



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

PHYLLIS TURNBULL, 98, a resident of Emerald Court in Anaheim, joined the Civil Air Patrol during WWII. After graduating from UCLA in 1941, Turnbull landed her first job with Lockheed Corp. She saw an advertisement to get a pilot's license and 300 hours of flying time for \$500.

'A WOMAN WHO FLEW'

Phyllis Turnbull, an Anaheim resident who turns 99 next month, was one of the trailblazing women of the Civil Air Patrol during World War II.

BY BEN BRAZIL

Many women broke barriers during World War II when they became pilots for the Civil Air Patrol, a citizen-led auxiliary unit of the U.S. Air Force.

While only about 3.5% of licensed pilots in the U.S. were women during the beginning of the war, about 20% of the patrol's senior and cadet members were made up of female pilots by the war's end.

Phyllis Turnbull, an Anaheim resident who turns 99 next month, was one of the trailblazing women of the Civil Air Patrol.

Turnbull graduated from UCLA with a degree in mathematics and went to work for Lockheed Corp., an aircraft company known today as Lockheed Martin.

Turnbull, then 20 years old, was working as a tool designer at the company when she saw an advertisement in the newspaper to receive a pilot's license and 30 hours of flying time for only \$500.

Turnbull had always spurned the traditional life.

"When I got out of school a lot of my friends couldn't wait to get married," Turnbull said. "I said that's not for me. You do that and then you have somebody else to consider. So what's your husband say when you want to go flying? I decided I wasn't going to get married in a big hurry."

Young and craving adventure, Turnbull took a leave of absence and went to Arizona to start her training.

Training occurred inland because flying was prohibited on the coast during the war,

which the U.S. had just entered.

"I hadn't really thought much about being a pilot before," Turnbull said. "It just sounded like a great idea. I thought my folks would have a fit, but they didn't say too much."

In fact, Turnbull's father had started training for his pilot's license in the Mojave desert, where he was working as an air raid warden.

"He had to go out at night to make sure everybody taped their windows," Turnbull said. "No light could be seen because the Japanese could bomb us."

Turnbull remembers how her father had always wanted to fly. He worked as a mechanic for the Air Force — then a part of the

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Santa Ana rolls out mobile COVID-19 testing

Caravan will provide free services to lower-income neighborhoods most impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.

BY BEN BRAZIL

Santa Ana rolled out a Mobile Resource Center on Wednesday that will provide free COVID-19 testing, free masks and information on assistance programs for neighborhoods most impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.

The mobile center will over the next several weeks visit the most densely populated neighborhoods in the city, which has the highest case count in Orange County.

The center will run tests twice a day — morning and afternoon.

"We know a lot of residents have had problems making appointments — it's been hard to get access to testing," city spokesman Paul Eakins said. "It's not easy if you don't have a car. Like half of our residents use public transportation."

A caravan of vehicles will pull into each neighborhood and set up tents and tables where the testing can be administered. CARES ambassadors will go door to door and provide residents with a bag with masks and a resource guide — available in Eng-

See *Mobile*, page R5

Second COVID-19 testing super site opens at fairgrounds

O.C. Health Care Agency director estimates site will process 500 tests a day before ramping up to around 1,000.

BY SARA CARDINE

As California pushes to increase its coronavirus testing capacity, Orange County officials on Wednesday opened a new testing site at Costa Mesa's O.C. Fair & Event Center to aid essential workers, first responders and those potentially exposed to the virus.

Individuals exhibiting symptoms, healthcare workers and residents and employees of congregate living facilities — along with teachers, grocery and food workers and public and utility employees — can register to be tested Mondays through Fridays, from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., as long as they live or work in Orange County.

The new O.C. fairgrounds testing super site is the second of its kind countywide. The first, at the Anaheim Convention Center, has conducted more than 10,000 tests since opening July 15.

Both locations are backed by \$550 million in federal CARES act funding received by the county

See *Testing*, page R5

ANY WAY YOU SLICE IT, A CHEESEMONGER'S UNIQUE PROFESSION IS SERIOUS BUSINESS

BY BRADLEY ZINT

At Five Crowns restaurant and its pub, SideDoor, Tracy Nelsen has a unique job title: cheesemonger.

It's a funny-sounding word, but becoming a certified cheesemonger is no joke. Nelsen has to know her stuff for a role that's uncommon, even in the restaurant world.

She serves as the house leader of cheeses. She plans the cheese menus, executes the cheese party planning and does the cheese purchasing. At Five Crowns and SideDoor, this is taken seriously. For years the Corona del Mar institution has hosted monthly cheese-centric events and a biannual gathering that's truly golden for anyone who loves the fromage.

On a cold evening in January, Nelsen was busy working the first of 2020's biannual gatherings. For cheese lovers, this event, pitched as an "ultimate cheese and charcuterie backyard party," there was no better place

to be. It featured a cheese lesson led by Nelsen and a buffet table elegantly displaying more than 25 different cheeses from several creameries.

Nelsen wore an apron emblazoned with various types of cheese for the occasion. Five Crowns, which is themed like an English inn and pub, staged the class in one of its dining rooms adjacent to its famed greenhouse and open-air patio. The room's fireplace blazed, giving the event the cozy feel of a small private party.

Before hitting the buffet, each participant tasted a plate of five cheeses paired with five drinks. It was a greatest hits culmination, as the five were highlights from past monthly cheese events held at SideDoor.

A sixth cheese was planned for the class but didn't arrive in time. But that wasn't going to stop this party.

"You can feast on cheese," Nelsen said at the outset. "It doesn't get better than that, in my opinion."



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

TRACY NELSEN is Five Crowns and SideDoor's restaurant manager and official cheesemonger, sommelier and cicerone. Nelsen has moved her expertise online during the pandemic with virtual cheese tastings.

With Nelsen's guidance, the diners rounded their plates. As they nibbled, Nelsen used words few associate with cheese: "crystal terracing," "woody," "microbes."

"Cheese is a living thing," Nelsen explained. "It evolves."

When it comes to cheese, there is a lot to know: where it

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Garden Grove approves contract with company that designs policy, training materials for police

BY VERA CASTANEDA

The Garden Grove Police Department is moving forward with plans to digitize its policy manual and training, after the City Council unanimously approved a \$59,400 contract with Lexipol, LLC at their Tuesday meeting.

Lexipol provides information and technology to public safety agencies, like police, fire and corrections departments, through digital policy handbooks and instruction models. While a Garden Grove police official said Lexipol's services would streamline policy updates, some residents criticized the company for having a reputation of meeting bare-minimum legal requirements instead of higher standards.

According to the vendor contract with Garden Grove's police force, the scope of services include a legally defensible policy manual written by public safety attorneys and experts in compliance with federal and state laws, court decisions and best practices. Lexipol staff would be responsible for providing timely updates to policies and Garden Grove police staff would be able to accept, reject or customize each update.

The manual is planned to be available on web and mobile platforms along with 2-minute, scenario-based training exercises that could be pushed out daily. The training is designed to help officers learn and apply policies to the real world and test understanding through questions at the end of the exercises. The department would also be able to track completion of training.

Lexipol markets itself as a way to decrease a city's liability in police misconduct lawsuits.

In the proposal overview, Lexipol describes itself as "America's leading source of state-specific policy and



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

POLICE OFFICERS form a perimeter near Garden Grove High School on June 3 during a Black Lives Matter protest.

training solutions that reduce risk, lower litigation costs and improve personnel safety in public safety agencies."

Lt. Carl Whitney of the Garden Grove Police Department said Tuesday the department "utilizes a policy and procedures manual that is updated by the department's professional standards division as needed. The design and maintenance of the manual has become cumbersome and burdensome throughout the years because of the limited staffing available."

He said when Gov. Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill 392, a legislation requiring law enforcement to use deadly force only when "necessary" instead of when "reasonable," went into effect in January it took several months and resources to update the department's written policy, get city approval and send the new information to officers.

Whitney also said every Orange County agency uses Lexipol except for three including Garden Grove. He listed the police departments at Cal State Fullerton, UC Irvine and Coast Community College among the agencies who use the company.

Council members Kim B. Nguyen, Diedre Thu-Ha Nguyen and Stephanie Klopfenstein were part of an ad hoc committee reviewing public safety.

Kim B. Nguyen said the committee identified a gap in the police department's upkeep of policies.

"As an ad hoc committee we all agreed that this would be a positive and important tool providing strong policy content, reducing staffing time, tracking and improving documentation and so forth. Not only improving transparency but checks and balances," Klopfenstein said.

Months after George Floyd died and ignited large

demonstrations of civil unrest calling for the defunding and abolition of police, residents are keeping an eye on Minneapolis as well as that city's respective local government's response.

About 15 people submitted written public comments opposing the contract and said they are concerned about police brutality.

During public comment, one speaker said, "I urge the council to consider Lexipol's reputation before authorizing any agreement or contract with the company. Lexipol has been known to drop policies that barely meet the legal minimum standard for police officers and policies from Lexipol are known to also authorize the use of force for police officers more generously relying on broader and more vague language to bypass liability."

Various police departments have also been sued due to faulty policies from

Lexipol that were found to violate constitutional standards and laws. Furthermore, it is concerning that we may be allowing people outside of our communities to decide how our police will operate. I hope that if we do indeed use policies from Lexipol that the city will also allow more local community voices to be part of the conversation."

The company, created in 2003 and representing public safety agencies across the U.S., has O.C. roots. One of Lexipol's founders, Bruce Praet, started out as a Laguna Beach police officer in 1973 at 17 years old.

His law enforcement career, summarized in a 1992 Los Angeles Times profile, lasted a decade with stints in Garden Grove and Orange. He beat misconduct lawsuits twice and was defended by Michael Stone, a former sergeant in the Orange police force and lawyer who later represented

one of Rodney King's assailants.

Praet became a police union lawyer, an assistant city attorney for Orange and went on to start a Santa Ana located firm focused on defending cops in civil matters such as shootings, dog bites and pursuits. He co-wrote a law enforcement manual in 1998 using Fullerton's police department as a model, according to Lexipol's website. He now serves on the company's board and conducts presentations to federal, state and local law enforcement.

A Mother Jones report pointed out that in a webinar with police officers last year, Praet hinted that he had personally worked with legislators to water down AB 392.

"The big question is — and I know everyone has been hearing in the media — 'Oh my god, the legislature now says we can only use force when necessary.' Is that true? Simple answer, no. What is the new standard? The new standard is the exact same thing we've had for the last 50 years," Praet said in the webinar.

When explaining how AB 392 would be implemented through Lexipol's policy updates, he later said, "Those of you who have been with Lexipol for years know that all of our policies are peppered with a reasonableness standard. We kept that in the legislation. Yes, would it be nice if you consider other resources and techniques? Of course, it would. But it's only if reasonable and feasible."

Garden Grove police officials expect to sit down with Lexipol legal professionals to review the company's standards and the department's own local policies to create a new manual customized to the city. The review process could take several months.

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UCI law students secure compassionate release for 74-year-old veteran

BY BEN BRAZIL

David Stringer was overcome with relief when he received the news he'd once again be a free man after more than 17 years in prison.

After a years-long legal battle for his freedom, UC Irvine law students were recently able to secure the compassionate release of the 74-year-old veteran.

"Now that I sit down, it just went by so fast, it doesn't even seem like it's been that long," Stringer reflected on his time in prison. "But I lost a lot while I was locked up."

Stringer was charged in 2001 for possession with intent to distribute crack

cocaine. At that time, crimes related to crack cocaine carried heavier penalties than powder cocaine.

Many tie that sentencing inequity to socioeconomic and racism. Crack tended to be used by lower-income communities of color and powder cocaine was the drug of choice for wealthier, white communities.

At one point, crack sentences were 100 times harsher than for powder cocaine.

The court ultimately kept that in mind when approving Stringer's compassionate release on Aug. 10. He was originally scheduled to be released on Sept. 5, 2021.

"We were able to develop a narrative for him which really almost wrote itself in that he was a veteran, he served his country and was honorably discharged," said Julienne Pasichow, one of the two UCI law students who fought for Stringer's compassionate release. "He found himself in the throes of addiction and that's how this particular offense came to be."

In its decision to reduce Stringer's sentence to time served, the court took into account Stringer's age, declining health and that his sentence was much longer than it would have been if

See **Release**, page R5



DAVID STRINGER and his daughter, Roshanda Stringer. The 74-year-old was imprisoned for 17 years for a drug offense and released with the aid of UC Irvine law students.

Courtesy of UCI

WOMAN

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Army — during World War I, but he never had a chance to enter a flying program.

While training, Turnbull slept in a barracks with other women who hoped to earn their licenses. Some of the women had husbands who were fighting in the war.

"Not many did finish or stay with it," Turnbull said.

She said the training wasn't easy, but there were calming moments in between.

"This young man, I was like 22, he was like 18 — he liked to dance and I liked to dance," Turnbull said. "We went up to a tiny spot and they had a jukebox and we would dance."

"I never did see him after that. I don't know what happened to him. Well you know, you see people and then they are gone."

Turnbull and her father received their licenses, purchased a small plane and joined the Civil Air Patrol, though she had wanted to be a member of the Women Airforce Service Pilots, known as the WASPs.

The WASPs tested and delivered aircraft, and trained other pilots in order to free up male pilots for combat. Unfortunately, Turnbull didn't meet the 5-foot-2 height requirement to join the group.

"I was too short because the planes didn't have adjustable seats," Turnbull said. "You had to be a certain height, I didn't

know that when I started."

The Civil Air Patrol was started in 1941 to mobilize the country's aviation resources toward the war effort. The group patrolled for submarines, monitored the borders and performed courier services.

Many women joined the Civil Air Patrol, feeling the need to contribute. It was one of the few groups where women could serve the country in uniform.

While still uncommon, the idea of a female pilot was becoming more familiar after Amelia Earhart spent the prior decade breaking barriers as the first female aviator to fly across the Atlantic Ocean by herself, among other accolades. She disappeared in 1937 during an attempt to fly across the entire globe.

"It seemed like you needed to do something because the men had all been drafted," Turnbull said, adding that businesses and factories were "begging" women to come replace the men who went overseas.

Turnbull and her father were never asked to take part in any dangerous war-related efforts. Turnbull said they largely delivered goods domestically for the military.

After the war, Turnbull went to work for the Hughes Aircraft Co.

She was given a job in the flight office by Glenn Odekirk, right-hand man to famed business magnate Howard Hughes. Turnbull had met Odekirk while training for her license.

"It's weird how I met and saw this man and had no idea who he was," Turnbull said. "Pretty weird huh? That's coinci-

dence."

She remembers that Hughes spent much of his time in the flight office. Turnbull was there when Hughes was almost killed in a highly publicized crash in Beverly Hills in 1946.

As a single mother of two, Turnbull spent time in a number of odd jobs to provide for her children, including 15 years as a tax preparer and a stint as a bridge instructor.

She hasn't piloted since she was 28, after she and her father sold their plane due to the expensive upkeep.

Today, Turnbull is living in quarantine in the Emerald Court assisted living facility in Anaheim. She said she isn't able to visit with her friends in the facility as much as she'd like to and isn't able to see her kids due to the potential spread of COVID-19.

Rusty Young, a longtime friend of Turnbull's, said the former pilot's vision is fading.

"One day she said to me, 'Oh, my eyes are getting worse, Rusty I don't think I can see your face right now.' I said, 'Well you're not missing anything, honey,'" Young said, laughing.

Young, who's known Turnbull for 40 years, said they sometimes discuss the old days. "I admire her because she was an aviator — I just couldn't believe I knew a woman who flew," Young said. "Especially doing it back in the day when women were looked down on to do anything exciting."

Turnbull thinks often about her flying days. The joys of flying her parents and 92-year-old grandmother around. The time she had trouble locating the airport after a



Los Angeles Times

JULY 7, 1946: Howard Hughes steps up to board the XF-11 aircraft at Culver City Airport. The plane crashed and nearly killed Hughes. Phyllis Turnbull, an early female pilot, worked in Hughes' office at the time.

heavy fog rolled in over the Santa Monica Mountains. How small her home looked from on high.

"I missed it for a long time," Turnbull said. "But you have to move on. Nothing lasts forever, that's for sure."

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BUSINESS

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was made, its aging process, regional traditions. Beyond just aging, a lot of things affect the outcome, like water and grass.

As cheesemonger, Nelsen knows all this. And a lot more.

She is officially certified by the American Cheese Society. But what makes her even more unique among Orange County's finest palates is that she's also a level 2 cicerone (a beer expert as determined by Cicerone Certification Program) and certified sommelier.

Curiously enough, Nelsen says the cheese test was as hard as the wine one.

Nelsen was born in Fargo, N.D., but didn't stay there long. She moved around the Midwest as her father took on different jobs, including some time as an animal nutritionist.

Her palate developed as an adult. It didn't take root from her childhood. Her family didn't celebrate the subtle notes of wine over candlelit dinners. But, she notes, they did cook from scratch, supplementing meals with produce from their home gardens.

"I will say I'm very Midwestern in that spice, for me, meant add more salt and pepper to the gravy that goes with the mashed potatoes and the meat," Nelsen said.

She raised two daughters, training them to have good palates through tasting classes.

"The kids absolutely loved it," Nelsen said. "It was pretty pivotal to them. I would say my youngest daughter has surpassed my palate."

Sometimes if all three of them are together, they can be a tough crowd. They're able to pick everything apart, questioning interesting spices.

Nelsen got her start in the culinary world at a high-end deli in Long Beach. That later led to various positions at restaurants, including time as the service director for the

Center Club in Costa Mesa.

It was there, during a Christmas dinner for a group of doctors, that Nelsen's wine appreciation breakthrough moment surfaced. The doctors were drinking high-end wines, trying to one-up each other on prestigious purchases.

Nelsen facilitated their drinks, but then something novel happened: They poured her a glass and asked for her opinion. No one had ever done that.

As a wine buyer and restaurant veteran, Nelsen knew some wine buzzwords. But she was certainly a novice. The sommelier training would come later.

Nelsen swirled the drink. She recalls it being a red Bordeaux blend from California winemaker Quintessa, made in the late '80s. Even as a novice, after one taste, she knew. This was special. Everything was in balance.

Today, Nelsen wishes she could watch a video of that evening and see it all go down again because of what she said to the doctor asking her thoughts.

"Well," she replied, "for the first time I understand why somebody would spend a hundred dollars on a bottle of wine."

After that Christmas party, Nelsen got more involved in wine buying. She studied the literature, but never got too serious. That didn't happen until several years later when she was hired at Five Crowns to be a wine captain in 2006.

She helped servers, greeted customers, opened bottles and recommended pairings. The job gave Five Crowns some Old World class.

Everything changed for Nelsen once she heard about an opening to take an introductory sommelier exam from the Court of Master Sommeliers. The U.K.-based organization is the preeminent group of its kind, professing to set "the global standard of excellence for beverage service within the hospitality industry with integrity, exemplary knowledge and humility."



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

CHEESEMONGER TRACY NELSEN teaches a cheese education class at Five Crowns in January 2019.

The Court grants four levels of expertise: introductory, certified sommelier, advanced sommelier and master sommelier.

In her naiveté, Nelsen thought to herself, "Sure! That'd be interesting."

As she found out soon enough, it would be terrifying.

Nelsen faced an uphill battle. The introductory exam involves two days of activities, including a multiple-choice test and blind tasting exercise. Her fellow test takers had already been studying and preparing together.

Nelsen had not. But she stepped up to the challenge anyway, cramming with about two weeks of dedicated study. Sometimes she fell asleep, wine books in hand.

The test took place in Anaheim. Michael Jordan, a famed restaurateur and master sommelier, was there.

Nelsen felt the pressure, but terribly so. Pass or fail, she would still have a job. But there were feelings of impostor syndrome. Though she had significant industry experience, she hadn't studied as long as the others.

A peak moment of the exam is a blind reading of wine, which the Court calls "deductive tasting." The process has five students each taking a turn at discovering whatever wine is in front of them.

The first judges for appearance. Is it clear or hazy? What is the color? What is its secondary col-

or?

The second goes for the nose. How does it smell? What fruits are there? Any minerals? How old does it seem?

The third takes the taste, judging aspects like sweetness, texture, body and balance.

The fourth compiles all that and makes an initial conclusion of its identity. What are its possible grape varieties? Is it Old World or New World? How old is it?

Then the fifth rounds it off with a final conclusion.

What stuck out to Nelsen that day was a moment when she sat in that fifth seat. She recalls 40 people staring at her, including master sommeliers. It began regularly enough — out spurted thoughts on the wine's appearance, smell, taste, the initial conclusion. The students were building off one another's ideas, talking about the glass being a California cabernet.

Nelsen felt they were way off. Nervous at the idea of defying them, she nevertheless announced a different direction. The declaration caused some of the masters to perk up. Nelsen said she didn't think it was a California cabernet. It was actually an Argentinean Malbec, about three years old, appellation Mendoza.

She was 100% right. She knew so when someone pulled out the hidden bottle. She read the label: Malbec, Mendoza region.

"It was one of those incredibly validating moments for me," Nelsen said. "That was the moment I was most proud of, not passing the test. That made me more excited than passing the test, because I proved to myself I had a reason to be there."

At the end of the day, she got her introductory certification, a pin, a glass of champagne and congratulatory handshakes.

Normally, the test scores are kept confidential, Nelsen said. You either pass or don't.

But Michael Jordan leaned in and quietly told her something she'll never forget: "You need to continue. You had that second-highest score in the class."

Six months later, Nelsen went to New Orleans and passed the exponentially more difficult level two exam. She became a certified sommelier.

She did not celebrate the milestone with a stellar bottle of wine. Rather, Nelsen moseyed over to the French Quarter and imbibed a hurricane at Pat O'Briens, where the sugary rum drink was invented.

That was a mistake. Nelsen jokes now, "It was a very bad decision. It's just super sweet and really not all that interesting."

SideDoor is a separate operation within Five Crowns, though similarly themed as a cozy English gastropub. Ever since its grand opening in 2010, it has always had a specialty cheese element on the menu.

Eventually, Nelsen took over SideDoor's cheese

program, which got her wondering: Does cheese have an expertise certification program like wine? Is there a sommelier for cheese?

In America, there is.

Enter the American Cheese Society, a Denver-based group that offers the most dedicated of cheese people to become a Certified Cheese Professional (CCP). Nelsen decided to be one of those people.

Unlike studying to be a wine sommelier, Nelsen notes there was "no real book you can pick up." Rather, she read Congressional bills. She studied from a thick binder of materials. She also studied from a website geared toward people wanting to become CCPs.

Unlike eating cheese, studying about for the exam was no fun, Nelsen said with a laugh.

To pass the 150-question CCP test, she needed to know an awful lot about *fromage*, including best practices, cheese stories and origins. According to the American Cheese Society, CCPs must also know all the "core competencies" common to the majority of cheese industry jobs. Examples are the duties of retailers, cheesemongers, cheesemakers, distributors, importers/exporters, restaurateurs, educators and food writers.

According to Nelsen, she needed to know everything from how much to charge for a cheese to the intricacies of importing cheese from Italy.

"The reason that the cheese test, I think, is harder than the other tests I've done is because you're expected to know it all," she said. "You have all of the alphabet soup of government agencies involved, so it's a huge database."

In July 2018, Nelsen traveled to Pittsburgh for her CCP test. A few weeks later, she received an email.

Normally, Nelsen is not excitable. But upon reading that email, even though she was at work, she jumped up and down. She had passed, adding another line to her already impressive résumé of certified sommelier and cicerone.

Once Nelsen got home, she opened up a good bottle of wine. She did not eat any cheese.

When Nelsen was planning the cheese and charcuterie backyard party in January, it was supposed to be one of two for 2020 alongside the monthly "cheese takeovers" at SideDoor where they feature a specific creamery.

But two months later COVID-19 happened, shutting down businesses nationwide, including Five Crowns and SideDoor.

Nelsen and her team were not deterred. Nothing would stop the cheese.

On April 23, Nelsen took her cheesemonger with to the internet with a Facebook Live virtual cheese and wine tasting. Participants picked up their curated plates with products from Vermont cheesemaker Jasper Hill Farm, some other bites as pairings, and a bottle of pinot merlot or sauvignon blanc.

Then they tuned in at 7 p.m. for Nelsen's seminar.

It was a low-tech production but effective. Nelsen stood in a corner of SideDoor with a stationary camera aimed on her. An assistant, Alison Leigh Robbins, monitored Facebook for any comments and questions streaming in.

"It's great to see you all, even if it's through a computer screen," Nelsen told the virtual audience.

Through Facebook, viewers sent her virtual hearts and notes of en-

couragement, calling her "the cheese guru."

Nelsen gave them detailed explanations of the cheese lineup, throwing around words like "washroom" and "it's kind of squidly."

One variety, the Winimere — a soft, decadent cheese wrapped with spruce bark — got a detailed description. Nelsen called it, "Like a sexy woman in the red dress that stands out from everybody else. That is this cheese."

At that point in the broadcast, 73 people were tuning in, even more than she would've had during a normal SideDoor event.

Nelsen took some time to answer viewer questions, which Robbins read to her.

One was the best way to store cheese. "I don't do it often," Nelsen noted. "I sit there and eat it."

She added that if you have to, wrap it tightly with something like Saran Wrap, making sure there are no air holes. Sweat will build unwanted mold.

Nelsen noted that cheese was as important as ever during a troubled time. Eating it releases dopamine in your brain and makes you happy, she said.

"And right now," she surmised, "we all need that, so buy a little cheese."

To Nelsen's fans and anyone who loves cheese, that April evening she certainly was an essential worker.

On July 30, Nelsen hosted another virtual cheese tasting. It was the same format as before, but this time the *fromage* was from five different countries. Robbins again helped with the video and reading live comments.

At one point, when getting excited about the possibilities about mixing and matching, she waved her hands and accidentally tipped a glass of chardonnay.

"No more wine for Tracy!" Robbins joked. "You've been tasting too much today, Tracy. I'm cutting you off."

"No, I haven't," Nelsen replied, cleaning up the broken glass. "I have not been tasting enough!"

She soon found another glass and refilled it.

The rest of the presentation went off without a hitch.

But one variety added a new dimension to everything. It was a bold French blue cheese by Herve Mons called 1924 Bleu. Nelsen noted that it had been aged in a cave.

"It has that cave look," she said, holding up the block.

It gives it a mustiness, tangy, peppery, "big and bold" flavor. Now, everyone knows: Amazing cheese can come from caves.

At Lawry's Restaurants, the Pasadena-based company that owns SideDoor and Five Crowns, Nelsen's unique contributions are noticed.

Ryan O'Melveny Wilson, Lawry's chief marketing and strategy officer, said her expertise in cheese, wine, beer and spirits adds "an extra layer to the dining experience at Five Crowns and SideDoor that our staff and guests find incredibly valuable."

He added that her cheese program, wine events and classes "open our guests' eyes to the beauty of the perfect pairing. They leave the events with an understanding and appreciation of the product, bringing them a new level of enjoyment."

"She's one of the reasons why our guests keep coming back."

BRADLEY ZINT is a contributor to Times OC.



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TimesOC

A Times Community News publication serving Orange County

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TimesOC is published Sundays by Times Community News, a division of the Los Angeles Times. Subscriptions are available only by subscribing to The Times, Orange County.

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“Now that I sit down, it just went by so fast, it doesn’t even seem like it’s been that long. But I lost a lot while I was locked up.”

— David Stringer

on being released after more than 17 years in prison

RELEASE

Continued from page R3

he was convicted of the same crimes today.

Stringer was suffering from chronic hypertension, vascular dementia and high cholesterol.

In its decision, the court stated that Stringer “is experiencing a serious deterioration in physical and mental health because of the aging process ...”

Katie Tinto, director of the UCI Criminal Justice Clinic, said it was crucial that Stringer was released now because there’s a COVID-19 outbreak in the South Carolina prison where he was serving time.

“They were right on point with everything,” Stringer said of the UCI students. “I didn’t have to ask for anything, they were right there for me.”

Stringer fought for his freedom for many years.

A UCI professor first represented Stringer with a request for clemency under President Obama. That clemency petition sat pending for several years.

Then in 2018, Congress expanded compassionate release with the First Step Act. Under the bill, an inmate can bring their own motions for compassionate release if the Bureau of Prisons fails to make a timely decision on the matter. Prior to the bill, many sick and elderly inmates died in prison while waiting for a judgment by the bureau.

Pasichow, along with fellow law student Harrison Weimer, picked up Stringer’s case.

Weimer, who will graduate with Pasichow next year, said the experience

was one of the best he’s had at UCI.

“This was a really cool and unique opportunity to work on something that was so real and affected real people ...” Weimer said. “This was a really rewarding experience. And it’s even better that it was a fantastic result.”

Stringer was considered a model inmate while in prison, even being admitted to a “trustee camp,” which is only reserved for the most trusted inmates, Pasichow said.

Stringer said one of his favorite ways to pass the time in prison was his music. He taught music theory to other inmates. At the beginning of each class the students would form a band with Stringer and play blues.

“We really had a good time with the music,” Stringer said. “A lot of them didn’t know they could play or they could read music as well as they could until the class got going.”

Stringer plays the trumpet, clarinet, tuba and baritone and french horns.

Stringer is going to be living with his daughter and grandchildren in North Carolina. He had plans to open up a Cajun food restaurant and a lounge with live entertainment, but COVID-19 has stalled that effort.

Once they are able to open up that restaurant, Stringer plans on performing the musical entertainment.

“But everything’s going good, I’m having a heck of a good time,” Stringer said, laughing. “I’m enjoying getting back into society.”

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MOBILE

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lish and Spanish — on various COVID-19 assistance programs, including utility and rental assistance.

Residents don’t need to have insurance or be symptomatic to be tested. Test results come back within two to three days, Eakins said.

The city is contracting with Medica Healthcare for the testing.

The city will notify neighborhoods of the mobile testing a day ahead of time with door hanger notices. Announcements will not be made citywide to reduce overcrowding and help the center observe social distancing, Eakins said.

The city specifically chose multifamily housing neighborhoods in ZIP codes that have the highest case counts of the virus. Many residents in those neighborhoods are essential workers.

Eakins said the mobile

center is an important part in getting the virus under control in the city. The high-density nature of the neighborhoods makes it easy for the virus to spread when one member of a household catches it.

“Sometimes the housing has a large number of people living in single units,” Eakins said. “So when someone is sick, it makes it very difficult for somebody to stay away from the others.”

The mobile testing is funded with part of \$28.6 million of federal CARES act money the city was recently granted by the state.

Through the federal funding, the city is also providing rental assistance, landlord assistance, grants for small businesses, financial assistance for artists affected by the virus and utility bill assistance, among other programs.

The city is also funding “isolation” assistance, where family members can stay in a hotel away from infected members of



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

MARIA CUAMATZI with Medica, left, gives instructions on how to complete a COVID-19 test to Daisy Rueda in Santa Ana on Wednesday. The city rolled out a Mobile Resource Center that day to provide free testing, masks and information on assistance programs for those neighborhoods most impacted by the pandemic. Test results come back within two or three days.

their family.

The city is also providing testing for all Santa Ana residents on Saturdays and Sundays at Santa Ana College.

Santa Ana’s COVID-19 case count was 9,247 as of Friday afternoon, according to the Orange County Health Care Agency. Ana-

heim has the next highest number of cases of any Orange County city with 8,204.

“We are going to these neighborhoods for a reason — they are most at risk,” Eakins said.

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TESTING

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and are operated through a partnership between the Orange Care Health Care Agency, the cities of Anaheim and Costa Mesa and 360 Clinic. Laboratory services are provided by Fulgent Genetics.

Rep. Harley Rouda (D-Laguna Beach), who attended a news conference marking the opening of the Costa Mesa site, said the boost in testing capacity is vital.

“This long-anticipated step of providing testing has finally arrived, thank goodness, for people of Orange County who desperately need testing and tracking, as well as masking, distance and leadership,” Rouda said afterward.

The new site opened a day before county health officials reported 369 new coronavirus infections and 29 deaths from COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, bring-

ing countywide cases to 47,459 and total fatalities to 947. So far, a total of 616,911 tests have been given, including the 5,767 reported Thursday.

It has been one week since Orange County was removed from a state virus watch list. If testing positivity rates, new cases and hospitalizations remain within thresholds defined by the California Department of Public Health, county schools may resume in-person instruction.

O.C. Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Michelle Steel said bringing the Costa Mesa testing site online is timely, as many teachers, students and school employees prepare for the potential reopening of school campuses in the wake of steadily declining countywide infections and hospitalizations.

“We understand that, with the start of school, there will be a need for our teachers, students and families to use super sites

such as Costa Mesa to ensure that they are free from COVID-19 in order to return to the classroom,” Steel said.

“This site can get people in and out quickly and return their result within 48 to 72 hours,” she added.

Earlier this month, Board of Supervisors Vice Chairman Andrew Do and 4th District Supervisor Doug Chaffee introduced a motion to allow schools to use the county’s testing capability to meet state guidelines for school reopening. It passed unanimously.

Do said Wednesday the county has four testing sites that together are conducting about 3,800 tests per day.

“I cannot understate how important this testing capability is and how it fits into everything we’re doing in the county to open up,” he added.

Dr. Clayton Chau, director of the Orange County Health Care Agency and newly named county health officer, estimated

the Costa Mesa testing site would likely process about 500 tests per day in the first week, before ramping up to around 1,000 daily tests by month’s end.

Costa Mesa Mayor Katrina Foley said the city was proud to host the new site alongside the O.C. Fair & Event Center and to help provide a vital means of identifying and isolating potential future hot spots for the virus.

Foley, who took a test at the site the day before in a dry run, said the process was simple.

“If you think you are at all exposed to anyone who has COVID-19, you should go online, check the box ‘exposed’ and come get tested,” she advised.

To register for free coronavirus testing, visit ochealthinfo.com/covidtest or call 1 (800) 446-8888. To learn more about who can be tested, visit ochealthinfo.com/supersite.

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