

Daily Pilot

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Photos by Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

NICK BERARDINO, the president of the Heroes Hall Foundation, said he hopes the new outdoor area at Heroes Hall Museum will be a comfort to those who still vividly recall their fallen brothers and sisters and the perils they faced together.

Heroes Hall to break ground on pathway

A special groundbreaking ceremony at the O.C. fairgrounds will take place as Heroes Hall hosts its Veterans Day event.

BY SARA CARDINE

Those wishing to honor members of the military who've made the ultimate sacrifice in service to the nation may do so Saturday at Costa Mesa's O.C. fairgrounds when the Heroes Hall Museum hosts its annual Veterans Day ceremony.

The event, which takes place from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., will include a performance by the All-American Boys Choir and a viewing of the museum's current exhibit, "Armed Only with a Camera: World War II Photography of Stanley Troutman," on display through next September.

Attendees may also participate in a

groundbreaking ceremony for a new outdoor installation that aims to provide a place of calm and healing for veterans, their families and the wider community.

A new Serenity Walk will feature a winding pathway with benches, lighting and shade trees just east of the site's Pacific Amphitheater near the museum. Slated for completion next year, the space will include landscaping and special plantings intended to honor Purple Heart recipients.

OC Fair & Event Center board members in May approved spending \$500,000 for the project, accepting a

See **Museum**, page A4

HEROES HALL MUSEUM on the O.C. fairgrounds will offer a Veterans Day ceremony and the groundbreaking for its new Serenity Walk on Saturday.



THE NEW exhibit "Armed Only with a Camera: World War II Photography of Stanley Troutman," is on display at Heroes Hall Museum through Sept. 2023.

Trial begins in case of alleged drunk driver who fatally struck bicyclist in H.B. in 2019

BY ERIC LICAS

Prosecutors alleged during the first day of his trial Wednesday that a man previously convicted of DUI chose to drive drunk again when his BMW struck and killed a pedestrian in Huntington Beach, three years ago. His attorney, however, maintained he had suffered a concussion during a fight that impacted his ability to make decisions.

Victor Manuel Romero, 28, faces felony counts of

murder and hit-and-run in connection with a crash that left then-33-year-old Raymond MacDonald dead on March 30, 2019. The collision was one of the defendant was involved in before dawn that morning, Orange County Deputy Dist. Atty. Janine Madera told jurors during opening statements.

The defendant had been drinking that evening and was in a fight in the parking lot of Hurricanes, a bar and grill at 200 Main St., his

public defender, Madeline Berkley, and Madera said. Footage taken from social media and presented in court showed Romero getting knocked down, then repeatedly punched and elbowed in the head by a man mounted over him on the ground.

"Boom," Berkley said, each time a strike landed as the video played. "He's trying to protect himself. Nevertheless, blows keep landing."

The footage showed only

a small portion of the fight, Berkley said.

Witnesses to the altercation flagged down police. Romero was the only person who had been involved in it who was still there when they arrived.

When questioned, he said he was going to hail a ridesharing service, then told another officer minutes later that he would call his sister to pick him up, Berkley and Madera said.

See **Trial**, page A3

Conservative sweep likely in H.B. race

4 who campaigned together are set to take council seats next month, based on current results.

BY MATT SZABO

A new conservative majority is poised to be seated at the Huntington Beach City Council dais starting next month.

Pat Burns, Tony Strickland, Gracey Van Der Mark and Casey McKeon have been campaigning together for months. Van Der Mark said they have done 110 meet-and-greets since the Fourth of July.

It apparently paid off for them on Election Day, as each member of the quartet found themselves well ahead of the rest of the field to fill one of the City Council's four open seats.

Burns, Strickland, Van Der Mark and McKeon led as the first results came in at 8 p.m. Tuesday. The margin got wider as the

night got longer, with the four candidates attending an election party at the house of City Atty. Michael Gates, a fellow conservative.

As of 5 p.m. Wednesday, Burns had received 24,689 votes, followed by Strickland (24,378), Van Der Mark (22,342) and McKeon (21,910).

Gina Clayton-Tarvin sat in a distant fifth place with 14,192 votes as of Wednesday evening, with four-term City Council member Jill Hardy in sixth place followed by Kenneth Inouye and Oscar Rodriguez.

Gates, who campaigned along with the winning quartet, had 29,617 votes as of Wednesday evening, outdistancing challenger Scott Field with 16,673 votes.

Van Der Mark and McKeon unsuccessfully ran for council in 2020 along with Tito Ortiz, who was elected before resigning

See **Sweep**, page A2



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

A VARIETY of events are planned to mark Veterans Day. Above, the Huntington Beach High School band performs in 2019.

Events throughout county to honor veterans and active military personnel

It's almost Veterans Day. Events will be held throughout Orange County this Friday as well as on the weekend to celebrate the holiday, which honors those who have served in the nation's military forces.

COSTA MESA

Among the community celebrations planned is a free event on Saturday, sponsored in partnership with the Heroes Hall Veterans Foundation at Heroes Hall on the Orange County fairgrounds in Costa Mesa. Hours are 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the hall's new "Serenity Walk" will take place Saturday afternoon.

FOUNTAIN VALLEY

Fountain Valley and the West Orange County Veterans of Foreign Affairs Post and Auxiliary 9557 will honor veterans at Veterans Park, 17635 Los Alamos St., on Friday. The event will

See **Events**, page A4



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

CHRISTINA KREBS, right, assists Brandon Mendez in processing his ballot at the Huntington Beach City Hall on Tuesday.

C.M. measure up in the air, voters back incumbents

Early results show candidates already in office hold lead, while Measure K faces uncertainty.

BY SARA CARDINE

As county vote officials continue counting ballots, preliminary results in the race for three contested seats on the Costa Mesa City Council favored incumbents, although the fate of the initiative they all supported — Measure K — is still uncertain.

In the at-large race for mayor, incumbent John Stephens was ahead in the contest as of Wednesday at 5 p.m., coming in at 54.1% with 10,135 votes. His contender, former state senator and Orange County Supervisor John Moorlach, trailed with 8,585 votes, earning 45.9% voter approval.

Stephens said he spent election night in the company of fellow Councilman Jeff Harlan and Katrina Foley, a former Costa Mesa mayor who is campaigning for reelection on the Orange County Board of Supervisors.

"This is my fourth campaign, and when you're done it's just great to not have to think about it, because on some level it occupies your mind always," Stephens said Wednesday. "But I'm doing great."

Moorlach — who spent Tuesday evening at Catalina Fish Kitchen in Costa Mesa with fellow GOP candidates running for city council, school board and utility district seats — said he was startled to see his vote count rise significantly from the initial tally of 38.5% as the night drew

See **Voters**, page A3



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

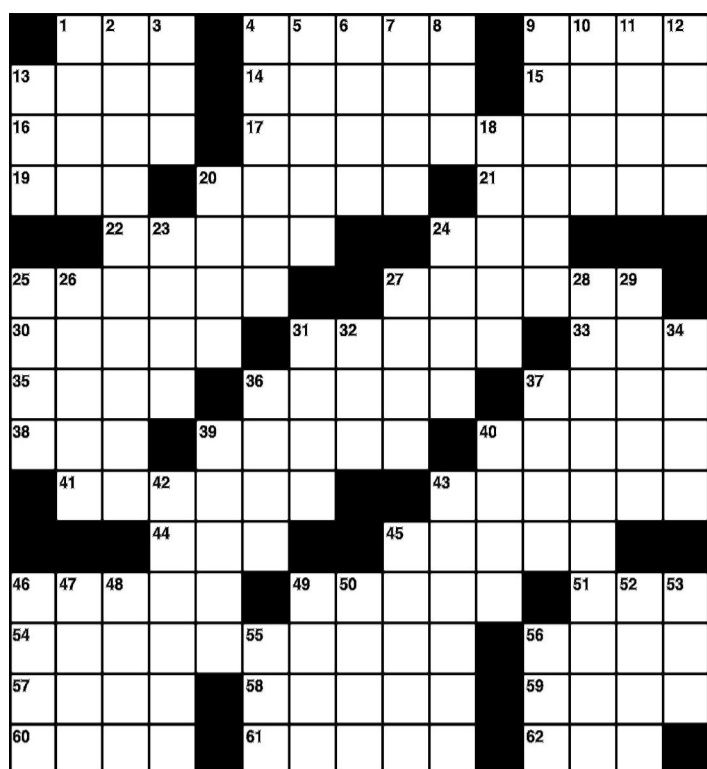
CONNOR MCCRORY fills out his ballot at the Norma Hertzog Community Center in Costa Mesa on Tuesday.

THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Jacqueline E. Mathews

ACROSS

- 1 Duke it out
- 4 _ out; eliminate bit by bit
- 9 Fundamentals
- 13 Group of quail
- 14 King or queen
- 15 Applaud
- 16 Singer Joan
- 17 Essential and urgent
- 19 Mongrel
- 20 Haywire
- 21 _ out; exhausted
- 22 Floored
- 24 Sunbather's reward
- 25 Teatime treats
- 27 Mamie's man
- 30 Enticed
- 31 Skirt fold
- 33 Jacket part
- 35 Provokes
- 36 Coral ridges
- 37 Soft cheese
- 38 Kick the bucket
- 39 _ four; tiny frosted cake
- 40 Explosive weapons
- 41 Albert & Fisher recipients
- 43 Medal of Honor recipients
- 44 Blushing
- 45 46th U.S. president
- 46 Elementary
- 49 Taters
- 51 Indignation
- 54 Trustworthy
- 56 Sore spot
- 57 Model airplane kit tube



For answers to the crossword, see page A2.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>DOWN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Suitor 2 Forced to toil too much 3 Closing trio 4 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, etc. 5 Like muggy weather 6 Swiss skier's milieu 7 Candy store chain 8 Get it wrong 9 Playing a role 10 Radar screen image | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 Fred & Wilma's home 12 Drove too fast 13 UK network 18 Look for expectantly 20 Filled with wonder 23 Tip jar fillers 24 Poet's contraction 25 Went down smoothly 26 Pierre or Marie 27 Skillful 28 Like voices in tune 29 Sioux or Crow 31 Shelter adoptees 32 Flowery ring 34 _ up; botch the job 36 Donna _ of old | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TV 37 Use a drill 39 Portion 40 Hospital furniture 42 Foolish talk 43 Obscure 45 Actress Delta 46 Tea holders 47 Ready, willing and _ 48 "Heart and _"; classic piano duet 49 Part of a shoe 50 Bucket 52 Well-to-do 53 Big game 55 Word from Scrooge 56 "Not _ long shot!" |
|--|--|--|

VOTERS

Continued from page A1

to a close. He said Wednesday afternoon, with little more than 18,500 votes counted the night before, that there was still a good chance he might manage a win as the Orange County Registrar of Voters continues to release daily updates this week. "There's got to be a bigger turnout than that," Moorlach said. "If the registrar tonight records more ballots, at the pace I'm going, I could pass John Stephens."



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

CAMPAIGN SIGNS line West 19th Street in Costa Mesa on Tuesday.

Although Councilman Manuel Chavez ran unopposed in District 4, several local voters still marked their ballots in his favor — as of 5 p.m. Wednesday, 1,062 individuals had cast ballots for Chavez.

District Councilwoman Arlis Reynolds, a Democrat, squared off against Republican challenger Rob Dickson and was leading with 62% approval Wednesday, compared to Dickson's 38% share of ballots cast.

MEASURE K CAMPAIGN A 'CLIFFHANGER'

Costa Mesa voters were also asked to decide the fate of Measure K, an initiative that would ease development restrictions in cer-

tain commercial and light industrial corridors in town by lifting a voter requirement codified by 2016 ballot Measure Y.

Although initial figures released Tuesday at 8 p.m. showed the proposal at a slight lead, by Wednesday afternoon, figures indicated 9,718 voters, 50.02% opposed Measure K, compared to 9,711, or 49.98% who supported it — a margin of just seven votes.

Supporters, including all four incumbent candidates, said the measure would ultimately spur new housing by allowing city officials to make needed zoning amendments in the se-

See **Voters**, page A4

TRIAL

Continued from page A1

But instead, he walked back to the parking lot to get into his car.

Romero's BMW struck a black Cadillac that belonged to the owner of Hurricanes as he pulled out of his parking spot, Madera said. Then at about 2:10 a.m., surveillance footage showed his luxury sports sedan running a red light and slamming into MacDonald as he was riding his bicycle at Beach Boulevard and Adams Avenue.

An Uber driver who was stopped at the intersection, David Vevia, told investigators his car shook as the defendant's BMW sped past him, Madera said. The witness got out of his car to check on the bicyclist, but he was already dead.

The BMW continued west until it crashed head-on with a tree at Lake Street. A homeowner's doorbell camera captured footage of the car going through a red light moments before the crash, then what appeared to be its driver running away

from the scene.

Police found a trail of blood droplets that began at the totaled sedan's driver side door and continued in the direction of Hurricanes, near where Romero was found seated at a fountain, visibly injured. Keys to a BMW were hanging from a lanyard around his neck.

The defendant denied driving that evening and insisted that his car was still in the parking lot. But Huntington Beach Police Officer Arthur Villa testified that Romero's vehicle wasn't found in the lot at the time, and his keys were able to unlock the one that crashed into a tree.

Berkley claimed her client suffered a concussion that may have been the reason he gave conflicting statements to police and witnesses at the scene. She noted that, under normal circumstances, he would call an Uber driver or his sister for a ride home like he told police he was going to do after the fight. She said that by then, Romero was "no longer present."

"Why does someone make a choice they otherwise wouldn't?" she asked

jurors rhetorically. "Is it because the neurons in your head aren't connecting? ... Because your brain has been shaken?"

Madera pointed out that Romero had pleaded guilty to driving under the influence in 2012. He was warned at that time of the danger such behavior posed to himself and the public and that he could be charged with murder following that conviction if he was later found to be intoxicated during a fatal crash.

Romero did recall those admonitions, as well as the months of court-ordered classes and thousands of dollars in fees associated with his prior conviction. But in conversations with police in a hospital following his arrest in connection with MacDonald's death, he was more concerned about the fight earlier that morning.

"I got slept," he repeated over and over during an interview following the crash, using a slang term for being knocked unconscious, Madera said.

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THU, NOV 10
MARC BROUSSARD



THU, NOV 17
DAVE ALVIN
JIMMIE DALE GILMORE



FRI, NOV 18
FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS



SUN, NOV 20
O-TOWN

- 11/10 **MARC BROUSSARD**
- 11/11 **KIDS OF CHARLEMAGNE (STEELY DAN TRIBUTE)**
- 11/12 **TYRONE WELLS**
- 11/17 **DAVE ALVIN & JIMMIE DALE GILMORE AND THE GUILTY ONES**
- 11/18 **FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS**
- 11/19 **BEATLES VS STONES - A MUSICAL SHOWDOWN**
- 11/20 **O-TOWN**
- 11/23 **HEARTBEAT CITY (CARS TRIBUTE)**
- 11/25 **LEE ROCKER OF THE STRAY CATS**
- 11/26 **WILD CHILD (THE DOORS TRIBUTE)**
- 11/27 **CHEST FEVER THE LAST WALTZ**
- 12/2 **WHICH ONE'S PINK? (PINK FLOYD TRIBUTE)**
- 12/3 **WHICH ONE'S PINK? (PINK FLOYD TRIBUTE)**
- 12/4 **FEE WAYBILL W/SPECIAL GUESTS**
- 12/8 **THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY FEAT. DANNY KORTCHMAR, WADDY WACHTEL, LELAND SKLAR, RUSS KUNKEL AND STEVE POSTELL**
- 12/9 **BERLIN**
- 12/10 **FLOCK OF SEAGULLS**
- 12/11 **PROGJECT 'THE ULTIMATE PROG ROCK EXPERIENCE'**
- 12/13 **SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS**
- 12/14 **TOMMY EMMANUEL W/MIKE DAWES**
- 12/15 **TOMMY EMMANUEL W/MIKE DAWES**
- 12/16 **GARY HOEY'S ROCKIN' XMAS SHOW**
- 12/17 **WALTER TROUT**
- 12/18 **WALTER TROUT**
- 12/21 **THE RAT PACK - CHRISTMAS SHOW**
- 12/22 **DAVID BENOIT: TRIBUTE TO CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS**
- 12/23 **AMBROSIA A VERY SPECIAL HOLIDAY SHOW**
- 12/28 **DONAVON FRANKENREITER / CHRISTINA HOLMES**
- 12/30 **L.A. GUNS**
- 12/31 **THE ENGLISH BEAT NEW YEARS' EVE!**
- 1/1 **THE ENGLISH BEAT**
- 1/6 **QUEEN NATION**
- 1/7 **QUEEN NATION**
- 1/10 **JAZZ IS DEAD 25TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR**
- 1/14 **THE PETTY BREAKERS (TOM PETTY TRIBUTE)**
- 1/21 **RONDSTADT REVIVAL (LINDA RONDSTADT TRIBUTE)**



FRI, NOV 25
LEE ROCKER
of The Stray Cats



SUN, DEC 4
FEE WAYBILL



THU, DEC 8
IMMEDIATE FAMILY



TUE, DEC 13
SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS

- 1/22 **THE HIGHWAYMAN SHOW**
- 1/25 **STEPHANE WREMBEL**
- 1/28 **ROBERT CRAY**
- 1/29 **HERMAN'S HERMITS FEATURING PETER NOONE**
- 2/3 **DESPERADO (EAGLES TRIBUTE)**
- 2/4 **DESPERADO (EAGLES TRIBUTE)**
- 2/10 **ARETHA STARRING CHARITY LOCKHART**
- 2/11 **OTTMAR LIEBERT & LUNA NEGRA**
- 2/12 **JESSE COLIN YOUNG**
- 2/16 **THE GILMOUR PROJECT PERFORM PINK FLOYD'S 'THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON' 50TH ANNIVERSARY**
- 2/18 **JOURNEY USA (JOURNEY TRIBUTE)**
- 2/24 **JOHN TESH - BIG BAND LIVE**
- 2/25 **DENNIS TUFANO / CANNIBAL AND THE HEADHUNTERS**
- 3/1 **ARTIMUS PYLE FORMERLY OF LYNYRD SKYNRD**
- 3/5 **SONNY LANDRETH W/ CINDY CASHDOLLAR**
- 3/11 **THE SMITHEREENS WITH GUEST VOCALIST ROBIN WILSON**
- 3/17 **THE FENIANS**
- 3/19 **GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA**
- 3/23 **PETTY CASH (JOHNNY CASH & TOM PETTY TRIBUTE)**
- 4/29 **CREAM OF CLAPTON: KOFI BAKER (GINGER BAKER'S SON) AND WILL JOHNS (ERIC CLAPTON'S NEPHEW)**
- 5/21 **LET'S HANG ON! (FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS TRIBUTE)**



DEC 14 & 15
TOMMY EMMANUEL



FRI, DEC 16
GARY "HO HO" HOEY



DEC 17 & 18
WALTER TROUT



FRI, DEC 23
AMBROSIA

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MUSEUM

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\$100,000 contribution from members of the nonprofit Heroes Hall Foundation to expedite the work.

Foundation President Nick Berardino, who served as a machine gunner for the Marine Corps in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968, said with more veterans dying every day, including by suicide, time was of the essence.

"About 2.7 million served in Vietnam, and now there's only 600,000 of us left," Berardino said Tuesday. "We can't wait. That's why I've pushed so hard."

The partnership allows for the construction of 11 pillars with nine additional monument plaques that pay tribute to Orange County veterans who've been recognized for special acts of service.

Carol Singleton, who oversees

programs at Heroes Hall, said the introduction of the Serenity Walk fits nicely with this year's celebration and its focus on healing.

"Since its opening in 2017, Heroes Hall Museum has become a place where veterans and their families feel safe to share their experiences and in doing so start on a path toward peace," she said.

"Many combat veterans continue to fight an internal battle long after their military service has ended, so it is important that we come together as a community to show our appreciation for their sacrifice."

Berardino, who's open about having sought treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder, said he hopes the new area will be a comfort to those who still vividly recall their fallen brothers and sisters and the many perils they faced together.

"People who are suffering



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

NICK BERARDINO shows where the new Serenity Walk for veterans will be completed at the Heroes Hall Museum on the O.C. fairgrounds. The pathway is intended to honor Purple Heart recipients.

from memories that are horrifying and seared into their brains are seeking peace, and we need to provide opportunities for that," he said. "This is an opportunity for that."

Heroes Hall is located at 88 Fair Drive, in Costa Mesa. Admission is free.

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EVENTS

Continued from page A1

start at 10 a.m. and can also be viewed online at facebook.com/furecreation.

HUNTINGTON BEACH

The city's annual Veterans Day ceremony and classic car show will take place Friday, with the ceremony at Huntington Beach City Hall beginning at 11 a.m.

The car show will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and include hundreds of classic collector cars, customs and motorcycles on display at the city beach parking lot at Pacific Coast Highway and Huntington Street.

Attendance for both events is free, but fees will be collected from those exhibiting their vehicles. Proceeds will go toward nonprofit organizations.

Additionally, Nuvision Federal Credit Union is hosting a breakfast from 8 to 10 a.m. Friday to honor veterans at the credit union's Huntington Beach location on Edinger Avenue. An outdoor ceremony is expected to take place between the Nuvision building and the Refuge church. Active military and veterans will have a catered breakfast and receive a \$25 gas gift card.

Those interested in participating should sign up at eventbrite.com/event/2022-nuvison-veterans-day-appreciation-breakfast-tickets-439319074177.

LAGUNA BEACH

An Air Force C-17 flyover will take place in Heisler Park on Friday, hosted by the First Marine Division Band, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5868 and American Legion Post 222.

The free event is expected to begin at 10:45 a.m., according to the Laguna Beach Chamber of Commerce.

NEWPORT BEACH

American Legion Newport Harbor Post 291 will mark Veterans Day with a ceremony and rifle volley on Friday. The "call to order" is set for 10:50 a.m., but doors will officially open at the post's 215 15th St. location at 10 a.m.

Guest speaker U.S. Marine Corps veteran Nelson Coburn will address attendees at the main hall from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., and the Ohio Trio Plus will play from 1 to 5 p.m.

Food will be available at what the organization says are "Vietnam era" prices for a box lunch and buffet dinner, though they are asking that gratuities match that of similar meals at the 2022 rate.

The dinner will begin at 5 and end at 8 p.m. No reservations are required to attend. More information can be found at al291.com/events.

— Lilly Nguyen



Scott Smeltzer

DEEDEE MCCRORY puts a sticker on jacket after voting in Costa Mesa on Tuesday.

VOTERS

Continued from page A3

lected areas without having to put the changes before voters.

Opponents, many of them citizens who worked to pass Measure Y in 2016, feared the initiative might lead to overdevelopment. They said an inclusionary housing ordinance requiring developers to build a certain percentage of below-market-rate units would be a more effective way to create affordable housing.

Stephens said while he answered constituents' questions about the initiative, he focused his campaign efforts on winning the mayor's race.

"I saw it as a separate issue for sure," he said Wednesday. "For some people, [Measure K] was really hard to understand, and if you get into the technical aspects of the measure, you lose people. What worked better ... was having a value-driven discussion."

Moorlach, who voted against Measure Y in 2016 but also opposed Measure K, said if voters elected him as mayor and approved Measure K, he'd be sure to seek resident input in any decisions made from that point on.

"It would be my responsibility to make sure my constituents understood why I was voting for development projects," he said.

Kathy Esfahani, a retired attorney who sits on the Yes on Measure K Steering Committee and Costa Mesa Affordable Housing Coalition, said although Wednesday's count was a "cliffhanger," she was heartened to see the opposition to the measure was not as strong as detractors had portrayed.

"It's clear there is no longer a consensus in favor of the no-growth position that was behind Measure Y in 2016," she said. "The people are willing to empower their city council to make smart decisions on growth and create housing where it makes sense."

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SWEEP

Continued from page A2

of Trustees as its president. Her current term runs through 2024.

Still, she decried the numerous political action committee mailers that targeted her candidacy for City Council. The conservative candidates' campaign had deep pockets; Strickland alone reported more than \$100,000 received in the first half of the year, a number that grew to more than \$194,000 by Oct. 22.

"They literally put out eight hit pieces on me," Clayton-Tarvin said. "All the disinformation overpowered the truth, that's the problem. If that's what Huntington Beach wants, that's the will of the voters, but I think it's dangerous behavior for future political campaigns in our city. They set the bar so low, but yet so high with spending. I don't know how anybody who wants to have an opposing voice is going to be able to do that."

"Oscar, Ken and I ran a clean campaign and we only told the truth ... And they turned it into

a referendum on Joe Biden and Gavin Newsom," she added. "I have nothing to do with Joe Biden and Gavin Newsom, but that's what they did. That's the current political landscape."

Hardy, a math teacher at Marina High, previously served 16 years on the City Council and was Surf City's mayor in 2005 and 2015. She said this was the first time she has lost a council race.

Hardy added that she would never say never, but it was unlikely that she would run for council again in the future.

"It's unusual, when an entire

slate gets elected and they're so far above the next group of candidates," she said. "But I know that they ran a long and hard campaign, so it's not surprising that they did well. I'm disappointed, of course. I've spent a little bit of time reflecting on what I could have done more. Honestly, I'm not even sure the sum of all of those things would have added up to a win. There's quite a distance between the four who won and the next group."

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