



Photos by Raul Roa | Staff Photographer

THE OLD BREA Chop House restaurant is among many in Orange County offering pickup meals — and in a few cases onsite dining — for the holiday.

Thanksgiving to go: These eateries want to help Orange County give thanks in spite of the pandemic

BY BRADLEY ZINT

With much of California returning to the purple tier because of a surge in coronavirus cases and health officials advising against non-essential travel, many Orange County families won't be celebrating Thanksgiving the same way they did last year, but area restaurants are gearing up to help make the holiday memorable and keep the tradition alive, with menus planned and pick-up services arranged.

Here are a few selections from throughout the county to satisfy almost any palate.

THE BLIND PIG

31431 Santa Margarita Pkwy., Rancho Santa Margarita; 4975 Lakeview Ave., Yorba Linda

The two locations of the Blind Pig are offering a Thanksgiving feast package with a mix of ready-to-serve and heat-and-serve food. The main courses are 4 pounds of prime rib roast with

a demi-glaze and four giant turkey legs with cranberry apple compote. You'll also get three sides: mashed potatoes (skin-on red potatoes, confit garlic, and chives), green bean casserole (mushrooms, bechamel, allium crumble and scallions) and stuffing (brioche, lardons, mirepoix and herbs). For dessert, it's a pumpkin cheesecake with cinnamon cookie crumble.

- Price: \$250
- Serves: six to eight
- Deadline: Preordering is available through Sunday. Pick-ups available at both locations on Tuesday and Wednesday.

- To order: For Rancho Santa Margarita, call (949) 888-0072. For Yorba Linda, call (714) 485-2593. You can also email contact@theblindpicoc.com.

BRUXIE

215 W. Birch St., Brea and 292 N. Glassell St., Orange

Bruxie is again serving its



See **Thanks**, page R4 **CANDIED YAMS** from the Old Brea Chop House.

More O.C. inmates' calls may have been recorded

A court motion claims the practice may have continued after the telephone vendor said it was no longer doing so.

BY BEN BRAZIL

A telephone vendor found to have recorded thousands of calls between Orange County jail inmates and their attorneys may have continued to record confidential calls even after the company said it was no longer doing so, according to a motion filed by Assistant Public Defender Scott Sanders.

It first came to light in 2018 that Global Tel Link Corp. — a Virginia-based contractor that oversees the county's jail phone system — recorded the confidential calls for the previous three years. The company blamed the lapse on "human error."

Yet, Sanders' motion filed last week contends that the company recorded at least six calls between April to December 2019 from the number of the Westminster branch office of the Orange County Public Defender, though GTL had supposedly repaired the system that led to the lapses and added the number to a Do Not Record list.

The company was found to have recorded inmate-attorney calls also in 2015 in Pinellas and Charlotte counties in Florida.

Orange County is still contracting with GTL.

"The reality is that the developments detailed herein, combined with GTL's history in this county and nation, eviscerate any reasonable faith that GTL reliably blocks the recording of calls from inmates to counsel whose numbers appear on the county's Do Not Record list," the motion says.

The motion was filed on behalf of Sanders' client, Ryan Franks, who had at least one call recorded by GTL. He is seeking records that would indicate how many calls were recorded between him and his counsel and whether prosecutors accessed those calls.

Prosecutors originally filed a motion to quash the subpoena but withdrew that this week.

"We withdrew our motion to

See **Calls**, page R5

Artist's 'Happenstance' completes Muckenthaler sculpture garden

BY VERA CASTANEDA

Although Orange County may be closing up once again, the purple-tier pandemic status didn't put a halt to the recently completed sculpture garden at Muckenthaler Cultural Center.

The center has stayed away from virtual events for the most part, instead opting to expand its programming with drive-in concerts and the addition of a sculpture garden spread throughout 9 acres of land.

CEO Farrell Hirsch said the idea to turn the outside property into an art gallery had been circulating for a long time, but it wasn't a priority.

"When the pandemic hit in March and April, people had to stay in their homes, and the reaction of people was taking walks,"

Hirsch said.

"Foot traffic increased through our grounds much more than they ever had. We said, 'This is the time to do it and find a way to bring art to people where they are.'"

Because it serves the north O.C. area, the center tries to champion local artists, Hirsch said.

He was familiar with artist Bret Price's work and had admired the piece on public display in Century City. When Hirsch found out Price lived near the center, he thought he would be the right fit.

Price's "Godot" sculpture was the first piece added to the garden in May. The title of the 12-foot metal sculpture is a reference to Samuel Beckett's play "Waiting for Godot," an absurdist two-act classic that seemed like a relatable fit for the existential dilemma



brought on during the pandemic — a wait for going back to some kind of normalcy.

"From a certain angle, there's this sad questioning character of

See **Sculpture**, page R5



LEFT: 5-year-old Evelyn Wu poses on Nov. 12 with a sculpture called "Happenstance" by artist Bret Price, one of eight installations at the Muckenthaler Cultural Center sculpture garden, at the Fullerton landmark location.

FAR LEFT: Price stands next to his piece titled "Godot."

Photos by Raul Roa
Staff Photographer

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Early Christmas spirit



Photos by Raul Roa | Staff Photographer

A 125-FOOT tall Christmas tree was lit at the Outlets at San Clemente following performances by students from the Orange County School of the Performing Arts and a special appearance by Santa Claus on Nov. 7. The show drew hundreds of visitors.



PERFORMERS STAND in front of the Christmas tree.



A STUDENT from the Orange County School of the Performing Arts sings before the the Christmas tree lighting.

As pandemic retightens grip, O.C.'s largest health insurer names new head

BY BEN BRAZIL

Richard Sanchez has been named the permanent replacement to lead Orange County's largest health insurer as the pandemic once again grips the county. Sanchez had been serving as the interim chief executive for CalOptima since early May after leaving his role as the director of the Orange County Health Care Agency. There was controversy surrounding Sanchez's departure from the leading health position in the county as it wrestled with the beginning months of the coronavirus pandemic and the politicization of masks. Sanchez, who served on the board of CalOptima, takes the reigns as the in-



Richard Sanchez

surer's membership numbers increase, lifted by residents facing new financial hurdles amid the economy. CalOptima serves the poor and homeless with Medi-Cal in Orange County. "We're anticipating that the financial hits that are being seen across Orange County are going to take its toll in terms of the population meeting criteria to be Medi-Cal eligible, and the sign-up may be ticking upwards," Sanchez said. Membership has grown by about 70,000 between February and October from 709,000 to 776,000. The

county's unemployment rate climbed to as high as 14.7% in May before tapering down to about 9% in September, according to CalOptima data. Sanchez said the most difficult aspect of the new world under COVID-19 has been transitioning to telehealth for both employees and patients. "The virtual nature of telehealth and transitioning to that very quickly and all the impacts that it's had on basically the health world, I mean I can just go on and on with that one," Sanchez said. Sanchez said it was a "heavy lift" switching from in-person to telehealth. CalOptima doesn't provide direct care, rather it provides care through its network. Sanchez said it was easier

for some of CalOptima's national health provider partners to transition over to telehealth, but it has been far more difficult for smaller community clinics to redefine how they provide healthcare through retraining staff and the expenses that went along with the transition. There's still room for improvement. "We've made headway in acceptance and usage," Sanchez said. "... Not at the same level where I feel our preventative care, our ongoing natural care of chronic conditions is where it should be." Sanchez said member acceptance of the new telehealth system is a major issue. Since CalOptima is the county's healthcare provider for the poor and homeless, members may

lack a computer or the technical knowledge to navigate the telehealth system. "Our senior citizens may struggle with that and may be more vulnerable because of that," Sanchez said. Sanchez also said he will work to put the millions of dollars earmarked for homelessness programs to use. Board of Supervisors Vice Chair Andrew Do, who serves on the board of CalOptima, was critical of the insurer while it was under the leadership of Sanchez's predecessor, Michael Schrader for moving "too slowly" in rolling out programs to help the homeless. "I am very frustrated," Do said in 2019. "It's to the point where they are either

tone deaf or they don't know what the heck they are doing." Despite requests for an interview this week, Do only provided an emailed statement. "The CalOptima Board is excited to appoint Richard Sanchez as the permanent CEO," Do said in the statement. "Richard's 36 years of experience in healthcare, together with his strong leadership at HCA and as interim CEO for CalOptima through the difficult challenges of COVID the past seven months, will allow him to be a strong leader in delivering a member-focused healthcare system centered on quality, increased access and equity."

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CALLS

Continued from page R1

quash based on new information we were provided,” District Atty. Todd Spitzer said Wednesday in a statement.

“As a county supervisor I was deeply concerned about the allegations confidential conversations between defendants and their defense attorneys were being illegally recorded by GTL, and I continue to be incredibly troubled by these continued allegations.

“I have now joined with the defense in issuing subpoenas to GTL and the Sheriff’s Department to find out if calls were in fact illegally recorded. If it turns out that GTL was once again recording attorney client privileged communications there will serious consequences. As prosecutors, we continue to fulfill our obligations to ensure fair and just criminal prosecutions and ensure that no one’s rights are being violated.”



Gary Coronado | Los Angeles Times

SEVERAL EMPLOYEES of the contractor that oversees the Orange County Jail phone system appear in court in 2018. Pictured, the Orange County Jail Complex in Santa Ana.

Sanders is known for discovering that the district attorney’s office and sheriff’s department were illegally using jailhouse informants to obtain confessions in 2016.

In the motion, Sanders said the information is critically important to a motion to withdraw Franks’ guilty plea of car theft.

Sanders was given the information on the most recent recorded calls by a special master months after Franks pled guilty. The special master was appointed by a judge in 2018 to review the calls.

Though the special master provided just six calls, Sanders said in the motion that there are “likely more

than a thousand others.”

“If an attorney’s phone number had been uploaded to the Do Not Record List why would any calls to that number have been recorded — and, alternatively, if a number had never been uploaded to the Do Not Record List, then why were not all of the calls to that number recorded?” the motion says.

“In other words, there should have been zero recorded calls to the Westminster Branch of the OCPD between April 2019 (when the upload allegedly occurred) and December 2019 (which is when the last recorded call was provided by the Special Master).

“If the number was never uploaded, however, every one of the 1,000+ calls during the time period should have been recorded. Under either scenario it is illogical that six calls would have been recorded.”

The motion contends that GTL hasn’t been truthful or transparent for years.

GTL spokesman Randy Brown declined to com-

ment.

Sanders wrote in the motion that the company knew or believed in 2015 that confidential inmate calls were being recorded in Orange County.

The company was already aware by early 2015 that it had recorded inmate calls in the two Florida counties, the motion says.

“In July 2018, the contractor who provides phone service to inmates in the OCSD jails, Global Tel Link Corp. (GTL), revealed that due to human error by a GTL employee, 1,079 inmate telephone calls to numbers that should have been designated as ‘do not record’ were erroneously recorded by the contractor,” said Orange County Sheriff’s spokeswoman Carrie Braun in an email.

“As a result of this discovery, OCSD staff directed GTL to correct the issue. Prior to July 2018, OCSD had received no notice from GTL that this was an issue. OCSD relies on many third-party vendors to provide vital services to our de-

partment. It is expected that vendors comply with the contracts they agree to, and that they meet the requirements of those contracts.

“The department has not been notified that there have been additional attorney/client calls recorded. If it is determined that attorney/client calls have been recorded, we have policy to address it.”

Braun said that the county is in the request for proposal process for updating the inmate phone system. The final decision on that will go before the county Board of Supervisors next year.

A 2019 Grand Jury report found that the Sheriff’s Department’s inadequate oversight led to the recording of the inmate-attorney calls. The Grand Jury also found no evidence of improper use of the recorded calls.

Sanders criticized that report at the time.

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SCULPTURE

Continued from page R1

a face, so I just named it ‘Godot,’ ” Price said. “It was better to have it in this beautiful space to be looked at in a safe way than in storage. And it’s on loan for a year or so.”

Price’s second sculpture, “Happenstance,” was installed last week and completed the garden.

“It’s a play on the word happenstance and the fact that something happened — my approach to what the pursuit of abstractions are to me,” Price said.

Unlike most of his metal pieces, “Happenstance” is made out of steel. He bought the material for the 12-foot sculpture about nine years ago from a genetics company that contracted a group to create a 30-foot-tall DNA helix.

The helix was going in the wrong direction so they scrapped the steel to start over.

“I got their mistakes, which were not mistakes for me,” Price said.

He compares his metal bending process to improv theater. He takes risks and problem-solves as he goes.

The works are lying down when he creates them, and he knows whether or not they work when he lifts the sculptures with a crane.

He said it’s exhilarating when a sculpture works, and a sense of discovery is what has kept him interested in sculpture for 41 years.

Price started bending metal in 1979 when he was teaching ceramics at Chapman University.

Disappointed with the smaller scale limits of ceramics, he made the art department’s parking lot his own experimental studio, and the vice president at the time helped him bend the metal for his first piece, “Twisted Flex,” which is still housed at the university.

Price’s sculptures can also be found in the permanent collections at the Laguna Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach Museum of Art, Orange County Museum of Art, the Dayton Art Institute and the Smithsonian as

IF YOU GO

What: Muckenthaler Cultural Center’s Sculpture Garden

Where: 1201 West Malvern Avenue, Fullerton

Cost: Free

Information: themuck.org

well as corporate collections.

“I got into the PepsiCo Sculpture Garden when I was 33 in the 1980s, and I thought I was golden,” Price said. “I thought I was God’s gift to artmaking. And then I didn’t sell a piece for a year. So the art world has a way of giving you humility.”

Today, he works out of his main studio Logan Creative in Santa Ana. He’s completed a few works this year and is taking a break to recover from a shoulder surgery.

“It’s hard to be a one-armed sculptor,” Price joked.

Other pieces in the center’s garden include “The



Raul Roa | Staff Photographer

PAPUA NEW GUINEA story poles make up one of eight installations at the Muckenthaler Cultural Center sculpture garden in Fullerton. These poles are more than 300 years old.

Wave” by Dan Miller, untitled pieces by Jimmy Centeno, a mural by Sofia Enriquez, a mosaic by Katherine England and 10- to 15-

feet story poles from Papua New Guinea on loan from the Bowers Museum.

The center will be cycling most of the pieces in and

out of the garden on a regular basis.

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