



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**DEBBIE AVOUX-DAVIS**, a new exhibitor at the Art-A-Fair, has painted a mural on site, which visitors will see along with her colorful octopus paintings during this summer's show.

## Backdrop to the art scene

Debbie Avoux-Davis created a tropical mural for visitors to enjoy this summer at Laguna Art-A-Fair.

BY ANDREW TURNER

Laguna Beach has its allure throughout the year, but in the summertime, the art festivals at the mouth of the canyon become as much of a destination as the city's beaches.

A range of creative works, from ceramics to woodwork, and from painting to photography, will be seen throughout the grounds of the respective festivals.

Less often — unless it's in the Pageant of the Masters — do you

see large-scale paintings featured among the artwork brought on site by the exhibitors.

Laguna Art-A-Fair will take a different approach this year, as Debbie Avoux-Davis was called on to produce a mural after being juried into the summer show.

Avoux-Davis, a first-time exhibitor, expressed excitement about being included among the artists at Art-A-Fair, which pulls from an international talent pool. Approx-

See *Art*, page A8



**AVOUX-DAVIS** was inspired to paint octopuses after watching a Netflix documentary called "My Octopus Teacher."

### CLASS OF 2024

## Vietnamese dual-language students mark milestone

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

A ceremony at Warner Middle School in Westminster saw the first-ever cohort of Vietnamese dual-language immersion students in Orange County promoted to high school.

Santina Vu, an eighth-grader, earned the Superintendent's Award at the Tuesday ceremony and is one of 18 students to have pro-

moted from the cohort.

"I learned a lot of skills through the program," she said on the day of her promotion. "I also got closer to the Vietnamese community."

Westminster School District's groundbreaking program first started in 2015 with a kindergarten class at DeMille Elementary School in unincorporated Midway City near Little

Saigon, the largest hub of Vietnamese Americans in the United States.

At the time, schools in Texas, Oregon and Washington had similar programs, but there were none in California.

Since then, school districts in Anaheim and Garden Grove have offered Vietnamese dual-

See *Students*, page A3

## Javier's reopens in Newport Beach after major remodel

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Over the past two weekends, guests have swarmed around the host podium outside Javier's Restaurant in Newport Beach. Reservations are not required, but they are recommended since it seems everybody is interested in dining at the recently reopened elevated Mexican restaurant. Staff are calm and professional, and guests are mostly understanding and excited to be back as they wait to be seated.

Javier's reopened on May 17, after being closed for nearly six months of remodeling at Crystal Cove Promenade on Pacific Coast Highway, where its neighbors are other highly lauded Orange County restaurants like Marché

Moderne and A Crystal Cove. Late last year, Javier's announced its plans to temporarily close its Newport Beach location for construction.

"It was tough, but we knew the finished product was going to be worth it," said Javier Sosa Jr., general manager and son of the restaurant's namesake.

The renovated space now has a more open-air feel, with unobstructed views of the ocean.

"We are in an area by the ocean, we wanted to take advantage of that," said Sosa. "At the same time we wanted to grow the restaurant a little more."

The ceilings are a little higher, and the space is less dark and moody, with a color scheme that incorporates a lot of creamy off-

white.

"The first difference people are going to notice are the colors," said Sosa. "And obviously how much wider and brighter it is."

The expansion has added roughly 50 to 60 seats to the restaurant. The small four-seater bar that used to sit in the corner of the dining room has moved to the center. The now 26-seat bar faces Pacific Coast Highway and the ocean.

Initially the restaurant had planned to open by March, but heavy rains set back construction, said Paul Kurz of PKJ Construction, Inc., who handled the remodel.

"We suffered a lot of rain delays

See *Javier's*, page A7



Don Leach | Daily Pilot

**GUESTS ENJOY** the new dining and bar space at the remodeled Javier's in Newport Coast, Newport Beach.

## Stanton 'proud' of focus on new housing

As part of Project Homekey, 3 former motels in the city are now sites of permanent supportive housing.

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

When Virginia Guevara first became homeless in 2016, she never thought of scrounging up enough money to stay overnight at motels.

Guevara, 66, lived out of her car instead, before residing at a Buena Park homeless shelter for three years.

But everything changed on Jan. 4 when she moved into a studio apartment at Clara Vista in Stanton, the site of the former Tahiti Motel off Beach Boulevard.

"My expectations were blown away when I first got my place," Guevara said. "It has a kitchen, it has a bathroom and a full shower. This is a godsend for me."

Clara Vista apartments is one of three former Stanton motels along or near Beach Boulevard

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### ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



Courtesy of Wales Communications

**PIZZA PARTY: HAND-PICKED SLICES OF O.C.'S PIZZA SCENE**  
PAGE A6

**'DISNEY CONTROLS EVERYTHING': RESORT OVERSAW CSUF REPORT ON EXPANSION PLAN**  
PAGE A2

**INFLUENTIAL AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN NOTED AT MUSCO CENTER**  
PAGE A7

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# Disney oversaw CSUF's positive report on resort expansion plan

Contract between Disney and university's nonprofit gave the company exclusive ownership of the economic impact report.

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

Before voting on a massive Disney expansion in April, Anaheim City Councilman Stephen Faessel professed as conventional wisdom that what's good for the company is good for the city.

"There seems to be a lot of concern that we're not seeing everything," he said. "I'm not sure whether I need to see everything. Every time that there's been Disney investment, the city benefits."

Prior to the vote on DisneylandForward, the company's name for the nearly \$2 billion expansion, Disney provided Anaheim with a nine-page executive summary of an economic impact report prepared by the Woods Center for Economic Analysis and Forecasting at Cal State Fullerton.

The summary seemed to back Faessel's notion with data.

Its rosier projection stated that a full build-out of Disney theme park, hotel and vacation club entitlements would bring a "dramatic increase in tax revenue" to Anaheim. The estimated \$244 million a year from such expansion would double Disney's current fiscal contribution to the city.

But council members weren't able to review the full report before unanimously voting to approve the expansion.

Disney withheld it from the city.

Citing the report and communications about it as Disney's "exclusive property," CSUF also withheld documents from a TimesOC records request.

But an agreement inked last year between Disney and Cal State Fullerton Auxiliary Services Corp., a nonprofit that oversees educational contracts, was disclosed and sheds light on the extent of the company's control over the study that it otherwise described as "an independent economic analysis" on a DisneylandForward website.

The contract is clear that Disney owns the report, which is referred to as the "work product," in "perpetuity throughout the universe."

That includes all written work, research, questionnaires, spreadsheets and databases that may have informed the study's research and findings.

The ownership claim has rankled California Public Records Act experts.

"It's ironic that Cal State Fullerton is citing the 'strong public interest served by protecting the integrity of academic research' while hiding the report from the public and even redacting the fee paid for the report," said Karl Olson, an attorney who specialized in public records law before retiring after 42 years of practice. "Cal State Fullerton's attempt to hide the report from the public itself casts doubt on it."

Even though the payment was redacted from the contract, Woods Center co-director Anil Puri disclosed in a previous article that Disney commissioned the report for \$150,000.

Per its terms, Disney outlined that university economists would conduct research "to demonstrate the positive economic impacts generated by the Resort" on Anaheim, Orange County and California.

The company also had the right to request revisions within 15 business days of receiving drafts from the university's economists. Disney further called for the final report to be delivered after its authors incorporated the comments received from the company. CSUF economists also signed over any rights to challenge Disney in court or elsewhere over how the company decided to "exploit" the study.

"What's key is that Disney controls everything," said John Crompton, a distinguished professor of recreation, park and tourism sciences at Texas A&M University. "That's a reasonable thing for them to do. They paid for it."

Previously, CSUF received a \$75,000 grant from Disney to do a study in 2018, which found the Disneyland Resort generated \$8.5 billion in economic impact to Southern California.

That report also wasn't publicly released but wasn't tied to any public policy de-

isions.

Disney spokespersons declined to answer detailed questions about the more recent DisneylandForward study's terms, including whether they reviewed and revised the report.

"We were free to study any impacts that we deemed appropriate under the contract," said Puri in an email to TimesOC. "The report was independently written and produced with no interference from Disney or any other external entity."

The study used a forecasting model known as IMPLAN, which Crompton noted can be a valuable tool in past scholarly articles but is also subject to manipulation to produce the desired statistics sought

by study sponsors.

"I am in no position to criticize the Disney study because there's no methodology I can look at," Crompton said. "But it's interesting that it's Disney who provided the input data for the models. All the models can do is process the impact data they're given."

Before getting to work, CSUF economists agreed that Disney "has the right, but not the obligation" to share the report with Anaheim.

Mike Lyster, an Anaheim spokesman, said the city had no reason to question the university's forecasting figures.

"No economic impact report was required for the project," he added. "The



DisneylandForward

**RELAXED ZONING** rules gives Disney flexibility to construct new rides, hotels and stores as part of its Anaheim expansion

economic benefit of turning parking lots into visitor attractions is obvious."

John Pelissero, director of government ethics at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University, said that Anaheim and its elected officials still had the responsibility to consider both the positive and negative econ-

omic impacts of DisneylandForward.

"There has to be a level of independent analysis done by the city when it is considering a major set of policies that will largely benefit one corporate landowner," Pelissero said. "As a public official you can't simply ac-

See **Report**, page A3

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**PARKGOERS WALK** toward Sleeping Beauty's Castle in Disneyland.

## STANTON

Continued from page A1

that have been recently converted through Project Homekey, a multibillion-dollar statewide effort to build affordable housing for people who are either already homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless.

Aurora Vista, formerly the Riviera Motel, is conjoined with Clara Vista through a parcel purchased in between the two properties.

That lot is now home to an amenities area with raised garden beds, a computer lab and game room.

It's also where elected officials and key stakeholders cut through a blue ribbon on Wednesday in celebrating the grand opening of the three converted motels.

"No one ever wanted to do this in California," said Stanton Mayor David Shawver. "Everybody thought, 'Oh, this is going to be bad for my community, it's going to be bad for

my neighborhood.' But today, we proved them wrong."

Through Project Homekey, which is administered by the California Department of Housing and Development, the Stanton Inn and Suites was also converted to become Iluma apartments, which offers a mix of studio and one-bedroom apartments to qualifying tenants.

Together, the trio of converted motels in Stanton will provide 153 units of permanent supportive housing.

During the pandemic in 2020, Stanton Inn and Suites was repurposed as temporary housing through Project Roomkey, a statewide effort to get homeless people off the streets and into motel rooms during the public health emergency.

The permanent conversions that followed as part of Project Homekey come as a result of a joint effort between Stanton, Orange County and the nonprofit Jamboree Housing Corp.

Project Homekey provided \$23.5 million to acquire and convert the motel properties. The county pitched in \$6.5 million. Stanton, a small city, spent \$5.6 million on the projects, which accounted for 20% of its annual budget.

An additional \$30 million was secured from federal low-income housing tax credits.

Stanton is now home to three of six Project Homekey sites in the county, which is a point of public policy pride for council members.

"I am just very proud of seeing Stanton being a symbol of helping our homeless population," said Stanton City Councilman Donald Torres. "These developments within our city are that symbol of compassion."

The conversions are seen by city leaders as an inclusive approach to redeeming Beach Boulevard, once hailed as O.C.'s "road to summer," only to be saddled with motels that became magnets for crime



Eric Licas

**OFFICIALS WERE** on hand for the ribbon cutting at the grand opening of Clara Vista in Stanton.

in recent decades, as well as housing as a last resort for homeless people.

According to a recent count, more than 7,300 people are homeless in O.C., a 28% increase from two years ago. More than half of those are living on the streets, and nearly half of unhoused adults experienced homelessness for the first time in the past 12 months.

The three Project Home-

key communities offer supportive services to their tenants, including VA programs, as 20 units are specifically designated for homeless veterans. Other services come in partnership with Homes First with 10 units dedicated to people with significant mental disabilities.

Each community comes with an on-site manager's unit. Rent ranges from

roughly \$725 to \$825 per month. Some subsidized tenants may pay as little as \$50 per month toward their rent, as they pay 30% of their total income.

Clara Vista, which was completed in December, is already almost at capacity with only a handful of roughly 400-square-foot units left available.

For Guevara, who fell on hard times after taking care of her father who suffered from dementia, Clara Vista represents a new lease on life.

She is looking forward to becoming a certified caretaker and wants to travel outside of the state to see family with stable housing now secured.

It's a message Guevara brought before stakeholders at the grand-opening celebration.

"We are more than just statistics," she said. "We are people with dreams and hopes."

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# Family makes move to confront early-onset Alzheimer's

BY MATT SZABO

An 11-year-old dog named Banzai scampers across the floors at the Watermark Laguna Niguel retirement community.

This kind of energy isn't always so obvious in such an environment.

Then again, Andrew Hollinshead and his wife, Laura, the mutt's owners, aren't your typical retirement community residents.

Andrew and Laura left their Laguna Beach home to move into the facility in January. It may have been a surprising step to some, but it ultimately made sense to them.

Andrew was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's disease in 2019, at the age of 49.

"I knew some of the signals," he said. "The first signal was that I couldn't do a

tip on a bill."

Laura saw other signs from her husband of nearly 25 years. Their daughter Sarah, in high school at the time, told Laura that Andrew had told her she could go out. Andrew had no recollection of that.

Then there was the time when he decided to cut cables outside of their house. In another instance, she came home and a random person was sitting in the living room.

"He decided to clean the stove and got something that was very strong, and ended up taking all of the numbers off our stove," Laura Hollinshead said. "Luckily it was gas and you can see the flame, but there were these things that were happening that I had to figure out how to deal with, keeping him safe."

According to the Alzheimer's Assn., about 6.2 mil-

lion Americans 65 and older were living with Alzheimer's in 2021. Early-onset Alzheimer's, diagnosed before that age, accounted for about 5% to 10% of those cases.

Andrew Hollinshead got a terminal diagnosis and was forced to quit his job at Capital Group in Irvine. He began seeing Dr. Seyed Sajjadi, a neurologist at UC Irvine.

"There's seven different degrees of Alzheimer's, but UCI only breaks it down into three," said Laura Hollinshead. "Based on his cognitive tests and where he was heading, he was at a Level 2, which pushed him out of qualification for any drugs because he's gone past the window."

She thought about "Alzheimer's proofing" their home. But late last year, the family met with Watermark Laguna Niguel executive



**ANDREW AND Laura** Hollinshead at the Watermark Laguna Niguel. Andrew was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's at the age of 49.

Don Leach | Staff Photographer

director Chris Tharp.

"We were talking to Dr. Sajjadi, and he said it was good idea to look at places for Andrew to eventually live in," Laura Hollinshead said. "But when we came here and met with Chris, he said, 'Have you thought about both of you living here?' With everything that

was going on, I thought that it might be a really good situation for both of us. We're both safe."

They moved into a unit at Watermark in January, soon after the facility opened. The benefits are numerous. They fully enjoy their time together, they have programs tailored for Andrew's needs, and he is getting familiar with the community to help make a smoother transition into memory care when the time comes.

Andrew, now 55, still golfs. In fact, he did well at the recent Laguna Niguel Chamber of Commerce golf tournament, though his memory issues mean he now needs assistance in selecting the right clubs.

He said he also takes Banzai for plenty of walks and arranges flowers for the ladies of the community. Andrew, who is British, even started a tea class at Landmark in March.

As importantly, Andrew has emotional support when Laura, a chief creative officer for a manufacturing company, has to go away on business trips.

"What I dialed in on was, let's remove limitations and change them out for possibilities," Tharp said. "No longer are you worried about Andrew, and [Laura] can focus on her life. She's a successful professional, and we're taking the burden of care and what are you going to have for dinner? Andrew now is just a big part of the social dynamic here."

Their house in Laguna Beach is still being used. Sarah and Andrew's stepson, Bryan, both live there,

at least for now. Bryan is getting married in Iceland in August, and Andrew and Laura will both be attending.

Laura believes this solution, though unusual, has been paying off.

"He's doing better here than at home because there's a schedule and a routine," she said, adding that her husband's long-term memory remains great but he doesn't remember conversations from minutes ago. "His moments of clarity are less. We have the same conversations over and over again, he loses track of time and days and stuff. But they're really good here. They'll knock on the door of our room and come and get him for exercise, so that he doesn't have to always try to be managing things. I just think the consistency and the care are helping us to kind of keep this at bay."

Laura is in an early-onset Alzheimer's support group, and the couple has gone to a few events put on by comedian Seth Rogen, whose mother-in-law experienced early-onset Alzheimer's in her 50s. They've also been twice been asked by Dr. Sajjadi to speak to medical students at UC Irvine.

As for Andrew, he remains engaged, laughing often.

"He's a super-happy guy," Laura said, grasping her husband's hand. "That's been one of the biggest blessings."

Andrew laughed again. "Well, I'm on meds," he said.

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Dr. Maheswari Senthil is a nationally recognized surgical oncologist who specializes in the management of advanced abdominal cancers.

## REPORT

Continued from page A2

cept the arguments that are being presented to you by Disney and its hired consultant about this without being able to do your own due diligence on the project."

Anaheim has not commissioned a study of its own on the project.

After DisneylandForward's final approval in May, the company sent celebratory mailers to residents proudly hailing the next chapter of Walt Disney's legacy in the city.

The glossy mailers beamed that in addition to new themed lands, rides and entertainment arriving to existing Disney properties, the expansion would generate \$202 million in additional tax revenue for

Anaheim within 10 years.

DisneylandForward would also lead to 8,960 new construction jobs and 4,584 permanent hospitality jobs in that same time.

The stats came by way of the CSUF report.

For transparency's sake, Crompton suggested Disney could have released the full report while the city commissioned a study looking into the costs of expansion to provide "another side of the balance sheet."

But that didn't happen.

"It's unfortunate that economic impact studies are allowed to not be transparent," Crompton said. "When they're not transparent, it arouses people's suspicions, rightly or wrongly."

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## STUDENTS

Continued from page A1

language immersion.

In elementary school, Westminster School District's program mixes native Vietnamese- and English-speaking students with English-language-learning students. Core subjects are taught 50% in Vietnamese and 50% in English.

Coming from a Vietnamese-speaking household, Vu started the program at DeMille Elementary School in 2016 and has continued with such studies ever since.

By the time students reach Warner Middle School, they are enrolled in history classes where half of the instruction is in Vietnamese and half in English. They also enroll in a full-immersion language and culture course.

Dr. Kenneth Lopour, Warner Middle School's principal, said he already sees the benefits of Vietnamese dual-language immersion as he prepared to say goodbye to its first promoting eighth-grade cohort.

"The students who are in the program have significantly higher scores on average than the school as a whole," he said.



About 60 students studied under dual-language immersion at Warner Middle School this past school year as cohorts only continue to get bigger amid declining enrollment elsewhere in the county. Enrollment at DeMille Elementary School is always in demand.

"It is a real source of growth of students for our district," Lopour added.

Once reaching middle school, the program's students are more

involved with the local Vietnamese community, whether at festivals or events like a recent Black April commemoration where Vu read a poem in Vietnamese to mark the fall of Saigon.

"During the ceremony, I felt very connected to the Vietnamese people there," she said. "I also got a glimpse of their emotional well-being and felt connected to their history."

Diana Doan teaches seventh-grade Vietnamese dual-language

immersion classes and felt a special attachment to the program's first cohort — she was previously their fifth-grade teacher at DeMille Elementary.

From that unique perspective, Doan has seen the students' linguistic and academic growth up close.

"One of the most meaningful impacts is the confidence that the students build throughout the years," she said. "Every year, they get better and better. Every year,

they grow into themselves a little bit more."

Thanks to a partnership forged in March with Huntington Beach Union High School District, the cohort will have the opportunity to continue their dual-language immersion studies at Westminster High School in the fall as incoming ninth-graders.

According to Westminster School District, the program's K-12 pipeline marks a first for Vietnamese language instruction in the nation.

The model allows for students to become fully bilingual and biliterate while maintaining an essential part of their culture.

For Doan, now that the first cohort is heading to high school, she knows her former students will graduate and be well-positioned for the future.

"They really want to use their skills to give back to the community," Doan said. "No matter what their hopes and dreams are, not only are they going to be more desired when the hiring opportunity comes, but they can work in Westminster, their hometown."

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forum

COLUMN | **PATRICE APODACA**

# Resistance is growing in Huntington Beach

Pushback continues to intensify against the Huntington Beach City Council.

Whether that opposition succeeds remains an open question. But it is notable that those entities taking action are organized, influential and sophisticated in their efforts. They are using their platforms and resources in an attempt to counter the highly controversial measures promoted by a four-member council majority, and the people involved are as determined as they are passionate.

The four elected officials in question— Mayor Gracey Van Der Mark, Mayor Pro Tem Pat Burns and council members Tony Strickland and Casey McKeon — should take heed. The changes to city policy and operations that they have pursued, which are deeply unpopular with a large segment of voters, might not stand in the long run.



**THE FOUR CONSERVATIVE** members of the Huntington Beach City Council, from left, Mayor Gracey Van Der Mark, Mayor Pro Tem Pat Burns, Mayor Gracey Van Der Mark, Tony Strickland and Casey McKeon, listen to public comments at a council meeting.

To recap, since this group took control after the 2022 election, they have banned the rainbow Pride flag from city property; dissolved the city's human relations committee; approved a new policy that

eliminated references to hate crimes and included anti-transgender language; advocated for a ballot measure requiring voter ID that passed in March; and engaged in costly legal battles with the state over a \$5.4-

million settlement with the operators of the Pacific Airshow and their refusal to abide by California's housing mandate.

They have been aided in these efforts by the hard-charging city attorney,

Michael Gates, while they've been opposed by council members Dan Kalmick, Natalie Moser and Rhonda Bolton.

The battles over these issues have kept the city in the spotlight, and not in a good way. While many other communities in Orange County and across the country have taken similarly extreme steps, Huntington Beach has gained a nationwide reputation for its full-scale embrace of far-right extremism and intolerance — a reputation that many residents want no part of.

In particular, the council's attack on the city's public library system is generating a strong groundswell of community activism.

The City Council is in the process of forming a parent/guardian review board of up to 21 appointed members that will screen children's books for sexual content and references, superseding the decisions made by library staff regarding which books to include and where they should be shelved.

The council is also soliciting proposals to turn public library operations over to a private company. That idea came to them from former Huntington Beach Mayor Mike Posey, who now works for Library Systems & Services, a private operator of public libraries which would presumably be the front-runner to win a contract.

None of this makes sense to Dina Chavez, a board member and past president of the nonprofit Friends of the Library, which has 1,200 dues-paying volunteer members who run used-book sales, a gift shop, programs and fundraisers. The library would undoubtedly lose the \$250,000 the organization raises each year if the privatization plan is implemented.

Trusted and experienced librarians would also be lost, Chavez expects, because they would likely be forced to reapply for positions at lower salaries and benefits. Reduced levels of service would result.

"We're trying to stop this

See **Apodaca**, page A8

**CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS**

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**MAILBAG**

## Is transparency a flight of fancy in Huntington Beach?



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**AIRCRAFT FLY** away from the pier during the Pacific Airshow press conference in Huntington Beach in February.

Only in Huntington Beach can government transparency be controversial. Transparency is what protects us from graft, cronyism and corruption. Transparency builds trust and keeps our democracy safe and honest. Rules and procedures must be open to scrutiny and comprehensible; a transparent government makes it clear what is being done, how and why actions take place, who is involved, and by what standards decisions are made. Then, it demonstrates that it has abided by those standards.

Much is hidden from residents in my city by our extreme council majority: the settlement agreement for the Pacific Air Show, their plan to restrict books and eliminate librarians in the public library and detailed city finances. Our extremists and the city attorney are blocking residents from participating in the democratic process by restricting information. A transparent city council develops mechanisms for citizens to hold the government accountable. Citizens want to know if a decision was taken through correct procedures. Lack of transparency breeds corruption. In Huntington Beach, transparency is found in windshields, water, goggles, and wine glasses but not in our city attorney and extremist-four council majority.

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## O.C. can help keep control of House

Although the Democratic Party has made large inroads in Orange County in the last decade turning it from red to purple and giving the majority of votes in 2016 and 2020 to Donald Trump's opponent, it still must struggle to win elections.

What does that mean for local representation in Congress? First of all and most importantly, California congressional districts could determine control of the House. And in a presidential election I consider to be the most important in my lifetime, controlling the House of Representatives is going to be paramount.

Furthermore, one of the most important House races is in Orange County,

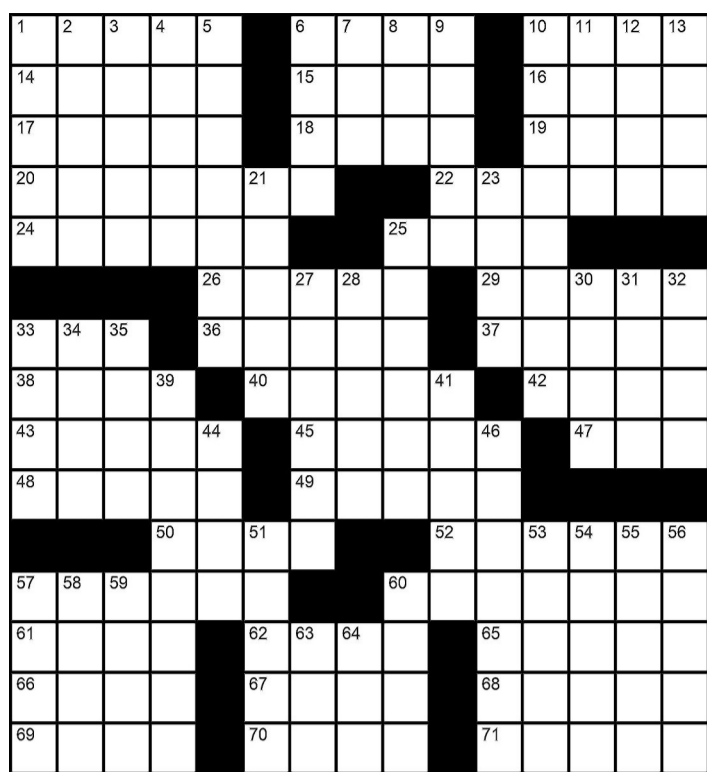
See **Mailbag**, page A5



**THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE**

By Stella Zawistowski

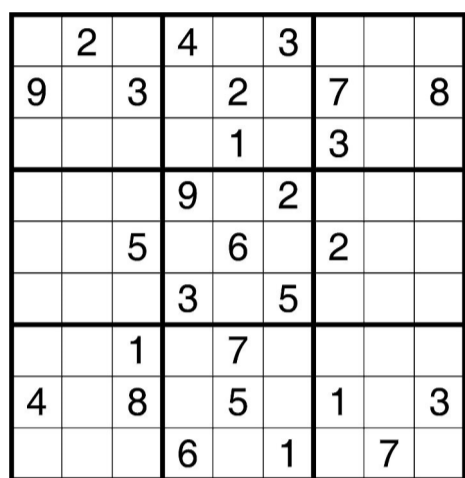
- ACROSS**  
 1 "Get out!"  
 6 Picks up the check  
 10 1978 Village People hit  
 14 Actress Maureen  
 15 Opera song  
 16 Actor Wilson  
 17 Soda bottle size  
 18 In the mail  
 19 Of sound mind  
 20 Requires  
 22 Cowboy's shout  
 24 Bully's retort: 2 wds.  
 25 Streetcar  
 26 Low-voiced singer  
 29 Snug-fitting  
 33 Natural \_  
 36 Try to get a job  
 37 Wayward  
 38 Up to no good  
 40 Serving of pie  
 42 Get honestly  
 43 Unbending  
 45 Instagram post part  
 47 Buzzy insect  
 48 Tropical salsa fruit  
 49 \_ cotta  
 50 With no warranty: 2 wds.  
 52 House and grounds  
 57 Shaped  
 60 Puts clothing on  
 61 "Makes sense": 2 wds.  
 62 Gets more mature  
 65 Injures badly  
 66 Secluded valley  
 67 Car horn sound  
 68 Venezuelan corncake  
 69 Cottony to the touch  
 70 \_ and ends  
 71 Snidely unkind
- DOWN**  
 1 Shoe bottoms  
 2 Fine dinnerware  
 3 In shabby condition



**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 A4.**

- |                             |                               |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 4 Locales                   | 10 El Capitan's national park |
| 5 Xylophone-like instrument | 11 Chef's kiss sound          |
| 6 Football throw            | 12 Wrestler-turned-actor John |
| 7 "_ you joking?"           | 13 Once more                  |
| 8 Yang's counterpart        | 21 By _ and bounds            |
| 9 Deity with goat hooves    |                               |

- 23 Consumes  
 25 Hot Wheels product: 2 wds.  
 27 Gymnastic moves  
 28 Icky residue  
 30 Quickly take  
 31 Rabbit's relative  
 32 Actress Daly  
 33 Hand sanitizer target  
 34 Athletic wear brand  
 35 One of twelve in the zodiac  
 39 Bone connector  
 41 "Snowy" bird  
 44 Medicine amount  
 46 Kodak founder George  
 51 The Gem State  
 53 Sparkly headpiece  
 54 The Ram  
 55 Entice  
 56 Written assignment  
 57 Newton fruits  
 58 Norway's capital  
 59 Coral formation  
 60 Poses a question  
 63 Deity  
 64 Finish

Tribune Media Services

**MAILBAG**

Continued from page A4

pitting Dave Min against Scott Baugh in the 47th District consisting of Irvine, Huntington Beach, Costa Mesa, Newport Beach and Seal Beach. Unfortunately, because of a bitter personal battle Min had to fight in the primary, his war chest is down. But his Republican contender has major vulnerabilities too, so the negatives could cancel each other out.

Before the primary election, Min was a college professor at UCI and is currently a state senator. He was endorsed by the L.A. Times and Katie Porter who would like to relinquish her seat in the 47th to Min. Baugh is a former state Assemblyman who ran unsuccessfully for Congress twice. The L.A. Times says Baugh is out of touch with the issues of the 47th, but nonetheless he ran a close race there against Porter two years ago.

The framers of the Constitution set up a federal system consisting of the state and central government, providing a division of power between the two.

They also provided a system of checks and balances among the three branches of the national government to keep any one branch from having too much power. They said nothing about political parties. In fact, Washington and the other founders warned against the factionalism they created.

In a perfect world, political parties could provide a workable division of power between the President and Congress. However, the fear that the founders had about political parties has been realized dramatically since 2016. Political dissension is threatening to destroy the ingenious form of gov-

ernment that our founders provided and our freedoms along with it.

**Lynn Lorenz**  
Newport Beach

**State Senate bill a ploy to influence local education**

As local school boards become the political battleground for the rights of parents, school choice and governance of local control of education, a troubling state Senate bill (SB 907) advances in Sacramento authored by state Sens. Dave Min and Josh Newman. This bill's outcome is clearly intended to weaken the pro-charter and pro-parental rights majority of the Orange County Board of Education (OCBE). A story by Daily Pilot reporter Sara Cardine, (Is a bill to reconfigure the O.C. Board of Education and its elections about democracy or politics?, May 24) indicates that Sacramento politicians, led by Min and Newman, are craftily engaging in raw Machiavellian political power and politics. Many Orange County parents already view SB 907 as a ruse used against Orange County residents and voters, a raw political power grab in response to the recent election campaign victories by OCBE trustees that created a pro-parent and pro-school choice majority.

Newman and Min want to gerrymander local control of education by expanding OCBE's composition and current trustee boundaries. This is a similar political tactic that many Washington lawmakers want to do to the U.S. Supreme Court. By stacking the OCBE with their candidates, California's only governing political party effectively and simply destroys local control of education here in Orange County. SB 907 basically redistricts and expands the OCBE by an unelected

and unaccountable county committee, that is controlled by anti-charter and union protagonists. Newman boasts on his X account that his SB 907 is simply "modernizing" the Orange County Board of Education. If Newman and Min's logic is true, then they should legislate and apply "modernizing" and expanding the current O.C. Board of Supervisors to seven members from five. The supervisors represent the same constituents as the OCBE. But do the voters really believe Newman and Min's deception? No, they do not. Even Newman's political challenger in the November state Senate race, Dr. Steven Choi, has criticized SB 907.

SB 907 is opposed by moderate-minded and centrists Democrats, independents, and the California Charter School Assn.

Even the moderate leaning California School Boards Assn. objects to the bill. In the senate bill analysis of an argument in opposition, the CSBA stated SB 907 "sets a troubling precedent by singling out and manipulating just one county board of education for manipulation. By doing so, SB 907 tramples on the will of local voters by legislating the addition of two additional seats on the OCBE in an effort to dilute the current makeup of a locally elected governing board. This proposal enables the state to reach into communities to influence changes to a locally elected governing board, circumventing the long-standing normal process that requires a vote of the electorate to make a similar change."

So it is on record by the CSBA that Newman and Min are trampling on the will of the voters and removing local control of education.

**Dr. Ken Williams**  
OCBE member



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# Any way they slice it: O.C. pizza scene expands

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Wood-fired, hand-tossed or deep dish, Orange County has never been short on pizza options. Folks Pizzeria at the Camp in Costa Mesa slings some of the most craveable pizza, and its Caesar salad is a favorite of mine, too. There are hidden gems, like the Parlor in Tustin, tucked behind a corporate office building and open for take-out from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays and mysteriously closed on weekends, or the pizza at Vacation Bar in Santa Ana, which serves a Neapolitan-style pizza with deeply dialed-in dough. That's not to mention countless pizza pop-ups, like Lunitas Pizza and Focaccia Boi.

But a slew of new pizzaiolas have come on the scene in the last year or two. Here are four of my favorite parlors to join the pizza party in Orange County, serving distinctly different styles of pizza, either by the pie or one slice at a time.

## LOOSIES PIZZA

300 E. 4th St. Ste 103, Santa Ana, (714) 760-4444

A trip to New York City inspired friends and Santa Ana natives Miguel Navarro Edgar Garcia, and Daniel Anguiano to bring the pizza of the Big Apple to Orange County.

"Loosies is a group effort for sure," said Navarro.

Located in downtown Santa Ana's east end next to the Yost Theater, Loosies Pizza offers 18-inch whole pies and single slices or "loosies" in the style of New York City's best. That means a not-too-thick but not-too-thin crust that is crispy enough not to buckle under



Courtesy of Wales Communications

**ROMAN-STYLE PIZZA** offered up by the slice at Sugo in Costa Mesa.

toppings but still pliable enough to fold for easy eating. The trio keeps it simple with red sauce, mozzarella and pepperoni cups, the kind that curl and crisp with a tiny pool of meat juice in the center when baked, dotting the pepperoni slice. Red sauce, mozzarella, mushroom, bell pepper, red onion, black olives and Italian sausage crowd my top pick, the supreme pizza.

Loosies are all under \$5, and the tight menu offers Caesar and Caprese salads as the only alternatives to pie along with classic New York black and white cookies.

There are soft drinks and beer, and the shop has a few stools, patio seating and walls decorated with skateboard decks and framed pictures of celebrities. It's a mix of what the three friends are all into, Navarro said, and the exact type of relaxed atmosphere they were going for when they opened in 2022.

"It's such an awesome experience to be able to pull up and grab a loosie or pie with the homies," said Navarro, "We just wanted to provide a spot where you can hangout and enjoy

some pizza."

Loosies is open for dine-in, take out and late night too, closing at midnight on Friday and Saturday. Pizza bonus: Derek Bracho's pop-up concept, Focaccia Boi, takes over the kitchen every Wednesday, serving heavenly focaccia bread pizza from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m.

## SUGO

675 Paularino Ave., Costa Mesa, (714) 852-3580

Italian chef Sandro Nardone began making pizza in Orange County in 2012 and continues at Bello by Sandro Nardone in Newport Beach in 2019. Now he has turned his attention to pizza al taglio, or "pizza by the cut," a style he grew up with in Atina, Italy, located between Rome and Naples.

"In Rome, it's a very famous concept, and I wanted to bring this Pizza Romana to Costa Mesa," said Nardone.

Sugo, Italian slang for sauce, has been open for just a few months and only serves Roman-style pizza, made from a dough Nardone developed based on a recipe from Corrado Dimarco.

"Due to the high hydration, the quality and mix of

flours make the dough airy, light and crispy," said Nardone. "It's cooked at a lower temperature than our Neapolitan-style pizza that I make at our sister restaurant, Bello."

When you walk into the fast-casual concept, the rectangular pizzas wait behind glass to be selected and then sent into the oven on the small sheet pan they are served on. Some slices are traditional, like Margherita with tomato sauce, mozzarella, basil and extra virgin olive oil. Others are more creative, like the ono, piled with roasted pineapple, smoked mozzarella, Spam and pickled Fresno's or a Japanese pie, topped with sauteed mushrooms, mozzarella, bonito flakes, sliced porchetta and miso kewpie sauce. All are delicious, with a crunchy base and complex flavor combinations. There is even a sweet slice, slathered with Nutella and assorted fruit.

While the spot is casual with a few tables outside, Nardone said you can expect quality.

"Even though Sugo is a fast-casual establishment, I'm introducing high-end ingredients like fresh truf-

les, uni, bottarga (dry mullet roe) and more, giving it a step up in terms of experience."

You can order online for pick-up at Sugo until 11 p.m. during the week and 1 a.m. on Friday and Saturday.

## GIBRONI'S

555 N. El Camino Real Ste. E, San Clemente, (949) 312-2042

Gibroni's began as a pop-up in San Clemente, where Tony and Lindsey Gioutsos' Detroit-style pizza developed quite a following. The grand opening of their brick-and-mortar shop on May 17 resulted in a long line wrapped around the building that started cuing up for dinner as early as 3 p.m.

"It's the community," said Lindsey. "We definitely wanted to open here, both my children were born in this town, the fact that we can walk here, we really wanted to stay in town."

Tony was born and raised in Detroit and taught himself how to make the pizza of his youth, baked in authentic blue-steel pans from the automotive industry for crispy corners just like Detroit pizza icon Gus Guerra made. During the pandemic the couple sold pizza out of their home, two nights a week. Once things opened up again, Tony traveled to Detroit to train with professional Detroit-style pizza-makers who helped him refine his recipe. After a stint doing a kitchen take over at JD's Kitchen & Bar in San Clemente, the Gioutsos finally have a space of their own with a full bar, arcade, live music and even some hard-to-source items from the Motor City, like Faygo soda. Salads, pastas and wings are on the menu too, but the pizza is the headliner.

Gibroni's 8-inch by 10-inch pizzas are sliced in four and made with a thick Sicilian dough, with cheese all the way to the edge and sauce on top.

"We call it a butter crust," said Tony. "The corner slice is the best."

The corners are where the cheese and toppings caramelize to create satisfying crunch while the middle remains soft and chewy. "From the D" is the original Detroit pizza topped with double pepperoni, Parmesan cheese and complex marinara sauce. There are more sophisticated pies too, like the "Fun Guys!" topped with crimini mushroom, sausage and a porcini cream sauce finished with white truffle oil, or the Greektown, which showcases Tony's Greek heritage with gyro meat, red onions, feta cheese, grape tomatoes, fresh dill and a drizzle of tzatziki.

Seating is available at the bar, on the patio and at high top tables around the dance floor. A small stage features local bands and even karaoke on some nights. The bar and lounge is for ages 21 and over after 8:30 p.m., but you can order Gibroni's online for pick-up or delivery Thursday through Monday.

## TRULY PIZZA

24402 Del Prado Ave., Dana Point, (949) 218-8220

World Pizza Champion teammates John Arena and Chris Decker opened Truly Pizza in Dana Point last summer, using their award-winning pizza-making skills to create a two distinct styles of pizza.

"We have a round and a square pizza. The round is a more traditional, thinner New York style with our own Truly twist; a beautiful cornicione with the micro-blistered crust gives it a crispy exterior with a chewy interior," said Decker, who is also head pizzaiolo.

The square pizza, sometimes referred to as a "grandma slice" is deceptively light and airy with a great crumb structure.

"We took the properties

See **Pizza**, page A8

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**Richard Reitherman, M.D.,**  
medical director, breast imaging,  
MemorialCare Breast Center at  
Orange Coast Medical Center



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# 'Gospel Voices of OC' returns to Musco Center

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

When Debora Wondercheck began producing "Gospel Voices of OC," she hoped the artistic concert in conjunction with June-teenth would be come an annual tradition.

"I wanted it to become a staple in the county. I wanted it to be something where we could celebrate who we are," she said.

As the show returns for its third season to Musco Center for the Arts at Chapman University on Saturday, June 8, her dream is becoming a reality.

The word "gospel" comes from the Greek "euangelion" that translates to "good news." Christians use the word to refer to the teachings of Jesus Christ, and at their core, gospels are stories. Gospel music is a blend of African musical traditions and new forms that can be traced to the transatlantic slave trade and has always been about sharing a story.

"I called it 'Gospel Voices of Orange County' because within the African American community, our ancestors saw the church as a place where we would actually have a voice," Wondercheck said.

Produced by Won-



Photos by Karen Tapia | Greg Andersen

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY'S 2023 production of "Gospel Voices of OC" at Musco Center for the Arts.

dercheck, founder and chief executive officer of the nonprofit Arts & Learning Conservancy in Costa Mesa, and presented by Musco Center Presents and Chapman University's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, the concert highlights the influence of gospel music on our nation. The show traces the history from June 19, 1865, when news of the Emancipation Proclamation reached enslaved Texans, to the present with performances in choir, dance, band, spoken word, digital media and theater.

"The different voices that we are going to be celebrating, the voice of

dance, the voice of the choir, spirituals, jazz, blues all of that comes from what a spiritual is," said Wondercheck. "It is a retelling of a struggle that you are going through."

The concert will benefit the Arts & Learning Conservatory, a nonprofit that works with Orange County school districts to provide student scholarships and no-cost musical theater, band and string classes.

Wondercheck created "Gospel Voices of OC" three years ago out of the civil unrest that was happening in Orange County.

"With George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, all of the horrible things that there

were happening, I kept thinking there has to be a way to bridge our community together in celebration," she said. "So I came up with the concept of 'Gospel Voices of OC' to be a celebration of African American artistry."

Wondercheck envisioned the program as a way for artists and audiences to come together and honor the artistic works and historical impact African Americans have had on our nation.

This year's theme, "Sacred Sounds, Soulful Queens," tells the story of women who have influenced America's performing arts.

"We are honoring trail-blazing women who have made a huge impact in the world of the arts, and in our culture and our history," Wondercheck said.

"We are honoring these women because we want to make sure people remember who they are."

The work of Katherine Dunham, regarded as the queen of African American dance, will be honored along with singer/songwriter/guitarist Sister Rosetta Tharpe, who many credit with creating the distinct rock 'n' roll guitar sound that influenced artists like Elvis Presley,

Chuck Berry, Carl Perkins and later on, Eric Clapton. American Jazz pianist Mary Lou Williams, who composed original music and wrote musical arrangements for greats like Benny Goodman and Dizzy Gillespie, will also be highlighted.

"She influenced and trained Thelonious Monk, Charlie Parker," Wondercheck said of Williams. "But do we even know who she is? We are reminding people of these amazing women."

Contemporary artists will be signing and performing excerpts from these women's work. Like jazz guitarist and vocalist, Felicia Collins, best known for her work with Paul Schaffer and the CBS Orchestra on "The Late Show with David Letterman."

"She played Rosetta Tharpe on Broadway and she's flying in from New York to be our Rosetta," Wondercheck said of Collins.

Collins will be joined by vocalists Angie Fischer, Meloney Collins, Deidrick Bonnor and Singers of Soul in bringing these women's stories to the forefront at this year's show.

Dr. Reginald "Reg" Chhen Stewart, Ph.D. Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at

Chapman University said he is proud to welcome Wondercheck's production back to Chapman for a third year.

"Gospel Voices of OC' continues to be our community's premier showcase for the storytelling of the Black experience in the United States," said Stewart. "Chapman University is the host and a proud sponsor of the event and we encourage all to come and engage, learn and celebrate."

Wondercheck said she hopes Chapman University will continue to host "Gospel Voices of OC" annually. She also hopes the program will grow beyond Orange County.

"I always had in mind that this would be an annual event, but what is happening now is I am getting calls for it to grow across the state," said Wondercheck. "Eventually, I feel like it's going to be national."

"Gospel Voices of OC" takes place on Saturday, June 8 at Musco Center for the Arts at Chapman University at 7 p.m. Tickets can be purchased at musco center.org.

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Twitter: @SarahNMos

## JAVIER'S

Continued from page A1

in Southern California this year, which is abnormal for the area," said Kurz. "So it took a little longer than normal."

Kurz said he admires Javier's vision and is pleased with the way it turned out. "It's stunning; they really hit it out of the park with the resort feel," he said.

The remodel expanded the kitchen by lengthening the line with a new pantry and dessert station and adding equipment, like a

steakhouse broiler, that Sosa said will help the kitchen be more efficient. Salsas are made fresh daily along with specialty dishes like a Trio de Enchiladas Del Mar, with each enchilada stuffed with shrimp or Dungeness crab or Maine lobster. Servers shuffle out countless ceviches and crudos, like Aguachile Del Rey, to waiting tables.

The space and improvements are welcome for the kitchen that pushes out food for roughly 3,000 customers a night, Sosa said.

Javier Sosa Sr. first opened his namesake restaurant in 1995 in La-

guna Beach, where it operated for 13 years. Javier's opened a new location at the Irvine Spectrum in 2004 followed by the Crystal Cove restaurant and a space at the Cabo Azul Resort in Los Cabos, Mexico, in 2008. Today, the family operates four Southern California locations as well as the one in Mexico and a restaurant at the ARIA Resort & Casino in Las Vegas.

Javier's Newport Beach is also open for lunch, and while it isn't as overwhelmingly busy in the day as it tends to get at night, the parking lot is still full on a Friday afternoon.

"Ever since Javier's opened again, it's been like this," a security guard in a golf cart at Crystal Cove Shopping Center said as cars circled for parking near the restaurant. Javier's offers valet parking and a designated ride-share pick-up area. The security officer offered rides on her cart to Javier's guests, who parked at the end of the center.

Javier's Restaurant isn't just welcoming back excited guests either. Most of the staff who worked at the Newport Beach location before the closure have returned as well.

"We are definitely happy

to be back," said Francisco Del Carmen, who has worked as a server at Javier's Newport Beach since 2017. "It's great being back with my co-workers. We have a very strong bond, and seeing Javier Sr. come through that door, shaking hands with everyone from the valet to the front desk to the kitchen, and seeing Javier Jr. help us on the floor, those were the little things we were missing."

Sosa said Javier Sr. kept staff paid during construction to ensure that most of them would return to their old jobs. "We've had people

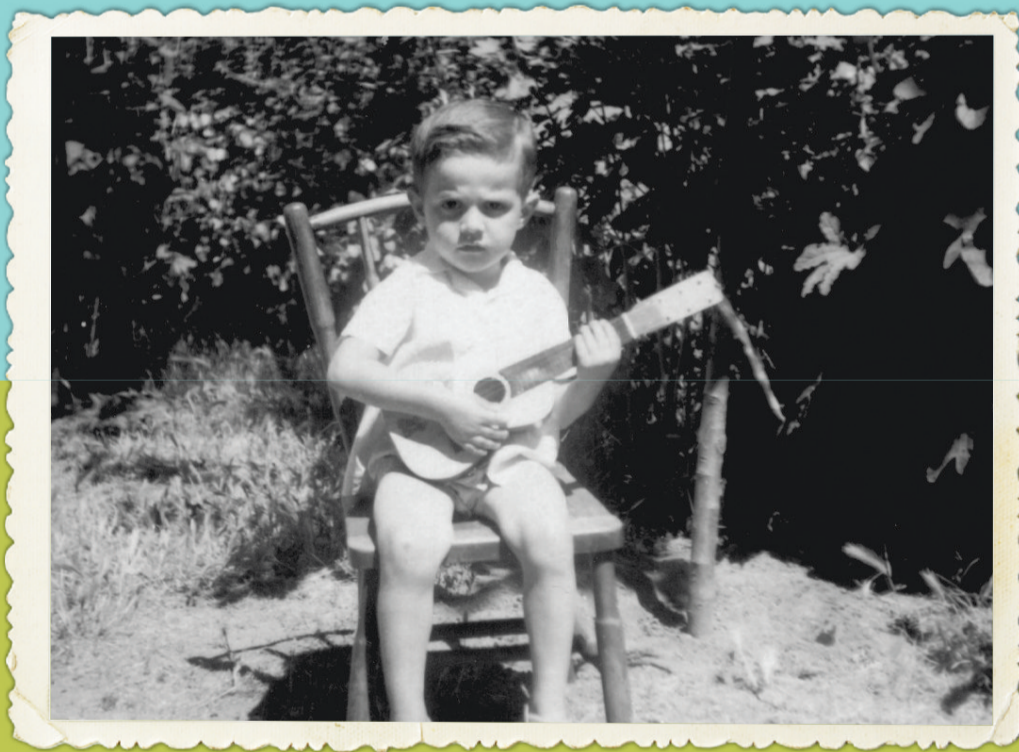
who have been with Javier since 1995," he said. "I am happy to say that everyone came back."

Sosa said the entire remodel was a labor of love, and while he is happy to see both guests and staff return, there is still room for improvement.

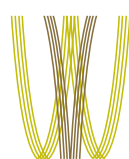
"We are still learning and we are still far from a perfect restaurant," said Sosa. "But we never stop learning, and we are always trying to find ways to make things better."

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# ART

Continued from page A1

imately 115 artists are in this year's show, which will be open to the public from June 28 through Sept. 1.

The introduction to the exhibitor side of the art festival scene has appealed to Avoux-Davis, who noted a "supportive" atmosphere in which "everybody just wants everyone to succeed."

"It's the first art show I've ever been in, and also, I've never shown my paintings on canvas before," said Avoux-Davis, who learned she was taken off the waitlist about two months ago. "This is the first time I've had a series of paintings, which I'm really excited about. It's the first time I've painted what I want because I've always been hired to do murals or commissioned pieces, things like that."

"It's been a long time wanting to create my own series of work, so I'm just excited that I got accepted because I just started at the beginning of the year creating my paintings. I thought, 'What the heck, I'll give it a shot. I'll try to send them into the show,' so when I got invited, I was very excited."

Kim Brandon-Watson, vice president of marketing and publicity for Laguna Art-A-Fair, said the festival received over 250 applications to exhibit work this summer. The applicants



Don Leach Staff Photographer

**DEBBIE AVOUX-DAVIS** poses with various artistic tools on Thursday at Laguna Art-A-Fair.

included artists from eight countries and 16 states.

While she was not brought into the show as a muralist, Avoux-Davis said Art-A-Fair officials sought her out for an additional project after viewing her social media. The San Francisco Bay Area native and Ladera Ranch resident has painted murals as full-time work for more than 30 years.

"Tropical Harmony," which she created for Art-A-Fair, prominently displays water birds among greenery. It includes a pair of snowy egrets in flight and a blue heron, as well as two butterflies.

A well-trained eye may also be able to spot a couple of ladybugs, a feature Avoux-Davis incorporates on her original canvases to represent her two children.

The 10-foot-by-24-foot mural has been positioned in such a manner that it will

serve as a backdrop to the live entertainment and dance floor at Art-A-Fair.

"I do a ton of murals at upscale apartment complexes, like in the garages or resident areas and things like that, so this is totally different," Avoux-Davis said. "I've never had a mural in such a location that's going to be so full of people and energy, and it's just so cool. This will be a really neat experience to have."

The live music and dance floor were among the steps taken to make the experience more engaging for festival-goers. Art-A-Fair reconfigured the layout of its booths last year to make it more open. With the mural, the festival has made another effort to offer something new to its guests.

"Debbie Avoux-Davis' mural is a spectacular addition to this year's exhibition," Robert Ross, board president of Laguna Art-A-Fair, said in a statement. "It perfectly embodies the spirit of Laguna Art-A-Fair and our dedication to presenting art that inspires and moves people. We are thrilled to have her work featured prominently at our event."

Positive reinforcement went a long way for Avoux-Davis in her artistic journey. She found herself being recognized in youth art contests, even when she felt she was covering up mistakes by adding to original drawings.

When she attended the Academy of Art in San

Francisco, she turned toward murals by picking up jobs off the job board. Avoux-Davis added that one of her first opportunities to paint a mural was for her sister's baby's room.

Some of her work can also be viewed locally, as she did a project on an exterior wall of the Corona del Mar High gym last year. During the summer showcase, Avoux-Davis will fill her booth with octopus paintings. A Netflix documentary, "My Octopus Teacher," served as the inspiration for her submissions.

"I just learned so much about octopuses," Avoux-Davis said. "They're so intelligent and creative and clever and sneaky. It's amazing. I think they're the most amazing creatures I've ever come across — the way they can change their color and completely adapt to their environment, they can change the texture of their skin, they can change the shape of their body to hide from predators and to catch their prey. ..."

"I just decided, 'How fun would that be to just start painting them and kind of create characters out of them,'" Avoux-Davis said. "... I just feel like I'm just going to paint what I love, and so far, the feedback has been amazing. I'm finding all these other octopus lovers. I had no idea how many were out there."

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# PIZZA

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we love about the Sicilian, Detroit and Grandma-style pizza and combined them to make our square," said Decker.

Earlier this year, Truly kitchen manager Sergio Balderas took home the grand prize in the traditional pizza category at the 2024 International Pizza Expo, and the team is always coming up with something new. A favorite 12-inch round is the Truly White with creamy onion and garlic sauce with melty caciocavallo and mozzarella plus indulgent stracciatella, all cut with the brine and spice of guindilla peppers. For the squares, I am partial to the Smoky Vodka, with house-made vodka sauce, semi-dried marinated tomatoes, mozzarella, stracciatella and a drizzle of pistachio lemon pesto to brighten the whole pie.

The restaurant feels like a piazza, bustling with activity in every area from the glassed-in kitchen and dining room to the ground level patio and upstairs terrace, all blanketed in lush lemon trees.

"Growing up in New York, I was surrounded by mom-and-pop pizzerias, and I saw what an important role those restaurants played in the community," said Decker. "It was more than just a place to eat, it was a gathering



Courtesy of Truly Pizza

**THE TRULY WHITE** topped with creamy onion and garlic sauce and guindilla peppers.

spot to see your friends and neighbors."

The well-rounded menu also has composed salads, wings, French fries and sandwiches served on house-baked focaccia. Save room to sample one the rotating flavors of soft serve for dessert.

As Truly comes up on its first anniversary this month, Decker said they are truly grateful.

"This first year has been a year of firsts, and we're so appreciative of all the love and can't wait to continue to serve all of you for years to come," Decker said.

Truly has switched over to summer hours and is now open Wednesday through Monday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

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# APODACA

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because there's actually nothing wrong with our library," she said. "There's no reason to do this. It baffles me that they're even considering such a thing."

So in an effort to raise awareness, the Friends of the Library has been distributing thousands of signs emblazoned with "Support Our Library" and "I (heart symbol) HBPL" messaging. They've been

on display all over the city — on lawns and in marches down Main Street — showing just how committed many residents are to preserving the current library system.

That sentiment is deep and broad, as demonstrated by a recent survey conducted on behalf of the Orange County Employees Assn., a public sector union with about 12,000 active members, including five management-level HBPL employees. The survey found that 67% of the city residents queried

said they opposed library privatization when they were initially asked.

After arguments for and against privatization were presented, the share of respondents in opposition rose to 74%.

"We didn't bake the cake to get a result that was engineered," said Tim Steed, OCEA's assistant general manager. "It's clear that the electorate opposes this decision."

And those marches down Main Street toward the pier — those are organized by Protect Hunt-

ington Beach, a group started in early 2023 when a few citizens became alarmed by the City Council's culture war agenda. It was later registered as a political action committee, and its aim is to educate the public and campaign against what its members see as dangerous changes to city governance.

Lately it is focusing its efforts on a petition to repeal the book review committee and on stopping the privatization of the public library. The marches draw anywhere

from 100 to 400 participants every Friday evening. Other methods the group employs include sit-ins, rallies and signature-gathering.

"The level of support we're getting from volunteers has been overwhelming," said Protect Huntington Beach's co-chair Cathey Ryder, a retired high school activities director and one of the co-founders of the organization.

"It truly is grassroots." If Huntington Beach City Council members are

paying attention — as they should — they'll realize that this kind of grassroots community activism has been proven throughout history to be highly effective. The growing movement to stop the council's wrongheaded policies should not be underestimated.

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



# What can end homelessness in Orange County?

Help solve the puzzle ➔

