

# Daily Pilot & Times OC

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2024 /// Serving the coastal cities of Orange County and beyond /// [dailypilot.com](http://dailypilot.com)

## A unique, stable kind of therapy

The Shea Center in San Juan Capistrano is home to 28 horses used in a number of specialized treatment programs.

**BY SARAH MOSQUEDA**

At the Shea Center for Therapeutic Riding in San Juan Capistrano there is a row in the stables that Sarah Booth, communications director at the center, likes to refer to as the produce aisle.

Blueberry, Huckleberry and Razzberry are all horses who live side by side at the state-of-the-art riding facility.

"You can totally pet them," Booth said on a recent tour.

The three horses named for sweet berries are part of the herd of 28 specially trained horses and ponies at the Shea Center.

Founded in 1978, the center offers a variety of equine-assisted services like adaptive riding, mental health care, team building, speech therapies and physical and occupational therapy.

"When you are sitting on a horse, you are getting about 3,000 reps within half an hour, and kids don't notice it because it's fun," said Booth. "There is a lot of



*Sarah Mosqueda*

See *Therapy*, page A2

**THE SHEA CENTER** in San Juan Capistrano is home to 28 horses used for therapy in a number of specialized programs at the facility.

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**UCI Health**



## Anaheim postpones voting on law limiting lobbyist gifts

City Council votes to continue discussion of proposed law to later date, to the chagrin of some members.

**BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN**

An effort to cap gifts from lobbyists to Anaheim city officials failed to move forward with no scheduled date on when the proposed law could come back for consideration.

The Anaheim City Council debated the reform, which would set a \$50 gift-giving limit on lobbyists and others doing business

with the city, during its Nov. 13 meeting.

Council members Carlos Leon and Jose Diaz worked together to champion the law, which is the latest reform effort in the wake of an FBI political corruption probe that surfaced two years ago. The investigation rooted out cannabis corruption, halted the Angel Stadium deal and led to the conviction of former Anaheim Mayor Harry Sidhu.

"We're reinforcing our commitment to ethical governance and we're providing transparency that our community deserves," Leon said at the meeting. "By setting a high standard for our conduct,

we're showing our commitment to a transparent government where decisions are made openly without any hidden agenda or personal gain."

If passed as proposed, the law would ban gifts worth more than \$50 given by registered lobbyists, current or prospective contractors and people seeking licenses, permits or entitlements from the city. The bans would be in effect for a calendar year before and after they seek to do business with the city.

Outside of those "restricted sources," city officials could still

See *Gifts*, page A5

### ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



*Courtesy of Creep it Real Festive*

**'SEASON'S SCREAMINGS' HALLOWEEN AND CHRISTMAS COLLIDE AT OUTDOOR FESTIVAL** PAGE A8

## Providing dynamic ways for children to spark creativity



*Don Leach | Staff Photographer*

**MARY ANN** Sprague-Denison is the executive director of Active Discovery, a nonprofit that provides children with learning experiences including kits focused on physical activity, learning and relationship-building.

**BY MATT SZABO**

Mary Ann Sprague-Denison has always loved to both stay active herself and promote activity in others.

She was a three-sport athlete in college before going on to a long career as a women's college volleyball coach at Principia College in Illinois.

Her retirement in 2020 coincided with the death of her husband of 35 years.

Change was afoot. Sprague-Denison moved to Orange County, to be closer to her two adult daughters.

"I was moving to my next chapter, and I was just in love with the things that we did coaching but knew how many people didn't love athletics," she said. "I was thinking of kids and thinking, 'I want my next chapter to help those who work with kids.' Activity can be fun, and if it's fun, people will want to do it regularly."

She visited after-school programs at Boys & Girls Clubs, homeless shelters, affordable housing communities and elsewhere. What she saw were pro-

grams for at-risk children that were bursting at the seams.

Sprague-Denison wanted to help. She launched her nonprofit, Active Discovery, in mid-2021.

Active Discovery creates activity kits and provides curriculum resources to support the nonprofit's motto: Active Bodies, Active Minds, Healthy Relationships.

The kits can be used as part of camp programs or after-school programs, with the idea of enhancing or refreshing what the organization is already offering.

"Every kit that we produce has activity in it, and every kit also has things to explore and learn," said Sprague-Denison, who lives in Newport Coast. "Not school-like at all, but it gives the kids a chance to find what they love. We include music, we include art, we include STEM and STEAM and nature and life skills. If in a year, we help these kids find something that really lights them up, that's awesome. If they find a passion before they mature, their life is going to be great."

Another portion of the kit is the

See *Spark*, page A8

# Nonprofit won't say no to pets or owners in need

Animal Assistance League of O.C. takes on care of animals with costly medical conditions and traumatic pasts, often considered unadoptable by other shelters. It plans a fundraiser on Sunday, Nov. 24.

BY ERIC LICAS

Nicky the pit bull spent the first part of his life used as bait by his owners so they could teach cruelty to other animals intended as combatants in illegal dog fights. He was constantly abused, had his teeth filed down and was covered in wounds by the time Colleen McCammon took him in. An initial checkup with a veterinarian revealed a .38 caliber bullet lodged in his hip.

"He was mauled from head to toe," McCammon, president of the Animal Assistance League of Orange County, told the Daily Pilot Thursday. "When they were done they just tossed him out."

Other shelters considered him unadoptable because of his traumatic upbringing, McCammon said. Potential owners were afraid of the stigma associated with pit bulls, especially those who have been used in dog fights. So, Nicky spent almost 10 years in the League's care at their shelter in Harbor City.

But the staff and volunteers at the nonprofit's shelter all fell in love with Nicky, McCammon said. They grew to know him as an affectionate, playful pup who deserved a caring family as much as any other.

"The dog was the victim here," McCammon said.

Hardly anybody was willing to step up for Nicky

when a tumor was discovered in the roof of his mouth. So, the League took on his medical expenses and McCammon became his permanent foster so the white and grey pit bull with a pink nose would have a suitable environment to recover from treatment.

Doing so added more strain to the organization's shoestring budget. And it was a challenge for McCammon, as well, because she already had other animals and limited space at her home.

But she and the nonprofit she has led since 2006 simply can't say no to animals in need, even when others might have discarded them. They run a true no-kill shelter and frequently take in pets scheduled for euthanasia.

The Animal Assistance League of Orange County started out as a group of friends in Fountain Valley who got together in the 1970s to spay and neuter stray cats in their community. They wound up opening a help line to assist pet owners who had lost their pets, connect families struggling to afford animal care with resources and to provide advice.

The nonprofit opened its shelter in 1992, which initially had capacity for 20 cats and 20 dogs. They went on to purchase a boarding kennel across the street in 2005, allowing them to house as many as 135 pups,



Courtesy of the Animal Assistance League of Orange County

**NICKY, A PIT BULL**, was rescued from owners organizing illegal dog fights by the Animal Assistance League of Orange County. The nonprofit, founded in the 1970s in Fountain Valley, plans to host a bazaar and champagne brunch to raise funds on Sunday, Nov. 24.

kittens, bunnies, birds or any other creature that might be left with them.

Many of those in their care have been diagnosed with medical conditions that require expensive treatment, making them less desirable for adoption. The league sponsors fosters for those animals, covering

their vet bills and other costs. That allows people who have the time and compassion to take in a pet with special needs to do so, even if they might not have been able to afford to otherwise.

The nonprofit also comes to the aid of pet owners who encounter unforeseen

expenses or are just struggling to afford food and other essentials. McCammon recalled one family from San Diego who reached out to them after other organizations in their area declined to help them with their sick cat.

A vet diagnosed the cat with an infection causing a

life-threatening blockage of his urinary tract. Even though the family was from outside the area the League normally serves, the nonprofit footed the bill for surgery.

"We weren't going to cut out on them once we figured out what was needed with the surgery," McCammon said. "I'm not going to tell their children that they're going to have to lose their cat."

The League's charitable work isn't cheap, and McCammon said the cost of veterinary care has skyrocketed in recent years. She added that the group owes tens of thousands of dollars to local animal hospitals, many of whom have been kind enough to offer some measure of forbearance to the organization because of their reputation of compassion in the community.

The organization's president said they're committed to their mission and thankful they've rarely ever had to deny assistance to anyone, even if they are running on good will and "fumes."

Those interested in supporting the Animal Assistance League of Orange County can do so while enjoying a meal alongside a glass of bubbly at the nonprofit's Annual Holiday Bazaar and Champagne Brunch at the Hacienda Restaurant in Santa Ana on Sunday, Nov. 24. Unique crafts, collectibles and jewelry will be for sale, with all proceeds benefiting the League's operations.

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UCI Health



**A MINIATURE HORSE** at the Shea Center in San Juan Capistrano, which has treated patients with 87 different diagnoses this year.

## THERAPY

Continued from page A1

muscular activity that needs to happen in order for you to stay seated upright on a horse."

Booth said using horses for therapy offers certain advantages that a machine can't replicate, and this year alone the Shea Center has treated 87 different diagnoses, like cerebral palsy and autism. Services for a combination of physical, mental and emotional engagement are provided for clients from ages 2 and up, led by American Hippotherapy Certification Board specialists and PATH International Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructors. The facility is accredited by the Professional Assn. of Therapeutic Horsemanship International at the highest level and serves more than 1,400 participants each year with the help of a small staff and hundreds of volunteers.

The Shea Center teaches

and instructs in the foundational principles of dressage, a military form of riding. Two large covered arenas are available for use, blanketed with premium footing made from a blend of sand and composites that make it more comfortable and safe for the horses and trainers to walk on. Special ramps are connected to the arenas allowing clients with disabilities to mount horses safely, and rainbow reins, coded in primary colors, are used to make it easier for trainers to direct participants.

"When you are riding on horses you have to move your hands in different positions depending on different gaits you are doing, so we can say 'Move your hands to red, move your hands to blue,'" said Booth.

The open stall barn where Blueberry, Huckleberry and Razzberry hang out isn't traditional. Rather than being made of wood with walls that separate them, the Shea Center barn

is more modern and open.

"This barn was chosen because it has pipe stalls, so the horses can see each other because horses are herding animals. They like safety in numbers, and here they can see each other and they are social," said Booth.

The center has 12 different breeds of horses, all of them friendly. Most of them come from backgrounds in trail riding or competition, and they all undergo a trial phase to make sure they are a good fit for therapeutic use.

The horses interact with each other in their stalls, sometimes nipping at each other playfully or nuzzling. Besides spending time doing therapy work, they also get their own workouts in a euro walker, like a treadmill for horses, and spend time in "Sunshine Stalls" to get vitamin D.

Blueberry is a Percheron Brabant cross breed while Huckleberry is an American Gypsy Horse Draft cross and Razzberry is an



Photos by Sarah Mosqueda

**DANTE IS THE** largest horse at the Shea Center San Juan Capistrano.

American Quarter horse. They beg for treats, not unlike dogs and in another area of the barn, a miniature horse named Mac'n-Cheese bounces a treat ball around, working his lips to get a nugget out of the purple toy. Nearby is Dante, a black Percheron horse and the largest and second tallest at the center.

Horses of all sizes are open for sponsorship, like Tucker and JJ, two chestnut brown Quarter horses at the center who currently don't have sponsors. Spon-

sorship is available at three donation levels — silver, gold and platinum.

"It cost about \$15,000 per year to have each horse, and that is barring any injury or anything like that," said Booth. "People can donate horses too if they fit to our program and there is a need we have."

The funds donated for horse sponsorship are 100% tax deductible and restricted to use on horse care, like feed, bedding, farrier services and vet care. Individuals can also

donate time as a volunteer. No horse experience is required, and volunteers will spend time with instructors, therapists and staff members providing help before, during and after a rider's lesson.

"It takes a village to support a horse," said Booth. Visit [sheacenter.org](https://sheacenter.org) for information on horse sponsorship or volunteer opportunities.

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## UCI Health

# Feast on these Thanksgiving to-go options

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

This Thanksgiving, leaving the cooking up to the professionals doesn't mean you have to go out to eat. These Orange County restaurants are offering Thanksgiving dinner takeout this holiday season, so you can enjoy a restaurant-quality meal from the comfort of your own home. Choose from a traditional turkey dinner with all the fixings, a holiday dinner with Italian flair or a healthy gluten-free and dairy-free feast. You can even skip the bird altogether and opt for prime rib instead.

A good option for Thanksgiving morning is pumpkin cinnamon rolls from Toast Kitchen & Bakery, and the Ecology Center's Gratitude Market on Nov. 26 is a great place to gather provisions for your feast.

But for the big meal of the day, whatever you choose, be sure to place your orders before each restaurant's respective cutoff date so you don't miss out. We have a feeling these turkey dinners will be gobbled up fast.



Courtesy of Wales Communications

## BELLO BY SANDRO NARDONE

1200 Bison Ave. Suite C2, Newport Beach (949) 520-7191 [bellobysandronardone.com](http://bellobysandronardone.com)

Italian restaurant Bello by Sandro Nardone in Newport Beach will be closed for dine-in on Thanksgiving day, but you can still enjoy the flavors of Italy at your table. For the first time ever, chef Sandro is offering a Thanksgiving dinner for takeout. Choose between costata di manzo, an oven-roasted prime rib, or spalla di maiale, braised pork shoulder, for your entree. Sides include vellutata di zucca, or pumpkin soup, lasagna bianca, mushroom stuffing, truffle gravy and for dessert, cheesecake alla zucca (pumpkin cheesecake.) The feast feeds eight to 10 people. Call (949) 520-7191 for pricing and to order now through Nov. 22. Pickup times will be scheduled for Nov. 27 from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

## BOSSCAT KITCHEN & LIBATIONS

118 W Chapman Ave., Orange (714) 716-1599 [bosscatkitchen.com](http://bosscatkitchen.com)

Maple bourbon-brined turkey or brown sugar-baked ham? Sweet potato mash or garlic mashed potato? Apple pie or pumpkin pie? Tough choices for Bosscat Kitchen & Libations' Thanksgiving take-home feast. Other sides you can add include mac and cheese, cornbread, stuffing, green bean casserole, dinner rolls, winter spiced cranberry sauce and skillet gravy. If it helps, the turkey is a mix of light and dark meat and served in one-third foil pans, already carved, making dinner that much easier. Priced at \$195, the dinner feeds up to five people. Orders must be placed by Nov. 25. Order online at [bosscatkitchen.com](http://bosscatkitchen.com).

## GELSON'S MARKET

1660 San Miguel Dr., Newport Beach (949) 644-8660 [gelsons.com](http://gelsons.com)

Gelson's Market offers a complete Thanksgiving dinner option, a la carte sides and desserts. Roasted turkey dinner or spiral glazed ham dinner for parties of two, four or 12 start at \$60. There are also prime rib and brisket options and you can choose from sides like mashed potatoes, cornbread stuffing, creamed corn, green bean casserole, cranberry sauce and turkey gravy to round out your meal. Gelson's really is a one-stop-shop with floral arrangements to make your table extra festive. The last day to place orders at [gelsons.com](http://gelsons.com) is Nov. 26. Pickup is available from Nov. 22 to Dec. 1.

## GEORGIA'S SOUL FOOD

440 S. Anaheim Blvd., 209A, Anaheim (714) 906-1900, 732 Spectrum Center Drive,

**BOSSCAT KITCHEN & Libations'** Thanksgiving take-home feast with maple bourbon-brined turkey.



Courtesy of Georgia's Soul Food

**SOULFUL SIDES** from Georgia's Soul Food can round out your Thanksgiving meal.

Irvine (949) 669-2484 [georgias-restaurant.com](http://georgias-restaurant.com)

If you can handle the turkey, Georgia's will take care of the rest. Source your sides from the restaurant's soulful kitchen to bring menu items like cornbread with honey butter, collard greens and mac and cheese to your table. Don't forget an order of Nana Gretchen's whole peach cobbler or sweet potato pie. Place orders by calling the location you plan to pick up from. Preorders are open through Nov. 24 for pickup on Nov. 27.

## THE KROFT

440 S. Anaheim Blvd. #109, Anaheim (714) 635-5900 [thekroft.com](http://thekroft.com)

The Kroft is known for comfort food like country fried chicken and gravy battered poutines. This year, let the Kroft handle the most comforting meal of all: Thanksgiving dinner. Turkey dinners include cranberry sauce, spinach dip with crackers, balsamic-glazed brussel sprouts, garlic mashed potatoes, roasted corn salad, turkey gravy and dinner rolls, priced at \$119 for four to six people or \$179 for eight to 10 people. Prime rib dinners will include horseradish, au jus, spinach dip with crackers, balsamic glazed brussel sprouts, roasted corn salad, brown gravy and dinner rolls, priced at \$179 for four to six people and \$279 for eight to 10 people. Order by Nov. 21 for pick up by Nov. 27 during normal business hours. Place orders in person or by emailing [info@thekroft.com](mailto:info@thekroft.com).

## POLLY'S PIES RESTAURANT & BAKERY

9791 Adams Ave., Huntington Beach (714) 964-4424 [pollyspies.com](http://pollyspies.com)

Polly's Pies is a great place to pick up whole delicious pies, like the signature banberry (banana strawberry) and other favorites like apple crisp, coconut cream, lemon

## ZOV'S HAS

traditional Thanksgiving feasts with all the fixings available for pickup in Tustin.



Courtesy of Zov's

meringue and seasonal pies like pumpkin maple crunch. It's also a great place to get your Thanksgiving dinner to go. A feast with your choice of proteins like whole turkey, ham or prime rib start at \$169 with sides like potatoes au gratin, fresh green beans, glazed carrots and dinner rolls available a la carte. Individual dinners of turkey are priced at \$17.99 each, and ham dinners are priced at \$16.49 each.

## SOLSTICE SEASONAL KITCHEN & BAR

18555 Jamboree Road, Irvine (949) 241-7088 [dineatsolstice.com](http://dineatsolstice.com)

Enjoy the seasonality of Solstice at home with their heat-and-serve Thanksgiving meal. The dinner includes a 3.5-pound herb-roasted boneless turkey, savory turkey gravy made with wild mushrooms, pomme puree, sage walnut stuffing, cranberry orange relish, Brussels sprouts in a pear cider vinaigrette and citrus ginger-glazed Parker house rolls. Designed to serve four to five people, the feast is priced at \$195. Place orders online by Nov. 20 no later than 12 p.m. for pickup on Nov. 27 from 3 to 7 p.m.

## TAYLOR MADE CUISINE

17945 Sky Park Circle Suite G, Irvine (714) 342-6454 [taylormadecuisine.com](http://taylormadecuisine.com)

Taylor Made Cuisine is an Orange County-based meal prep and catering company. This year Taylor Made has created a gluten-free and dairy-free Thanks-

giving feast. This light and savory option includes roasted turkey, gluten-free gravy, cinnamon orange cranberry sauce, gluten-free sausage apple stuffing, dairy-free garlic mashed potatoes, simple green beans and cranberry mixed green salad. Available for groups of four to 16, the feast can be picked up or delivered chilled. Orders can be placed now through Nov. 20 for delivery or pickup on Nov. 27 by visiting [taylormadecuisine.com](http://taylormadecuisine.com).

## TENDER GREENS

530 Spectrum Center Drive, Irvine (949) 679-9135 [tendergreens.com](http://tendergreens.com)

Tender Greens chef-led kitchen is rolling out holiday meals and feasts this season available now through Jan. 8. Its holiday offerings serve up to 10 guests with a steak roast feast priced at \$195 or a short rib feast priced at \$205. Meals are chilled and ready to heat at home. If you are looking to feed a smaller crowd, holiday meals intended to feed a group of four are offered with steak roast for \$65.95 or short rib for \$67.95 and choice of two sides and gravy.

Individual holiday steak plates with seasoned steak, red wine shallot sauce, cauliflower, potato gratin and sautéed French green beans are also available. You can also order a variety of à la carte sides like farro salad, slow-cooked cauliflower and potato gratin and sweet potato mash. Order online at [tendergreens.com](http://tendergreens.com).



Courtesy of the Kroft

**THE KROFT'S** Thanksgiving dinner offers a choice of prime rib or roasted turkey breast in Anaheim.



Courtesy of Tender Greens

**HOLIDAY FEASTS** and meals from Tender Greens in Irvine offer an alternative to turkey with a steak roast.

## VACA

695 Town Center Drive Suite 170, Costa Mesa (714) 463-6060 [vacarestaurant.com](http://vacarestaurant.com)

Let "Top Chef" alum Amar Santana prepare your Thanksgiving dinner this year. A Mary's Farms whole-roasted, all-natural turkey is at the center of this gourmet Thanksgiving meal. Served with turkey giblet gravy, orange-scented cranberry sauce and Santana's famous Italian sausage-cornbread stuffing, you'll have a spread worthy of the Food Network. The meal also includes butternut squash and banana soup with pistachio crème fraiche, mashed potatoes, bourbon-maple glazed yams topped with candied chestnuts and green bean and mushroom casserole. For dessert, take your pick of a whole pecan pie, pumpkin pie or cheesecake. Priced at \$540 (excluding tax) the feast feeds six to eight people. Add wine or batched holiday cocktails to your order for an additional charge. Preorder by Nov. 20 for pickup on Nov. 27 from 2 to 4 p.m.

## ZOV'S BISTRO AND BAKERY

17440 17th St., Tustin (714) 838-8855 [zovs.com](http://zovs.com)

Chef Zov Karamardian of Zov's Bistro and Bakery has been offering holiday catering for more than 20 years. Zov's traditional Thanksgiving feast comes with your choice of sliced boneless turkey breast priced at \$625 or a whole free-range turkey priced at \$725.

Both options include enough wild mushroom and jasmine rice stuffing, mashed potatoes, maple-glazed yams, cranberry citrus relish and more to feed 12 to 15 people.

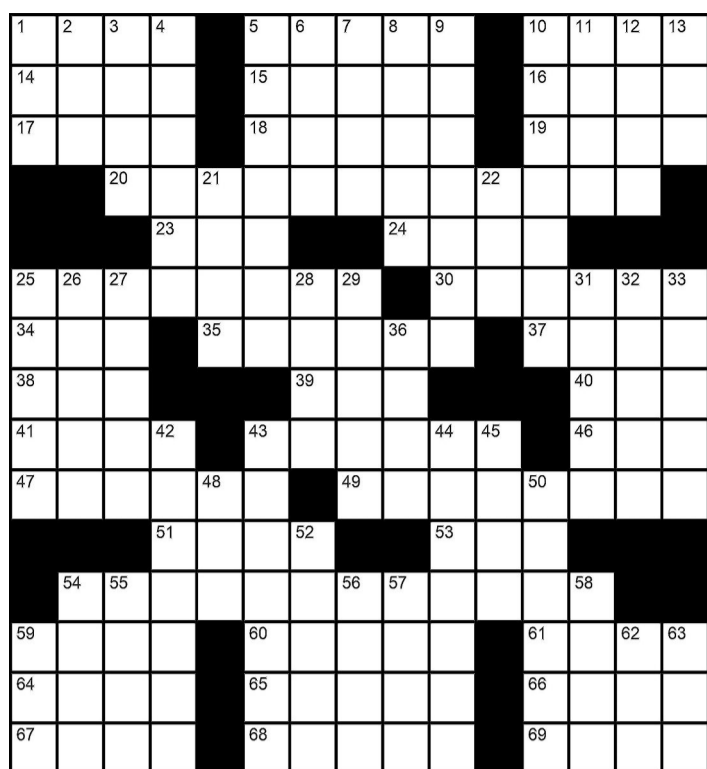
Fresh-baked whole pie choices include classic pumpkin, apple crumb or pecan. Preorders must be placed by Nov. 23 at 2 p.m. Pickups are scheduled for Nov. 27 between 1 and 5 p.m. Order online or by calling (714) 838-8855 ext. 22 or emailing [taleene@zovs.com](mailto:taleene@zovs.com).

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**THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE**

By Stella Zawistowski

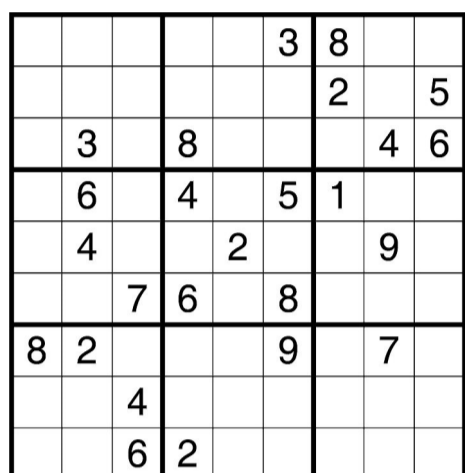
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 30 Soup servers  
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 37 Rescue  
 38 Edge of a glass  
 39 Pull an oar  
 40 Writer Anaïs  
 41 China's continent  
 43 Misleading trickery  
 46 Appliances used to cool down: Abbr.  
 47 "C'mon!": 2 wds.  
 49 Iron ore  
 51 Padlock part  
 53 Actress Thurman  
 54 Insects with big back legs  
 59 Intend  
 60 Cedar Rapids native  
 61 Country singer Keith  
 64 Mile or pound  
 65 January in Spanish  
 66 Lotion additive  
 67 Place to buy a Reuben  
 68 Get more of a magazine  
 69 Updates



**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 Starter course, for short  
 2 Ctrl-Alt\_  
 3 Cigar puff  
 4 Beach headgear: 2 wds.  
 5 Elite baseball player  
 6 "Yay me!"  
 7 The A in UAE  
 8 River in Pakistan  
 9 Graduation cap attachments  
 10 Goes up  
 11 Endmost  
 12 Shade trees  
 13 Bitter beer

- 21 A single time  
 22 Drink brewed from a bag  
 25 Fable's lesson  
 26 Actress Renée \_ Goldsberry  
 27 Let in  
 28 Certain  
 29 Geologic time period  
 31 Hawaiian porch  
 32 Kick out  
 33 Taste or touch  
 36 Overly cutesy  
 42 "Foolish" singer  
 43 File of documents  
 44 "My turn": 3 wds.  
 45 Domesticated  
 48 Car fuel  
 50 Plaid pattern  
 52 Call up  
 54 Autry or Kelly  
 55 Commuting option  
 56 Actor Wilson  
 57 Trim  
 58 Shoe bottom  
 59 "Here's \_ in your eye!"  
 62 Gift box decoration  
 63 "Uh-huh!"

Tribune Media Services



**COUNCILMAN STEPHEN FAESSEL** moved to punt a debate on the gift cap law until a later date. Faessel terms out next month.

James Carbone

**GIFTS**

Continued from page A1

receive and report gifts up to the state limit of \$590 per year.

"The goal of this ordinance, again, is not to seek any sort of punishment against an official or a gift giver," said Artin Berjikly, Anaheim's new ethics officer. "It is to seek compliance and the ability to correct."

The proposed law allows for a 30-day cure period where a city official can return, reimburse or donate a gift exceeding \$50 to charity. If a city official knowingly violates the law, penalties could include censure, admonishment and termination of employment.

Councilman Stephen Faessel raised some initial concerns and sought to boost the gift cap to \$100. "The \$50 limit is, candidly, very tight," he said while phoning into the meeting. "It's going to be difficult for some of us to manage."

Faessel noted that council members are often invited to receptions and that such a strict gift cap might put them in the position of counting shrimp on a dinner plate so as to not violate the law.

Berjikly framed \$50 as a median point between total gift bans and \$100 thresholds enacted by

other local governments. Currently, state law requires council members to report gifts over \$50 on their statement of economic interests forms filed every year.

A review by TimesOC of forms filed by current council members shows a number of dinners reported as gifts. Disneyland has also given gifts to several council members, including tickets to the theme park in 2022 on the same day of its star-studded Christmastime candlelight procession.

Diaz is the only council member to report no gifts. Councilwoman Natalie Rubalcava supported the reform but wanted clarification that the practice of council members soliciting donations to nonprofits — known as behested payments — could be considered gifts.

Berjikly, who serves in the city attorney's office, said that such activities wouldn't be covered by the law, which satisfied Rubalcava's concerns.

Citing Anaheim's recent Halloween parade, Councilwoman Norma Campos Kurtz asked Berjikly if a fee waiver granted to council members to participate in it would run afoul.

"We're allowed to have a car with our name on it and drive and waive to the folks," she said. "Anybody else that wants an entry into the parade pays a fee.

Would that be considered a gift?"

Berjikly opined that such activities would probably fall under ceremonial exemptions.

The questions and confusion prompted Faessel to ask for a vote on continuing discussion on the proposed law at some later date, which drew a rebuke from Leon.

"We had previously considered doing an all-out gift ban from everybody," he said. "Had we done that, then those concerns that my colleagues have mentioned ... maybe there'd be some concern there."

Approving a first reading of the law at the Nov. 13 meeting would have allowed council members to pass it with a second procedural vote at its scheduled Nov. 19 meeting.

But the gift cap lacked immediate support.

Council members voted 4-3, with Mayor Ashleigh Aitken being the swing vote, to postpone discussion on the law indefinitely.

"We don't need to get it fast," Aitken said. "We need to get it right."

Faessel and Diaz term out next month with two new council members set to be seated.

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**SEE WHAT'S NEXT**

# Shine Ever Brighter in Orange

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forum

A WORD, PLEASE | JUNE CASAGRANDE

# Casting a little shade on common grammar grievances

One reader wanted to vent about “on accident” vs. “by accident.” Another had a bone to pick with Wall Street Journal editors who don’t keep straight “that” and “which.” Another complained about people who add the word “right” after every sentence, while yet another felt that inserting the word “like” was the real problem.



These commenters were among the 1,100 or so readers who replied online to an article that wasn’t about “that” and “which,” “on accident” or linguistic tics like “right” — and that didn’t even appear in the Wall Street Journal.

That’s what happens when you talk about grammar in a public forum: Language grievances will demand their moment in the sun. So let’s address some of the comments on Michael Dirda’s April 25, 2024, review of the Anne Curzan grammar book “Says Who?”



Jenn Harris | Los Angeles Times

**GRAMMAR EXPERT** June Casagrande compares “The cookies that get gobbled up fast contain chocolate chips” and “The cookies, which get gobbled up fast, contain chocolate chips.”

“Makes me crazy that the Wall Street Journal in particular constantly confuses ‘that’ and ‘which,’ ‘that’ and ‘who,’ and ‘who’ and ‘whom,’” a reader called Local NYer posted. “Clearly nothing is subject to copy-editing anymore.”

“That” and “which” aren’t as rigid as NYer seems to think. Some major editing styles have long said that

“that” is for restrictive clauses and “which” for nonrestrictive. A restrictive clause narrows down the range of nouns it refers to. Compare: “The cookies that get gobbled up fast contain chocolate chips” and “The cookies, which get gobbled up fast, contain chocolate chips.” See how in the first sentence we’re talking only about the

cookies that get eaten first? That’s because the “that” clause narrows the range of cookies we’re talking about. But in the second example, “which get gobbled up fast” isn’t there to specify which cookies we’re talking about. Instead, “the cookies” — all of them — get gobbled up fast and also contain chocolate chips. But unlike in publishing, in the real

world, there’s no rule that says you can never use “which” in place of “that,” especially because the commas usually make clear enough whether a clause is restrictive. So instead of a firm rule, this is just a good reminder to write clearly.

“That” and “who” pose a similar issue. Editors usually feel that “who” is better to refer to people than “that” because it’s specific to people: “the man who I saw” vs. “the man that I saw.” I agree. But it’s OK to use “that” if you want.

As for using “who” in place of “whom,” that can be a tough call. Sometimes “whom” sounds so stuffy and formal that it distracts from your message. Precision language is nice, so I use “whom” when it suits, but getting your message across is what’s most important.

As for “on accident,” this is a case in which no rule of syntax applies. “The proper preposition is a matter of idiom,” wrote Theodore Bernstein in his 1965 guide “The Careful Writer.” When choosing between prepositions like “on” and “by,” go with the one that comes

naturally or check a dictionary. If those methods fail, Bernstein wrote, “the only thing to do is to consult three knowing friends and get a consensus.” So no one can say “on accident” is ungrammatical, but you can count me among your friends who say “by accident” is better.

A reader going by Speedostat added this comment: “This latest fad drives me nuts: using the word ‘right?’ after every statement someone utters. Geez, don’t get me started, right?”

Interjections like “right?” are a matter of taste, but a user called dkb50 found another reason to take a swipe at Speedostat: “Latest? That was annoying me as a kid in the ‘60s.”

That’s how it goes when you write about grammar in a public space: Even nitpicks get nitpicked.

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

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS

A	D	D	S		A	W	A	I	T		A	R	E	A		
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MAILBAG

## Readers weigh in on local elections

The city of Huntington Beach has spoken. No more liberal loons on the City Council, kind of like the Trump victory. All the liberals can move to L.A. or Long Beach, where they have something in common — watching their city continue to crumble.

Peter Anderson  
Huntington Beach

Many in the Surf City community already sickened by the political “red tide” which swept into our hometown in 2022 were

even further impacted by the partisan “red wave” which washed through our local elections this month. The post mortems are already surfacing. It is clear that a majority of the voters treated common sense and qualifications based on expertise and experience not only with disregard but with disdain. The same grievance-filled and feckless voters who made unqualified and unprepared Tito Ortiz the number one election winner in 2020 made equally inexperienced Chad Williams the

number one winner in 2024. It was a MAGA tribal triumph, which could tank our city for the rest of the decade.

Why would otherwise intelligent residents abdicate their civic duty to elect leaders with vision and the ability to solve our problems and address our community needs in favor of ideological idiocy and cultural negativity? Why would a majority of local voters support continued divisiveness and petty partisanship over community-building and unifying skills?

The answer is informational monotheism and how these voters’ views are shaped and reinforced by only one side of the equation. How they fail to comprehend let alone appreciate other points of view. How their only response is to deny, oppose or attack what they don’t understand.

There is only one way to deal with this messaging mononucleosis: diversity of viewpoints, news sources and understandings. We must not put all our eggs into one ideological basket. We must value real information and not “fake news.” We must value honest interpretations of issues and not biased and self-serving social media. Critics tell me that articles and letters in the Daily Pilot will not “save the world” for our county’s coastal communities. But they can play their part and act their role of informing and advising its readership. It need not be reading between the lines, but just reading. Only through offered diversity will we be able to cure our civic ills and improve our political climate.

Tim Geddes  
Huntington Beach

I check the Orange County vote several times a day to see if local Democrats can pull a little dignity out of the voting results. They did acquire some important positions, which were totally dominated by Republican politicians up until the last decade. And surprise of all surprises, despite being behind in the first counts, Kamala Harris has pulled ahead of Donald Trump by approximately 18,000 votes, making it the second presidential elec-

See *Mailbag*, page A7

## Daily Pilot

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# Buena Park eyes butterfly and aquarium attraction

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

Buena Park is banking on butterflies to be the newest attraction along Beach Boulevard — again.

Two years ago, the city spent \$9 million to buy back a 9-acre plot near Knott's Berry Farm after the late Rubin Stahl's plans to develop a Butterfly Palladium modeled after his past project in Scottsdale, Ariz. folded amid missed development deadlines and lawsuits.

On Tuesday, council members considered entering into exclusive negotiations with a new developer to bring a butterfly and aquarium attraction to the site, which formerly housed the Movieland Wax Museum before it closed.

Boardwalk Enterprises, which operates Butterfly Wonderland and Odyssey Aquarium at the Arizona Boardwalk complex in Scottsdale, envisions building a "rain forest meets British tea garden" atrium in Buena Park where more than 5,000 butterflies would flutter around freely.

"What we're planning to bring here, specifically, would be the largest butterfly conservatory in the country," Adi Knishinsky, a chief marketing officer for the Arizona complex, told council members. "What we'd be doing is superseding ourselves because we're already the largest butterfly conservatory in the country in Arizona."

After reacquiring the plot, Buena Park originally entered into exclusive negotiations in September 2023 with a developer that sought to transform it into a surf park with a hotel, restaurants and retail. But both parties agreed to end further discussions after



File Photo

**THE CONSTRUCTION SITE** where a Butterfly Palladium was supposed to be built before the city bought the land back in 2022. A new project involving butterflies and an aquarium is now planned for the location.

making insufficient progress.

Boardwalk Enterprises, which the city considered among the "top three" proposals it received last year, retooled its plans in continuing to show interest in the site. The company scrapped its outlines for a dinosaur exhibit and restaurant in favor of an aquarium, which found favor with city officials.

"We think about the user experience and the guest experience," Knishinsky said at Tuesday's council meeting. "We really think about what it means to visit us and what that means when you

go home and the lifetime of memories we are trying to create for families."

A walkway would carve through the middle of both attractions.

On the other side, the aquarium would feature marine life attractions that include sharks, penguins, sea turtles, otters and jellyfish.

"Large sharks are very iconic in nature, and they will draw guests from far away," Greg Charbeneau, president of Odyssey Aquarium, told council members.

The entire project is estimated

to cost between \$70 and \$80 million, with a 2½-year timeline estimated between construction and opening day.

With Stahl's past plans for a Butterfly Palladium, which included a jellyfish aquarium, plagued by financial challenges, Boardwalk Enterprises wanted to reassure council members that funding would not be an issue for their proposal.

"We've waited a very long time to find a second, perfect location for Butterfly Wonderland," Knishinsky said. "We have saved up quite a bit of money in hopes

that we would actually get this location."

Knishinsky added that the butterfly attraction would be unique to Southern California and estimated that the entire project would create 200 jobs in Buena Park across eight businesses.

An exclusive negotiating agreement with the company would require a number of benchmarks within the first six months, including a preliminary site design and supporting documents showing its ability to finance the project.

After the nine-month negotiating period, the development would be subject to public hearings at future planning commission and city council meetings.

Before Tuesday's meeting, council members had traveled to Scottsdale to see Boardwalk Enterprises' attractions up close.

Entering negotiations to bring them to Buena Park found broad support on the dais.

"I think this is going to be a crown jewel for Southern California right here in Buena Park," said Councilman Connor Traut. "You guys have the right team. You have the funding. This is going to create incredible memories for Buena Park and beyond."

Mayor Susan Sonne echoed Traut's sentiments and called the possible attraction an "extraordinary" addition to the city's mile-long Entertainment Zone near Knott's Berry Farm.

Council members passed the exclusive negotiating agreement unanimously — and enthusiastically — as the plot hasn't been fully developed in years.

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## MAILBAG

Continued from page A6

tion that a Democrat has won in O.C.!

O.C. Democrats have so far tied with Republicans in the House of Representatives as well as the State Assembly, but closer to home, conservatives won the Newport Beach City Council as well as holding a lead in Hunting-

ton Beach. The council bodies are not supposed to be partisan despite the outgoing Newport Beach mayor bragging about his 7-0 Republican council when then candidate for vice president, Minn. Gov. Tim Walz, recently visited the city. And while five of the six contestants in the Newport Beach City Council race were most likely Republican, the races for the three districts

(two in particular) were particularly undignified. I got involved, although I swear every race I won't, and my heart goes out to those who played by the rules. I think everyone with a conscience knows who I am speaking about. Something needs to be done about establishing rules of decorum because council races are not a pretty look for Newport Beach.

Of course, Huntington Beach has been experiencing constant pain from discord between the citizens and the council. I hoped this election would make the relationship better but from what I understand so far from the results, things are getting worse. It isn't like we are getting a positive role model from the federal government, so until we can get some positive role

models in Orange County civic government we are doomed to chaos.

I saved the best for last: I have been a constant fan of Dave Min for several years now. I like him not only for his position on issues, particularly guns, but because he is a man of action made all the more noticeable by his opponent who is definitely not. Min went through a hard patch and rose above it,

stronger for the lesson he learned. He has been declared the winner of the 47th Congressional District race and will take a seat in the House.

I also am rooting for Derek Tran, who was trailing behind Michelle Steel on Thursday, and hoping by a miracle he will pull ahead in the race.

**Lynn Lorenz**  
Newport Beach

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# 'Season's Screaming's'

Creep it Real Festive returns to the Heritage Museum of Orange County with live bands, food trucks and creepy Christmas fun.

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

Looking to have yourself a very merry and scary Christmas?

Whether perusing through horror-themed wares, posing with a ghastly "Creep Kringle" or following a procession led by Michael Myers in a Santa hat, Creep it Real Festive is chock-full of season's screamings.

The outdoor festival nestled in November between Halloween and Christmas offers two days of holiday-mashing mayhem with an assortment of vendors, food trucks, live bands and spooky surprises.

"We love both of the seasons," said Kevin Valentine, who co-founded Creep it Real Festive. "We thought that bringing some twisted sense of Halloween darkness into the good and pure of Christmas would be fun."

Valentine and Megan, his wife, are also the husband-and-wife duo behind Creep it Real OC, an outdoor Halloween festival in September that first began as an expo five years ago in Laguna Niguel before burgeoning into the largest event of its kind in Orange County.

With Creep it Real OC's early success, the idea for a Christmas-fused festival to cure Halloween hangovers was inspired by vendors,

fans and a creative impulse to do another event before the year's end.

Creep it Real Festive emerged from that crucible and offered an alternative to saccharine yuletide celebrations from the grounds of the Heritage Museum of Orange County in Santa Ana.

"We knew we had something special with the concept," Valentine said. "Then we saw that the demand was there with the first festival. Vendors outdid themselves and showcased their creativity by blending both of the seasons."

The Heritage Museum of Orange County has hosted the festival since it first began in 2022.

"For those of us who live spooky all year long, which I do, it's great, big way for us to transition out of Halloween and into the holiday season," said Darcy Staniforth, the museum's paranormal coordinator. "Historically, people used to tell ghost stories at Christmas. A creepy event during the holiday season only makes sense."

The Valentines plan both Creep fests in tandem about a year in advance.

It's been a remarkable journey for the Valentines, who started out humbly in 2019 with a few dozen vendors, a DJ and a costume contest.

Last year's Creep it Real



Courtesy of Creep it Real Festive

A GUEST POSES with "Creep Kringle" at Creep it Real Festive at the Heritage Museum of Orange County.

Festive sold out and drew about 2,300 people across both days.

The event promises even more morbid merriment this year with holiday sweets, apothecary products, horror apparel, original artwork, handmade crafts, photo ops and a tarot card reader rounding out the biggest assemblage of vendors to date.

Valentine likens the mood of the festival to the "unfinished business" of Halloween and sees the event as a way to get an early jump on Christmas shopping for horror enthusiasts while supporting small businesses in a niche market.

Even though Creep it

Real Festive is close in spirit to the Valentines' September Halloween festival, it is its own event, and they have learned from past events on how to best accommodate the shift in seasons, as guests have shown a preference for the evening's ambiance as its own attraction.

But there will be Haunted OC ghost tours of the museum's landmark Kellogg House for those that purchase "VIC" or "Very Important Creep" passes.

As the museum's paranormal coordinator, Staniforth helps crews investigate reports of supernatural activities at the Victorian home on the property.

During Creep it Real Festive, she'll serve as the primary Haunted OC "ghost host" for tours.

"It is definitely haunted," she said. "On one of my last tours on Halloween, we all heard footsteps on the second floor as if someone was walking around in the attic — and no one was in the attic."

Nearby, the museum's gazebo will serve as the focal point of festivities. It's where Frankie & Igor, a musical comedy act, and No More Somedays, will take the stage to perform.

Valentine hints at surprise events that will happen throughout the day in addition to scheduled live

entertainment.

There will also be a bar with spooky-themed libations to keep the mood merry.

Valentine calls Creep it Real Festive his personal favorite event to plan with its uniqueness in mind. Ticket sales have already outsold last year's total attendance.

"It has certainly gotten more successful with every passing year," he said. "It's a wonderful way to meander around and enjoy the night."

For more information, visit [creepitrealoc.com](http://creepitrealoc.com).

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# Bowers Museum invites players to gather for magic

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

An epic quest. Fantastical creatures. Sword play. Magic spells. The hallmark elements of fantasy can be found in stories throughout the ages. From Homer's Odyssey to the Harry Potter series, audiences love to get lost in worlds of make-believe.

The love of fantasy is partly what drew dozens of people to Bowers Museum in Santa Ana for an after-hours card game called Magic: The Gathering.

"As human beings we are always in a struggle to get anything and everything to where we want it to be, but being in a fantasy world and being able to do magic, cast spells and even fly takes us out of the stress of this world and into another life," said Christian Martinez, an Orange County local who showed up for the event with a case of cards in hand.

The special game night was presented in conjunction with the museum's latest exhibition, "Fantasy: Realms of Imagination" which celebrates the most renowned fantasy creators.

Presented in partnership with the British Library, the exhibition includes 160 fantastical pieces like costumes, historical manuscripts, maps, scripts and rare first editions. There are also film props and immersive multimedia experi-

ences.

"The exhibit starts off with the Greek epics and it ends with the popular culture movement with films and games and popular stories of imagination that cross over a number of genres," said Sean O'Harrow, president and chief executive officer at Bowers Museum.

Costumes like a red velvet tunic worn by Rudolf Nureyev as Prince Florimund in the Royal Ballet production of "The Sleeping Beauty" from 1968 are on display alongside a replica of Arya Stark's sword from HBO's "Game of Thrones." An 1819 copy of "Children's and Household Tales" by the Grimm Brothers from the British Library Board joins an edition of "Paradise Lost" illustrated by Gustav Doré from 1888.

"My own personally nerdiness focuses on the Arthurian romances from the 14th century because that is an era I have always been interested in," said O'Harrow. "As a kid I loved knights in armor and that sort of thing."

O'Harrow imagines people will also enjoy seeing a first-edition copy of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein.

"If you think about the importance of a [19-year-old] woman in the early 19th century writing a science-fiction/horror/drama and it essentially becoming the most famous story of its



Sarah Mosqueda

AN AFTER-HOURS game night at Bowers Museum in Santa Ana brings in fans of fantasy.

kind in the history of the world, to me the significance of it is amazing," said O'Harrow. "And that is the first edition from the British Library which was probably one of the first libraries to collect it, ever."

Tickets to the game night held on Nov. 8 included access to the exhibit. There were also raffle prizes, vendors like AKH Trading Card Co. and a free tasting of mead (a beverage made by fermenting honey) from Honest Abe Cider House & Meadery.

Magic: The Gathering is a collectible card game where

players can cast spells and "summon" creatures to defeat their opponents. While only 32 seats were open for the event, more than 40 people showed up to play.

"We are hoping to make this a monthly event," said O'Harrow.

The museum also hopes to add more games like Dungeons & Dragons, another popular role-playing game included in the exhibit, to the event.

Martinez said he began playing Magic: The Gathering with his wife during the pandemic.

"We had tried a bunch of games already and we just couldn't connect, and this is what connected us," said Martinez.

Others echoed the sentiment of using the game as a way to bond.

"As life gets more complicated and we always have our phones, it is nice to step away from technology and all that and come back to paper and just hang out. To me that is why we go into fantasy worlds," said Michael Apostol, another Orange County native who attended the game night.

Apostol said he also feels

people are drawn to the narrative found in fantasy.

"The stories themselves are part of it ... in the exhibit they have Homer's Odyssey and 'Alice in Wonderland,'" said Apostol.

Other events planned in conjunction with "Fantasy: Realms of Imagination" include a screening of the 1982 film "The Dark Crystal" on Nov. 30 in the Norma Kershaw Auditorium from 1 to 3 p.m. and an enchanted tea party on Dec. 15 with a docent-led tour of the exhibition followed by tea sandwiches, scones and dessert bites from Dreamland Maid Café from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Key Courtyard.

Apostol said he sees fantasy as a great way to connect that isn't just limited to the world of role-playing games.

"I think everybody does it, even sports people because Fantasy Football, March Madness — everyone loves that because it takes away from whatever we are doing and brings you to a different world where we can communicate and engage with other people," said Apostol.

"Fantasy: Realms of Imagination" is a British Library exhibition with contributions from Bowers Museum on display through Feb. 16.

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## SPARK

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Hometown Hero video series, telling stories of people who overcame great adversity through activity and finding a passion. Javier Sosa, who founded his first Javier's restaurant in Laguna Beach in 1995, is the first subject.

Sprague-Denison has found quite a market for the kits. She said there were about 3,500 Active Discovery kits distributed last year alone, and more than 37,000 total in Orange County and nationwide. Her curriculum director is Jane Harrison, an educator who lives in Missouri and is a longtime colleague through coaching.

One popular kit is "STEAM and swing," which features two paddles and



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

MARY ANN Sprague-Denison moved to Orange County in 2000 after a long career as a women's volleyball coach.

challenge and a robot STEAM balls created through collaboration with another nonprofit, Child Creativity Lab. Another is "graffiti art and agility," where children can learn how to create graffiti from good.

Each kit features a wristband with a saying that's part of Active Discovery's leadership mantra. They also have instructions for use, via words, pictures and even a QR code that links to a short video.

The organizations pay for a portion of the kits, while Active Discovery raises money to cover the rest of the cost.

"One of the coolest things is, it's not just a program," Sprague-Denison said. "After they finish the program, the children take the kits home. We've found through talking to them that once they take the kit home, an average of four other kids use it. That ripple effect is really important to me."

Madolyn Duplanty, a youth development leader at Boys & Girls Club of the South Coast Area, has seen the kits make a difference with the third- and fourth-graders she works with in San Clemente.

She said a mini-drum kit that featured buckets has been a popular choice.

"The kids really loved

that one," Duplanty said. "It also had a little gardening set, which was really cool. The kids were able to grow their own salads. They would check on their gardens, and they just had a blast."

One aspect that Duplanty also appreciates is the collaborative nature of the program. Each partner organization becomes part of the Active Discovery advisory council and is able to suggest additions or tweaks.

"They have provided our kids with the necessary tools to lead an active and healthy lifestyle," Duplanty said. "A lot of kids are stuck on their computers since COVID and all that, so Active Discovery has been able to provide our kids with the tools to have an active lifestyle while still having fun. They've been a

huge asset in helping our kids reach their fullest potential, which is what we're huge on here at the club. We're really grateful for them and all of their kits."

Sprague-Denison said her favorite word is synergy, and she and her team feel that connection with the partners they works with.

She even has two new grandchildren, a boy and girl who were born last year.

"That's an absolute pleasure," she said. "Any time you get to see that new life, you're like, we need to do what we can to unify and to help youth find their passion."

For more information on Active Discovery, visit [active.discovery.org](http://active.discovery.org).

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