at Vanguard University and former chief academic officer of the Orange County Department of Education, said. "Seventy-five years ago, three American children were turned away from an American school because of their ethnicity."

"That was challenged by their families, who believed in the American dream and believed in the American principles. They stood up for our principles and made us a better community and a better nation."

Hittenberger concluded his remarks by calling on visitors to the park to be the stewards of history going forward.

A grateful Sylvia Mendez, 86, called it "a big honor" to see the project completed, before turning her atten-



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

ACTIVIST SYLVIA MENDEZ waves at visitors at the grand-opening ceremony for the Mendez Tribute Monument Park. The space honors a landmark court case that led to the desegregation of schools in California.

tion to the future.

"Yes, the case led to the desegregation of public schools in California," Mendez said. "And yes, we are truly very happy, but today, we must continue with [the] legacy of education for everyone. And today, I am so proud that today, I have students here from a college and from a grammar school."

Mendez then looked into the crowd for the schoolchildren, finding them as-

sembled along a wall to the east, where an assortment of interpretive panels shared literature regarding her family's case that occurred nearly 80 years earlier.

The park, located at 7371 Westminster Blvd., is now home to two statues created by sculptor Ignacio Gomez, whose work has been featured in the Smithsonian American Art Museum. The Mendez family and dignitaries first un-

veiled a statue of parents Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez, who fought for the right of their three children to attend 17th Street School, which had been designated for white children, instead of Hoover Elementary, known at the time as the "Mexican school."

Gomez spoke to his intention to reflect the significance of the civil rights case by portraying the parents as larger-than-life figures.

"As the American flags in front of all the schools in the nation are raised, we have to thank Mr. and Mrs. Mendez for their courage and what they accomplished to do away with desegregation in California and beyond," Gomez said. "Mr. and Mrs. Mendez are bigger than life. The statues are monumental because what they accomplished in the history of the United States for the children is monumental."

Attendees then transitioned over to the entrance of the park to see the second statue, which depicts two children walking to school with books in hand, symbolizing the 5,000 children represented in the case. "We the People," the

famous first words of the U.S. Constitution, are prominently displayed at the feet of those who approach it. The inscription at the base of the statue reads "1947: Toward equality in our schools."

The educational content around the grounds has been made accessible in the English, Spanish and Vietnamese languages through the use of QR codes. The Orange County Department of Education worked with the city and the Mendez family to produce the material. The park also includes augmented reality features.

Sergio Contreras, a former member of the Westminster City Council who was a strong advocate for recognizing the case in his time on the panel, said the park will be an inspiration in a quest for a "truly merit-based society."

"By creating this memorial, we remember the successes of our past, and hopefully, we can inspire the successes of our future," Contreras said. "To every student, young and old, who visits this beautiful place, may you learn from Gonzalo Mendez's family

story, that ordinary people can do extraordinary things, and be inspired that you can, too."

The park also features a giant book monument, which Assistant City Manager Adolfo Ozaeta said weighs 4,000 pounds. It

provides an introduction to the influential civil rights case and makes mention of the five families involved in the suit: Mendez, Guzman, Palomino, Estrada and Ramirez.

Construction of the park began in 2020, backed by \$1.5 million from California State Parks and private donations.

A resolution approved by the city in 2017 promised to honor the Mendez v. Westminster case. In addition to the park, the city also plans to have a Mendez Freedom Trail.

"I really want to thank the Mendez family, who fought for educational opportunities for our future generations," Mayor Tri Ta said. "The Mendez family is not only the legacy of the city of Westminster but also [the] legacy of the country."

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APPROACH

Continued from page A1

despite being intended for temporary use. Scuffs and scrapes dot its inner walls, which have been repeatedly resurfaced and repainted, often by the teens living in Juvenile Hall.

The worn-out appearance of the old visiting center compounded the stigma felt by many families of youth housed at the correctional facility. About 100 teens and young men and women live there, including some convicted of crimes as serious as murder.

"For parents, it can feel like such a shameful thing to have to go visit here," Deputy Correctional Officer Colleen Byrne said.

Inside the bungalow was a low-panel ceiling and no windows or any space for the siblings of incarcerated youth to wait during visits. That made it even more difficult for parents to see

their committed children, especially those who could not afford to pay for a babysitter.

But now they won't have to choose between visiting youth held at the facility or staying home to watch their brothers and sisters following the completion of the Multipurpose Rehabilitation Center in November. The multimillion-dollar addition to the Orange County Juvenile Hall was paid for with county and state funding and features a larger, brand-new visiting area that shares a large glass wall with a playroom filled with toys and video games.

That will allow parents to keep an eye on their other children while meeting with those who are locked up. And a new check-in area with seats and lockers means they shouldn't have to stand outside in line while waiting for their turn to go into the visiting room.

"I think it instills a sense of security and comfort for

parents to know that their kids are in good hands," supervising correctional officer Erick Bieger said. "Because it's still not an ideal

situation, but pulling up to something that's new and clean, and you can see your kid in an environment with working lights instead of a

trailer, you're going to feel better when you go home. It's still not great, but you're not going to go home thinking 'What's happening

to my kid?'

The new Multipurpose Rehabilitation Center also features meeting rooms that can be used to host classes and gatherings. It has a garage equipped with a vehicle lift that will allow staff to teach entry-level auto shop inside Juvenile Hall.

Deputy Correctional Officer German Zarate teaches the newly formed automotive program at the facility. He learned how to work on cars from his father and grew up in his auto repair business, sparking a passion that stayed with him into adulthood.

"It's just amazing that I get to share those skills that were handed down to me with these kids now," Zarate said. "Because at the end of the day, we want to see them get hired once they get out of here."

Before Zarate was tapped to become the facility's auto shop instructor, he



ORANGE COUNTY PROBATION staff show off an activity room in the Multipurpose Rehabilitation Center at Orange County Juvenile Hall.

Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

situation, but pulling up to something that's new and clean, and you can see your kid in an environment with working lights instead of a

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COLUMN | PATRICE APODACA

We need to find solutions to the student debt crisis

I was raised in a family that held sacred the value of education. My parents, the first in their families to earn college degrees, believed deeply in the intrinsic worthiness of higher education and saw college as the surest means of achieving personal and professional fulfillment.

So there was never any doubt that my three older siblings and I were expected to attend college. What we chose to do with that education was up to us, but we were going, and that was that. I will be forever grateful for my parents' adamancy.

Back then, UCLA was the university of choice for us. It had an excellent academic reputation, and as a state school it was affordable for a family of modest means. We didn't have to mortgage our futures to achieve our scholarly goals.

What a different world it was then: Before the cost of a college education began running laps around the overall inflation rate and increases in incomes. Before state support for higher education, particularly in California, shrank to a small proportion of previous levels, leading to a sharp escalation in tuition and fees paid by students.

Before student loans were marketed with the kind of scruples associated with used car lots.

And long before the accumulated debt from those loans reached a



Seth Wenig | Associated Press

THE EXPENSE for those who borrow money to pay for college remains a major issue even after President Joe Biden's move to forgive some student loan debt.

crushing \$1.75 trillion and counting.

That amounts to an average of \$28,950 per borrower. Today, more than half of students leave college with some debt. And in case you're wondering, students from public four-year institutions are just as likely to carry student loan debt as those from pricier private schools. Aside from mortgage debt, student loans account for the largest share of debt held by U.S. consumers.

This is a huge problem that, until recently, we've managed to ignore. Even now that it has reached what we deem to be a crisis and we're finally paying attention, solutions remain elusive. President Biden's plan to forgive some student loan debt

remains stalled; more comprehensive reform is barely discussed.

If you think that this disastrous situation doesn't effect you because you aren't one of the 48 million Americans that hold student loan debt, think again. There are many reasons that we should all treat this situation with great seriousness and urgency.

The economy is a big one.

Consumer spending drives the U.S. economy. When consumers have fewer discretionary dollars to spend because they're mired in debt, that becomes a drag on economic growth. Student loan debt makes it harder to own a house or start a business, or even, for some distressed borrowers, to buy

smaller ticket items. Like Christmas gifts.

Evidence of this emerged during the pandemic. Economists estimate that consumer spending received a significant boost in 2021 due to a moratorium on student loan payments.

That repayment pause is now set to expire at year's end, after which the outlook is ominous. Economists are warning that the nation's student loan debt burden is as dangerous as the housing bubble that led to the Great Recession.

There are more reasons to care about this issue, including that a large share of the debt is held by people who never graduated. That means they owe money without the benefit

See **Debt**, page A10

MAILBAG



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

MEGHAN HANEY, a police officer with the Huntington Beach Police Department, was awarded the medal of lifesaving by the department for her effort in talking a suicidal person out of killing herself.

Honor for Haney's heroism well-deserved

Thanks for the pride-inducing article on Huntington Beach Police Officer Meghan Haney (Daily Pilot, Nov. 19) and her lifesaving conversation with a woman about to end her life by plunging off a two-story building on Beach Boulevard. It may have been 4 o'clock in the morning, but Officer Haney's compassion and alertness were not dimmed by the predawn darkness nor by the dire circumstances of a potential suicide. Congratulations to Officer Haney and her lifesaving accomplishment. We residents of Huntington Beach are blessed to have such public servants on duty 24/7.

Ben Miles
Huntington Beach

REASONS TO WORRY AND CELEBRATE

I am flattered to have "shared the stage" in the Nov. 19 Daily Pilot Mailbag

page with esteemed local writers Tim Geddes, Ben Miles and Mike Aguilar who share the same concerns about Huntington Beach's new City Council that I have about Newport Beach's newly elected council. The similarities are their political positions on the right of the political spectrum and their obeisance to big money donors (often developers) rather than to grassroots democracy.

It sounds like the difference between the two councils is as all three writers point out, that in Huntington Beach the four newly elected council members relied on rhetoric to win their races a la Trump and Tito Ortiz rather than tackling current problems such as homelessness, high-density development, affordable

See **Honor**, page A10

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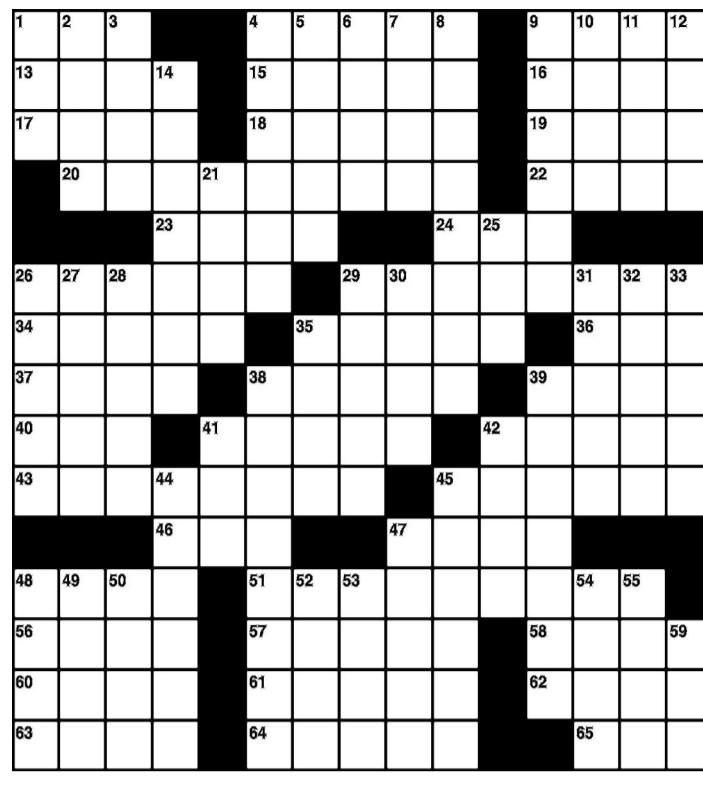


THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Jacqueline E. Mathews

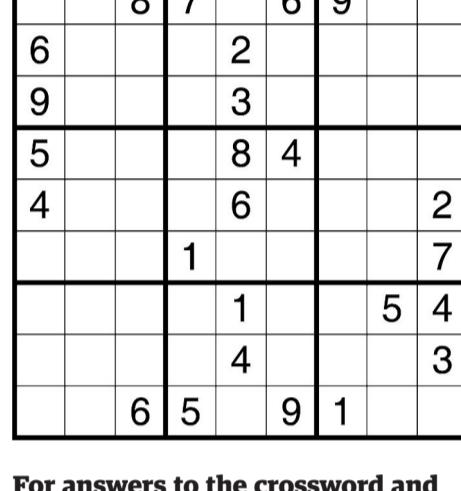
ACROSS

1 Boo-hoo
4 No longer a minor
9 Bathtub ring, e.g.
13 "Beware the ___ of March"
15 Punctuation mark
16 Cross one's fingers
17 Actress Amanda
18 "rooms ___ fifty cents" ("King of the Road")
19 Mob scene
20 Middle weight
22 Holiday ___; stopovers
23 Wheel tracks
24 ___ Tin Tin; TV dog
26 Bits of holly
29 Most smooth-talking
34 Prom-goers
35 Bell's invention
36 ___ McClanahan
37 Pealed out
38 Pitchfork part
39 Dad
40 False front
41 Seacoast
42 High-powered beam
43 Most annoying
45 Water-usage trackers
46 Girl's name ending
47 Do one's civic duty
48 Pierce
51 Proof of purchase
56 ___ Alto, CA
57 Savvy
58 Batch of laundry
60 Many hardware stores
61 Governess
62 Crooked
63 Have a snack
64 Little ones
65 Feasted on

DOWN**SUDOKU**

By The Mepham 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 A10.

1 Use a straw
2 Anthology entries
3 Answering machine sound
4 Groups of eight
5 ___ the bill; pays for a group
6 ___ want for
Christmas is my two"
7 Ending for party or movie
8 Going into
9 Become smaller
10 Bit of change
11 Feel put-___; sulk
12 New York team

14 Rubberneck's activity

21 Floor coverings
25 Cocktail cubes
26 Thin leather strip
27 Tranquility
28 Landlord's collections
29 ___-lived; brief
30 "The ___ Star State"
31 Clear the board
32 "Terrific!"
33 Sad drops
35 ___ and cons
38 Game bird
39 Kneecap
41 Moral transgression
42 "Why don't we!"
44 Put the ___ on; veto
45 Saunders
47 Novelist Jules
48 Stretch across
49 Mexican lunch
50 Stein drinks
52 Take ___; subtract
53 Too skinny
54 Davenport's state
55 Go separate ways
59 Hair coloring

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JAN 20**LEIF OVE ANDSNE, PIANO**

8PM | RENÉE AND HENRY SEGERSTROM CONCERT HALL

Named by *Wall Street Journal* as "one of the most gifted musicians of his generation," celebrated pianist Leif Ove Andsnes showcases his commanding technique in a recital program of Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 31, Janáček's "From the Street" Sonata, and works by Dvořák, Silvestrov, and Vustin. Tickets start at \$23.

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8PM | IRVINE BARCLAY THEATRE

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Asian American artists resurface in new exhibit

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

"Yellow Submarine" was penned by Paul McCartney and John Lennon as a children's song, and art historian and former Vietnamese American Arts and Letters Assn. board member Thuy N. D. Tran interprets the Beatles standard as a song of togetherness recognized by multiple generations.

"I learned it in elementary school, my 6-year-old son learned it too," said Tran. "I know that it is a song that is still applicable and is still relevant. When I was learning it, the way my son was learning it, it was about togetherness and unity and bringing people to the realization that we all live in this together."

However, during the pandemic, Tran said that rather than feeling a sense of togetherness, many minority groups, particularly the Asian American community, felt more isolated than ever. In 2021 the O.C. Human Relations Commission reported a 43% increase of anti-Asian/Pacific Islander hate crimes and a 164% increase in anti-Asian/Pacific Islander hate incidents from 2020 to 2021.

On Saturday, the Vietnamese American Arts and Letters Assn. will open "Yellow Submarine Rising: Currents Within Asian American Art" at the Orange County Center for Contemporary Art in conjunction with the Downtown Santa Ana Art Walk. The multidisciplinary art exhibition is inspired by the #StopAsianHate movement and the resiliency of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans.

Tran borrowed the song as messaging for the title



HAND-PAINTED banners of family by Victo Ngai at "Yellow Submarine Rising: Currents Within Asian American Art."

of the show for which she served as guest curator.

"I had to put 'rising' because it is an active submarine," said Tran. "We are rising out of this, and we can only do it if we rise together."

The Vietnamese American Arts and Letters Assn. was founded in 1991 by Vietnamese American journalists, artists and members of the community to make space for artists to express themselves as a newly resettled immigrant community. "Yellow Submarine Rising" is the last project of the yearlong celebration of the organization's 30th anniversary.

The opening-night reception will feature poetry and spoken-word performances by Asian American artists. On Dec. 10, a children's book reading will take place from 1 to 3 p.m. and include family-friendly crafts. The show closes on Dec. 17 with a special appearance by renowned photographer and artist Binh Danh.

The exhibition showcases the work of Danh, along with other contemporary artists like Anto-

nus-Tin Bui, Alison Ho, Bonnie Huang, Alina Kawai, Victo Ngai and Jave Yoshimoto. The space is divided into sections by themes laid out in a circle so that no matter which direction visitors start viewing the show, they will always end up at the same place.

The show begins with "transference and futures," where Tran said the focus is what to share with future generations. It is in this space that we see prints of "Wishes," a children's book about the immigrant experience by Muon Thi Van, illustrated by Victo Ngai.

"When you stand back from afar, you see this common element of waves," Tran said of the prints from the book, "and that is purposeful. It is the continuation of a history."

The second theme is "belonging _home."

"The reason why that underscore is important is because without that sense of belonging that underscores home, you won't feel it. You have to feel accepted," said Tran.

In this space, the abstract visual art of Alina



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

CURATOR THUY TRAN stands at the "Yellow Submarine Rising: Currents Within Asian American Art" show marquee piece at the Orange County Center for Contemporary Art.

Kawai is featured.

"She is of Japanese descent, she is Japanese American, and her exploration here is her way of connecting to her traditional past out of fear of losing it," said Tran.

Acrylic on canvas depicts simplified images of sakura blossoms and false strawberries, a type of weed that grows in Japan.

The section dedicated to the theme of "cultural legacies" includes work from Vietnamese American artist Antonius-Tin Bui, who uses the traditional technique of paper cutting.

"This is a nod back to a traditional method of creating paper cuts, which started in Chinese art but is shared in the East Asian region," said Tran. "Usually they put them up on the wall during New Year."

Traditional imagery and symbolism is the background for aggressively modern text in these hand- and laser-cut color paper decals that Bui describes as a response to the shared AAPI experience of intergenerational trauma and also a challenge to the stereotypical portrayal of AAPIs as silent, apolitical and submissive.

"Even though the paper medium is such a fragile thing, the message is serious and strong," said Tran. The final theme is "elevating empowerment." While the show as a whole simultaneously retaliates against hatred toward the Asian American community while also celebrating its cultures and traditions, it is a sentiment best represented in Alison Ho's Mylar balloon letter installation in this section.

Bright pink-letter balloons spell out "Rock the Boat," something Ho said conformists and sycophants advise against. Balloons signify celebration, but the words are also a call to action. Tran said combating racism requires both.

"So often we are told not to rock the boat, especially if you are in a work environment. But we have to rock the boat sometimes in order to make progress, in order to make change,"

said Tran. "This is in Mylar balloon form because we also celebrate those moments when we do rock the boat. It is about a call to action as much as it about a celebration of making a difference."

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APPROACH

Continued from page A2

would frequently work on projects with committed youth to teach them carpentry and other skills. He said learning a trade and working with their hands often helped those held at Juvenile Hall envision a life beyond its walls and the circumstances that led them there.

"It'll be the end of the day, after we've just finished, and a kid will just say 'thank you,'" Zarate said. "I'll ask what for, and they tell me 'I forgot I was locked up today.'"

Aside from facilities to advance committed youths' education and careers, the Multipurpose Rehabilitation Center also has a full-sized gym. It is attached to a weight room, equipped with a variety of sporting equipment and is large enough to host indoor soccer games. Teens also plan to use it to hold a talent show and other events organized by the Juvenile Hall's Youth Council, a group of members from each of the correctional facility's units and elected to



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

GERMAN ZARATE, a deputy juvenile correctional officer, shows off the new auto shop, part of the new Multipurpose Rehabilitation Center at the Orange County Juvenile Hall.

communicate the wants and needs of their peers with staff.

"When my kids walked in here for the first time, it was like being in a candy store: just, like, looking around, completely in awe," Bieger said.

"And they couldn't quite understand that this was

for them. They see the auto shop and they're like 'Wait, what's happening here?' Because they're used to, you know, jail."

The construction of the new multipurpose center exemplifies a broader shift in the way the Orange County Probation Department and other agencies

approach the supervision of minors convicted of crimes, Orange County Probation Division Director Sanford Rose said. Over the years, they have moved away from what had by and large been a punitive model, focusing instead on creating incentives to encourage growth and rehabilita-

tion.

"If you didn't have that culture change then all the buildings in the world wouldn't do anything," Bieger said. "It's not: 'Here's all the things we're going to do to you if you screw up.' Now it's: 'Here's the things we want to give you to help you out.' We'll take those away temporarily until we gain some compliance again if there's an issue, and it's just like having kids at home. We don't spank our kids anymore."

An example of this shift was the end of room confinement at juvenile halls in California beginning in 2018.

Committed youth who received that punishment had been forced to stay locked in their rooms for as long as five days. Orange County Probation stopped practicing it in 2016.

"The state got rid of it, and they were right to get rid of it," Bieger said. "My kids pushed back for about three months. They were like: 'Yeah, we can do anything.' And then they realized we were teaching them a different way to react to negative situations. Now if they fight they can't

go run into their room for five days and not interact with us. Now if they fight they have to sit down at a table, have meditation and share a meal together if they fight each other."

"A lot of us get in the habit of being punitive, here are the consequences, negative, negative, negative," he added. "Well, best-practices evidence shows us that doesn't work. It doesn't bring about change. Investment, incentives, positive reinforcement, these are the things that bring about change."

But fights do still happen at Orange County Juvenile Halls. Details regarding how often were not immediately available.

Elsewhere, in Los Angeles County, numerous staff have been hurt while trying to end fights among committed youth. The Times reports that injuries and safety concerns have driven up the use of sick leave in that department, and that may be contributing to a detrimental environment for youth inside Los Angeles County's facilities.

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HOT CHICKEN and biscuits is among the unique dishes at the Toast Kitchen & Bakery in Tustin.

TOAST

Continued from page A1

rotating slate of causes each month and continues to do so. It also made an effort to hire veterans, recovering addicts, former foster youth and those struggling with homelessness. Diners embraced the partners' approach to breaking bread and bringing everyone to the table. They eventually launched a sister restaurant, Tableau Kitchen and Bar at South Coast Plaza, with a focus on dinner and a designated 12-person "Giving Table" available to reserve each month for a chef-led wine dinner in support of a local organization.

Park and Lee have built a reputation for good food for a good cause, and the new location on Kensington Park Drive has been anxiously anticipated.

"John has a great reputation here in Orange County," said Lee. "We have been busy since the moment we opened."

Toast Tustin has the same style of food diners have come to know and



Photos by Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

PARTNERS Ed Lee and John Park stand inside the Tustin location of Toast Kitchen & Bakery.

love from Toast Costa Mesa.

"As far as the food, we just wanted to bring some comfort food to the neighborhood," said Park, "utilizing my background mainly in L.A. and just being exposed to a lot of different cultures when it comes to different types of cuisines and also having our cooks be really involved in our menu."

Toast's menu features avocado toast alongside Tres Leches French toast with horchata milk sauce,

whipped cream and caramelized rice, and ube French toast with ube pastry cream and mango coconut sauce. The Thai chile chilaquiles are served with pulled pork and smothered in a Thai chile salsa verde with hibiscus pickled onions while the sisig burrito is stuffed with pork belly, chicharron and kalamansi mayo. Many of the unique dishes come from the diverse kitchen staff.

"The initial idea will come from them," said

Park. "The direction will be from me, tweaking things and dialing in the flavor combination."

Besides the good food of their other restaurants, Toast Tustin also brings the goodwill.

"Beyond the food, there is the giving aspect of it," said Park. "We hire veterans and kids that grew up in foster care. That is the bigger part for me."

Some of the employees who worked at the Costa Mesa location in the past are now at the Tustin spot because it is closer to where they live.

"The first thing we did was have a meeting with the Orange County Rescue Mission, which is just right up the street," said Park. "I have a call with them today to maybe have another two veterans work with us. That is something that we absolutely want to keep rolling."

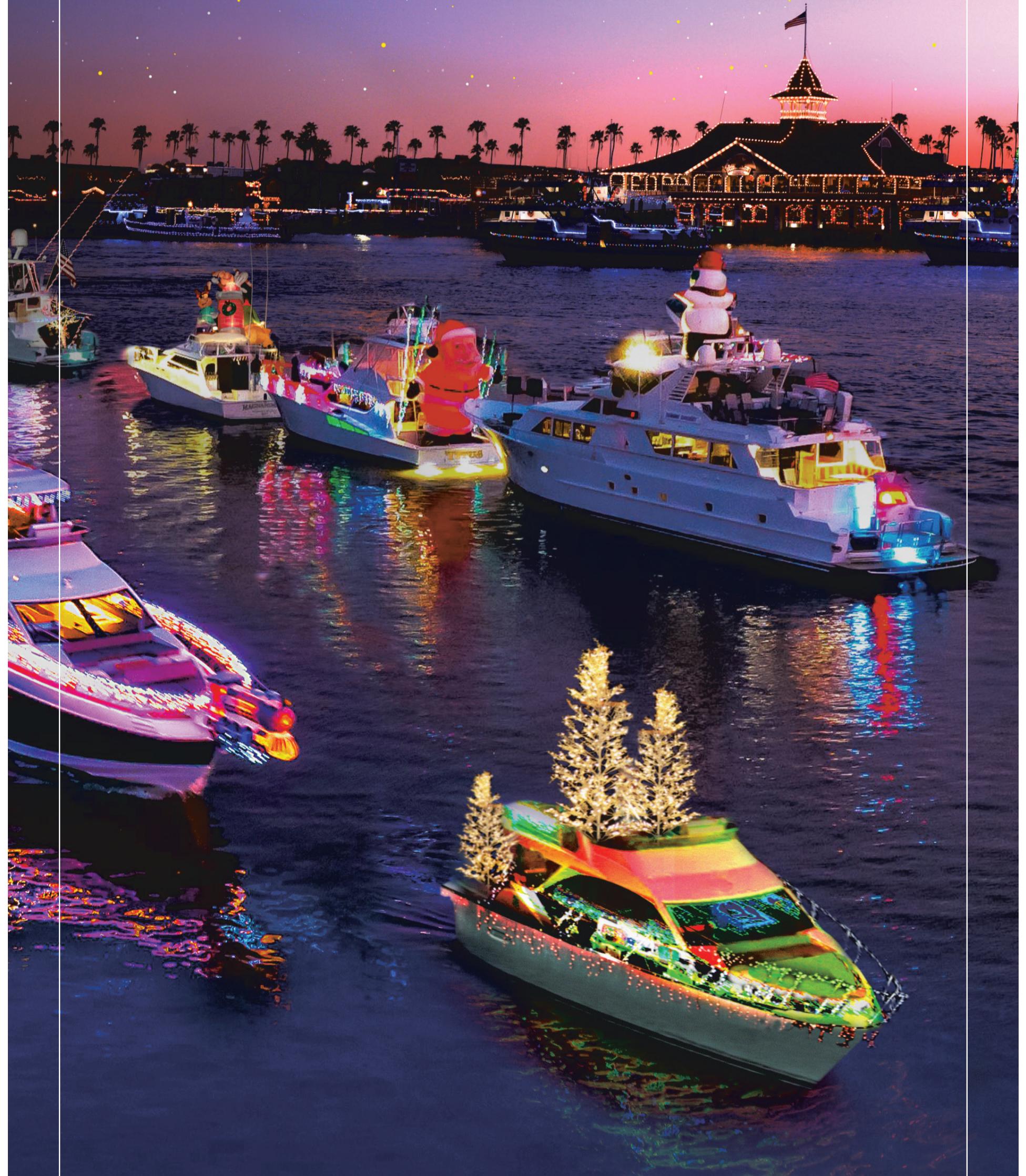
Today the "O" in Toast's logo is a pie, a nod to the baked goods that started it all and a reminder to share a slice when you can.

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H.B. author challenges stereotypes in first YA novel

BY MATT SZABO

Bob Madison remembers the time he got in the most trouble at his Catholic high school in New York.

It wasn't because of something he said or did to his teachers or classmate. No, it was because of a little book called "Tarzan at the Earth's Core" by Edgar Rice Burroughs that Madison started reading when he was 14.

"I was so enthralled by it that the next day, instead of going to school, I went to the park and sat in a tree all day to finish reading 'Tarzan at the Earth's Core,'" he said. "Little did I realize, the school was calling my mother, wondering where I was. I came back at 3 o'clock, and my mother said, 'How was school today?' I said, 'Oh, it was really tough.'

"And she said, 'You'll never guess who I heard from today! I got in a lot of trouble for Tarzan.'

Madison, who moved from New York to Huntington Beach five years ago with his husband Russell Frost, kept up that lifelong love of reading during his career as a communications executive. Now 60 years old, he hopes to give that joy another generation of teenagers.

Madison had his first young adult novel, "Spiked!," published by Vulpine Press this week. It is available on Amazon.

The 238-page book tells the story of Thom and A.J.,



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

BOB MADISON, a Huntington Beach resident, had his first young adult novel, "Spiked!," published this week.

two childhood friends growing up in Long Island who Madison calls nerds. It contains a lot of Madison's personality baked in.

"I learned a lot about how to be a good person through the nerd culture that I consumed when I was growing up," he said. "They obsess over 'Star Trek' and 'Star Wars' and 'Lord of the Rings.'

But their "nerd paradise," as Madison put it, becomes

corrupted when they fall in love with baseball. Madison never did that, although he remembers a poster of former New York Mets star Lenny Dykstra, shirt off and baseball bat in hand, with his nickname "Nails" at the top.

"If you're going to figure out that you're gay, you're probably going to figure out you're gay looking at posters of things like Lenny Dykstra," Madison said.

In the story, Thom and A.J. become obsessed with an egotistical baseball star nicknamed Spike. Thom realizes that he needs to tell A.J., who plays baseball, that Spike is probably not the best role model to have.

Madison made sure to include plenty of comedy in the story, which includes a riotous night out on the town with Spike. He said his younger brother David

Lee Madison, a former first baseman, helped fill in some of the particulars about the sport of baseball.

But there are plenty of lessons to go around, too. Frost, who has read his husband's book, appreciates the family dynamics at play.

"You see the relationship that the two boys have with each other, their friends and their parents and family," Frost said. "The way

one friend interacts with the family of the other friend, you can learn a lot just looking at that. Families are very different and raise their children in a very different way, and the boys are experiencing that, because they're visiting each other so much."

That part also rings true to Madison, who said it was easy when Frost came out to his family but called his own experience "a disaster."

Either way, he's excited that the book is now published. "Spiked!" will be promoted on BookBub starting on Tuesday, Madison said, which should help get more eyes on it. He has already sold another book, "Cash and Carrey," which he called a politically incorrect adult comedy novel.

He said the lesson of "Spiked!" is to follow your heart and be true to yourself, and don't worry about labels. Madison added that he hopes to catch some of the magic and amazement of those teenage years.

"I think young adult books should be replete with joy," Madison said. "When I say joy, I don't necessarily mean happy, but they have to do something for you to make your life better. Not only should they be replete with joy, but they should be crammed with wonder. When you're at that golden high school age, everything is magical."

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SHOP

Continued from page A1

Costa Mesa resident said Wednesday during a visit to the store. "With our belief and faith in what we were doing — we basically went for it."

This isn't Taft's first rodeo. He's operated another legal dispensary in Santa Ana for seven years and has had a

hand in Costa Mesa's cannabis future since 2014. That's when he and others collected enough signatures to put an initiative, Measure V, on the ballot for a special election that would have allowed eight medical marijuana dispensaries to be taxed and regulated inside city limits.

City officials, however, would not call for a special election, and a legal battle

over whether a tax-related proposal could even be decided outside a regular election cycle delayed the matter to 2016.

By then, Taft's interest had shifted as he saw more promise in backing an alternate cannabis plan — Measure X, which would allow for medical marijuana manufacturing, distribution, testing and processing in an industrial "Green Zone"

north of the 405 Freeway. "The city came to me, at the time it was a conservative council, and they said, 'We aren't ready for a dispensary in our city yet, would you be interested in making drugs instead of selling them?'" he recalled. "I said, OK, I'm a Costa Mesa-first guy — I'm going to support my city with Measure X."

Taft actively threw his

weight behind a new campaign, even hiring an airplane to sky-write messages of support for Measure X. It

garnered nearly 55% approval as Measure V withered on the vine. Since then, Taft and his partners have opened a manufacturing and distribution company called the Healing Plant and CMX, a distribution facility.

When the city of Santa Ana in 2014 granted the

right for 20 medical marijuana collectives to do legal business, Taft won a lottery and one year later opened the first 420 Central, a "megastore" named for its street address, which transitioned to selling recreational products when the city granted that right in 2018.

Both the Santa Ana dis-

See **Shop**, page A10

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SHOP

Continued from page A8

pensary and the new one in Costa Mesa are supplied and served by Taft's Measure X businesses in a vertical model that keeps operations local.

"We're self-distributing everything," he said. "We can honestly say the products we make come from Orange County. We have grows in Santa Ana for our products, and we package them here in Costa Mesa."

In addition to the Harbor Boulevard store, 420 Central in Santa Ana is expanding to fill out its 25,000-square-foot space to include marijuana cultivation and a consumption lounge — both of which have been sanctioned by the city.

Taft also envisions expanding in Costa Mesa and has partnered with another



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

ROBERT TAFT JR. stands inside his newly opened 420 Central Newport Mesa store on Wednesday in Costa Mesa. It is the first shop among 12 approved so far to open.

cannabis retailer on a joint

effort across Harbor Boulevard from 420 Central Newport Mesa called South Coast Safe Access. While that application recently hit a snag at the planning commission level, owners say they are confident an

appeal will be successful. Meanwhile, the new Costa Mesa dispensary is getting decked out and will soon feature murals of local beach scenes and other coastal effects. A grand-opening celebration is planned for Dec. 16, from 7

to 10 p.m., and will include vendors and special discounts to welcome new customers.

Costa Mesa Mayor John Stephens, a supporter of retail cannabis, was among the dispensary's first customers.

"I think it's exciting that [dispensaries] are starting to open," Stephens said Thursday. "As more cannabis businesses open, people will be the positive benefits to the city, not just in terms of tax dollars but making shopping centers look nicer and providing 24/7 security with lighting."

While not providing specific details, Stephens indicated he did make a purchase.

"On the record, I bought some things," he said. "It's legal."

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loon over time.

Now they're drowning in debt and questioning whether it was all worth it.

If someone is drowning, do we stop to reconsider before throwing them a lifeline?

I hope not. I hope that we pull them out of the water, and after they are safe we figure out how to fix a broken system that pulls many well-meaning student loan borrowers so easily underwater in the first place.

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.

isn't recommended. That's because Unleaded 88 or E-15 gasoline has a higher amount of ethanol and is not compatible with every vehicle.

Despite these bumps in the road, I wish Big Oil companies like Shell, ExxonMobil, Chevron and others had the courage to follow Sheetz's lead. I paid a low of \$5 a gallon before leaving Orange County last week, compared to nearly \$7 a gallon just a few months ago. Is there a downward trend in sight?

According to Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy, the answer is yes. "Everyone will be seeing relief at the pump this week, with even more substantial declines on the way as oil prices plummeted last week to briefly trade under \$80 per barrel."

I wonder what the price of gas will be when Hanukkah and Christmas roll around?

Denny Freidenrich
Laguna Beach

DEBT

Continued from page A4

of the higher incomes typically associated with a college degree. These are the kind of folks that are more likely to require government assistance, while contributing less to government tax rolls.

Another factor to consider is that about 40 percent of federal student loan debt is for post-graduate programs — and no, these degrees aren't guaranteed to automatically produce income levels sufficient to easily handle the debt. Do we really want to discourage young people from pursuing masters degrees and PhDs, which are vital

to maintaining our global competitiveness?

One of the aspects of the student loan crisis that I find most troubling is the lack of compassion shown by some Americans toward struggling borrowers. We hear comments along the lines of "They knew what they were getting into" and "I shouldn't have to help pay for their fancy degrees."

And for those who wonder why we should treat student loans differently, the answer is that we already do.

A little known fact is that federal law makes it nearly impossible to have student loan debt discharged in bankruptcy. Credit card debt, yes.



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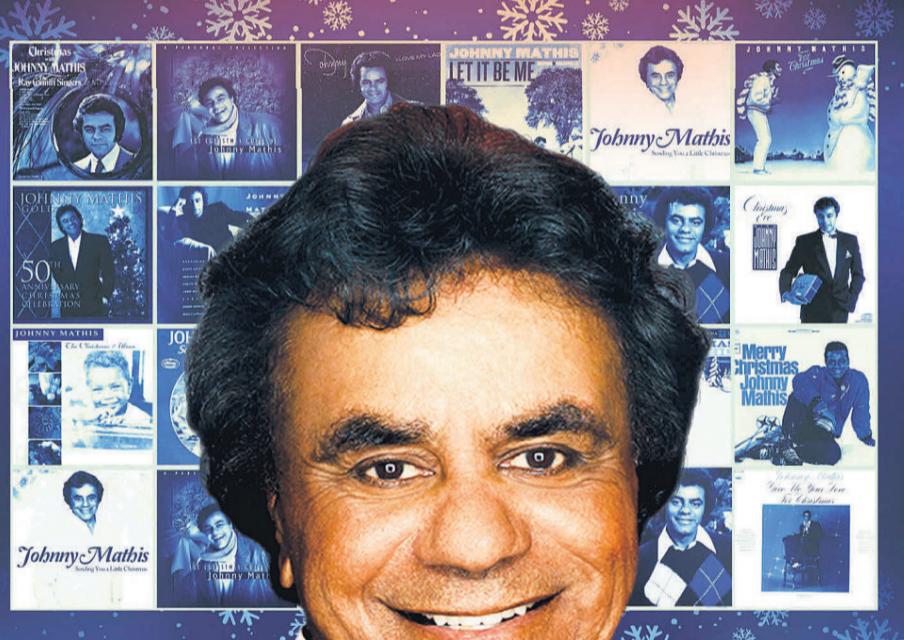
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