



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**FIELD MANAGER** Brandon Flores finds a beautiful ripe pumpkin grown on the vine at Hana Field in Costa Mesa on Thursday.

## Oh my gourd!

Fall has arrived at Costa Mesa's Hana Field.

BY SARA CARDINE

For fall lovers eagerly eyeing their sweater collections despite the recent spike in daytime temperatures, an autumnal paradise has opened its corn rows to the visiting public — the Hana Field Pumpkin Patch in Costa Mesa opened Saturday.

Situated between the 55 and the 405 freeways and bordered by Anton and Sunflower avenues, the 30-acre field has been planted with 4 acres of pumpkins, in various shades, sizes and textures, along with marigolds and



**A SCARECROW** stands in a field of bright orange marigolds blooming for Dia de Los Muretos at Hana Field. The site has opened earlier to welcome visitors with blossoming sunflowers.

sunflowers — all of which people can pick and take home with them.

In addition to the crops, Hana Field offers a series of activities for all ages, including a corn maze and a barnyard with live chickens and goats.

The site was originally scheduled to open to the public on Oct. 1, but owner Kenny Tanaka said the hot weather spurred the early

growth of its sunflowers, so operators wanted to make sure visitors still had time to pick some stems.

"We weren't planning on opening this weekend, but the flowers came in early, so we figured we'd better open early, so we don't lose them," Tanaka said Thursday.

See **Gourd**, page A8

## Don Ramsey shows no signs of slowing down

**DON RAMSEY**, right, glides in for a landing after tandem jumping out of a plane with the U.S. Navy Leap Frogs on Thursday.



Kevin Chang  
Staff  
Photographer

BY MATT SZABO

Don Ramsey turned 70 earlier this year.

That fact did not preclude the longtime Huntington Beach resident from jumping out of a plane 13,000 feet in the air with the U.S. Navy Leap Frogs on Thursday morning.

"He called me and said, I think I'm going to do it," said Ramsey's daughter, Angie Bailey, who also lives in Huntington Beach. "I said, 'I think you have to, or you're going to regret it the rest of your life.' He's terrified of heights, but he said, 'I'm just going to have to get over it.' I was stoked for him. He doesn't even go on roller coasters, so we were all stoked."

Dozens of friends and family members gathered between life-guard towers 9 and 11. Ramsey landed last, in a tandem jump.

"It was exciting," he said. "I got a little nauseous toward the back

end of it, but all in all, it was fantastic. Jumping over my town, it's hard to explain until you do it."

The Leap Frogs did the jumps Thursday as publicity for the Pacific Airshow, which hits the beach in Surf City next weekend. Pro surfer Courtney Conlogue, a Sage Hill School alumna, was the next to take the leap.

Ramsey said he loves the airshow, and it maybe means a bit more to him as a veteran of the armed forces. Ramsey served as a medic in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War; he was stationed in Korea for 14 months.

As for Huntington Beach, that is indeed his town. Ramsey's family first moved here in 1963, when he was 11.

Since then, it's been a life of waves, but also of service. Ramsey is on the board of directors of the Huntington Beach Boardriders Club, and he's also gained lo-

See **Signs**, page A4

## HBPD replaces old air support

New replacement helicopters, at a cost of \$7.3M, are expected to be delivered between November and February.

BY ERIC LICAS

Huntington Beach police replaced their aging air fleet with the purchase of brand-new helicopters they will begin receiving in November, less than a year after a department aircraft crashed in Newport Beach, killing one officer and seriously injuring another.

The three MD-530F helicopters that were ordered cost a combined \$7.3 million. They will take the place of the three older model aircraft made by the same manufacturer that the department bought about 20 years ago, Huntington Beach Police Lt. Thoby Archer said during a brief interview Tuesday.

The new helicopters have more

See **Air**, page A2

## OCMA looks to link arts, shopping

The Mind, a planned retail space, will have five unique sections dedicated to connecting the future to the past.

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

The Orange County Museum of Art, opening in October, is all about connections.

Heidi Zuckerman, the museum's chief executive officer and director, has made connecting the past to the present a running theme. The announcement last week of plans for the museum's retail space, the Mind, will foster a different kind of connection — between OCMA and South Coast Plaza.

"One of the super interesting things about the Orange County Museum of Art's location is its

See **OCMA**, page A8

## ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



James Carbone

**ARTISTS BRING 'HIDDEN TRUTHS' OF EPILEPSY TO LIGHT IN ART EXHIBIT** PAGE A8

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# Paul Frank’s workshop helps others find their creative side

BY ANDREW TURNER

About two dozen people — enough for a classroom — sat at four tables, fully engaged in a creative activity at Laguna Art Museum, guided in their artful pursuit by Paul Frank, the local cartoonist who became known for his whimsical characters, most notably Julius the Monkey.

As an industry veteran, Frank has taught classes on occasion, including at Orange Coast College and the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena. The opportunity has not always been there, though, so Frank took to conducting workshops. The Sept. 17 event in Laguna Beach saw his participants making clocks using the likenesses of some of his characters.

“Because I’ve had 25 years or more work experience, I don’t have to have a teacher’s credential to teach design classes,” Frank said. “What I like to do is teach a class at Orange Coast or Art Center, where I teach people my methods.

“I kind of taught myself how to construct handbags, and I taught myself patternmaking for handbags, and that’s not a class you can take. I think it’s fun to share my expertise



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

**CARTOONIST PAUL FRANK**, top left, leads a character clock-building workshop at Laguna Art Museum in Laguna Beach on Sept. 17.

that way, and there’s this ‘a-ha’ moment when the students start to get it. There’s something really cool about it that makes me feel really good, like I was able to pass on something that’s positive.”

Frank, 55, grew up in Huntington Beach, where he said he and his friends were in no hurry to grow up. In the fair weather of Southern California, the kids could focus on being in a band or go surfing or

skateboarding after school, rather than worry about shoveling snow.

“I think we had a prolonged adolescence,” Frank said.

The Ocean View High graduate had a penchant for being different.

“I always wanted to paint my bicycles,” Frank recalled. “The color it came in was never good enough for very long. You had to customize stuff.”

Frank said he had grown

accustomed to do-it-yourself projects, often creating rather than buying what he wanted. In his mid-20s, he asked his mom for a sewing machine.

“I wanted to be able to alter clothing and possibly even make my own clothes,” Frank said. “Back then, everybody wanted to wear, at least in my circle of friends, we all wanted to get the cool thing at the thrift store.

“We were like, ‘You found that sweater,’ he reenacts in a disappointed tone. “I missed it.” ... In those days, people were using messenger bags, and I’m like, ‘Well, I don’t want to be the 20th guy to wear the same messenger bag.’”

Julius the Monkey, a character created in 1995, was a sort of spin-off on a sock monkey his grandmother had made, Frank said. There are now between 60 and 70 characters that Frank and his design team have created, many coming into being during humorous moments.

“One of my newer characters, his name is Heavy Eyeliner Cat,” Frank said of the character that has yet to be released to the public. “It was just an accident because I was redrawing him. I draw them rough first, and then I clean them up, but I happened to make the eye shapes, I overdid it with a pencil. It just looked cool, like he was wearing eyeliner.”

Those who attended the workshop at Laguna Art Museum had the chance to create clocks featuring a handful of Frank’s characters: Clancy the Giraffe, Aku the Alligator, Mika the Cat, and of course, Julius.

One of the participants showcased her fandom in

wearing a Julius sweater, but the workshop featured budding new artists across three generations, including grandparents working alongside their grandkids.

“Often, our workshops tend to have either an older crowd or a much younger crowd, so this was special because it was a mix,” said Daniel Stachowski, public programs coordinator for the museum. “I think it just really goes to show how universal the brand of Paul Frank can be.

“When I was growing up in the ’90s and early 2000s, it was really popular, and it’s nice to see it resurging again with some of the younger kids, and I think that’s why the class was mixed. As we’re getting older, we’re sharing our loved things from the past with our new generation, so it’s nice to have grandparents, parents, kids all working on the same project. At the end, you could really see everyone’s personality show through with their clock.”

Stachowski added that Frank will be holding workshops at the museum in October and December, with those projects being themed for Halloween and Christmas, respectively.

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## AIR

Continued from page A1

powerful engines than the ones currently in HBPD’s fleet. That means they can carry more people and heavier payloads, Archer said.

“The aircraft we were using before weren’t underpowered by any means,” Archer said. “But the 530s should be able to take more people aboard during a search and rescue operation or carry a crew of four and something like a full water bucket if we wanted

to use it to assist with fire suppression. With the old ones, you might run into issues carrying much more than a full crew.”

The department’s fleet had been made up of three MD-500 helicopters, one of which was still in service as of this past week. Another was sold to a buyer in Australia earlier this year, Archer said.

The third spiraled into waters along Newport Beach on Feb. 19.

Officer Nicholas Vella was one of two crew members in the helicopter, and died as a result of the crash.

The other suffered traumatic injuries but has since returned to duty, Archer said.

“Nicholas was a friend to all of us,” Archer said. “It was tough on everyone, but it wasn’t like people were going to stop calling 911; everyone just had to work through it.”

The helicopter that went down had just returned from routine maintenance about a week before the crash, Archer said. As of Friday, its wreckage was still being examined at a National Transportation Safety Bureau facility, and the agency had not yet speci-

fied the exact cause of the tragedy.

In the weeks following Vella’s death, HBPD’s Air Support Bureau underwent a thorough review of its procedures, Archer said. However, they found no “glaring issues” in either training or policy that might have played a role in the crash, the lieutenant said.

“Flying over water is difficult,” Archer said. “Flying at night is difficult. I don’t want to speak out of turn, but it may have just been a perfect storm of factors that evening.”

Even though unanswered questions about what led up to the crash linger seven months after it happened, members of the Air Support Bureau retained “full faith and confidence” in their engineers and equipment, Archer said. He added that members of the bureau are still processing the loss of officer Vella in the midst of performing their duties.

The crash that killed Vella was the second time in recent years an HBPD aircraft went down unexpectedly. A different department helicopter experienced a mechanical problem and was

seen spinning and tilting in the air before making a hard landing at John Wayne Airport in April 2019. That incident was related to a worn-out part that has since been repaired, and no injuries were reported at the time.

The purchase of the new helicopters was approved by the City Council in June as part of the 2021-22 budget. They were supposed to have arrived by April, but their delivery has been delayed, Archer said.

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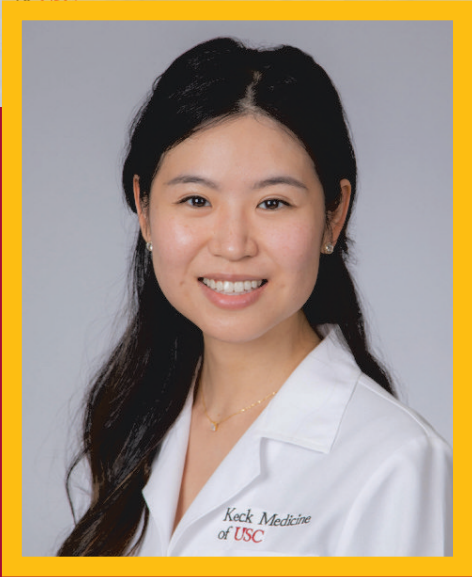
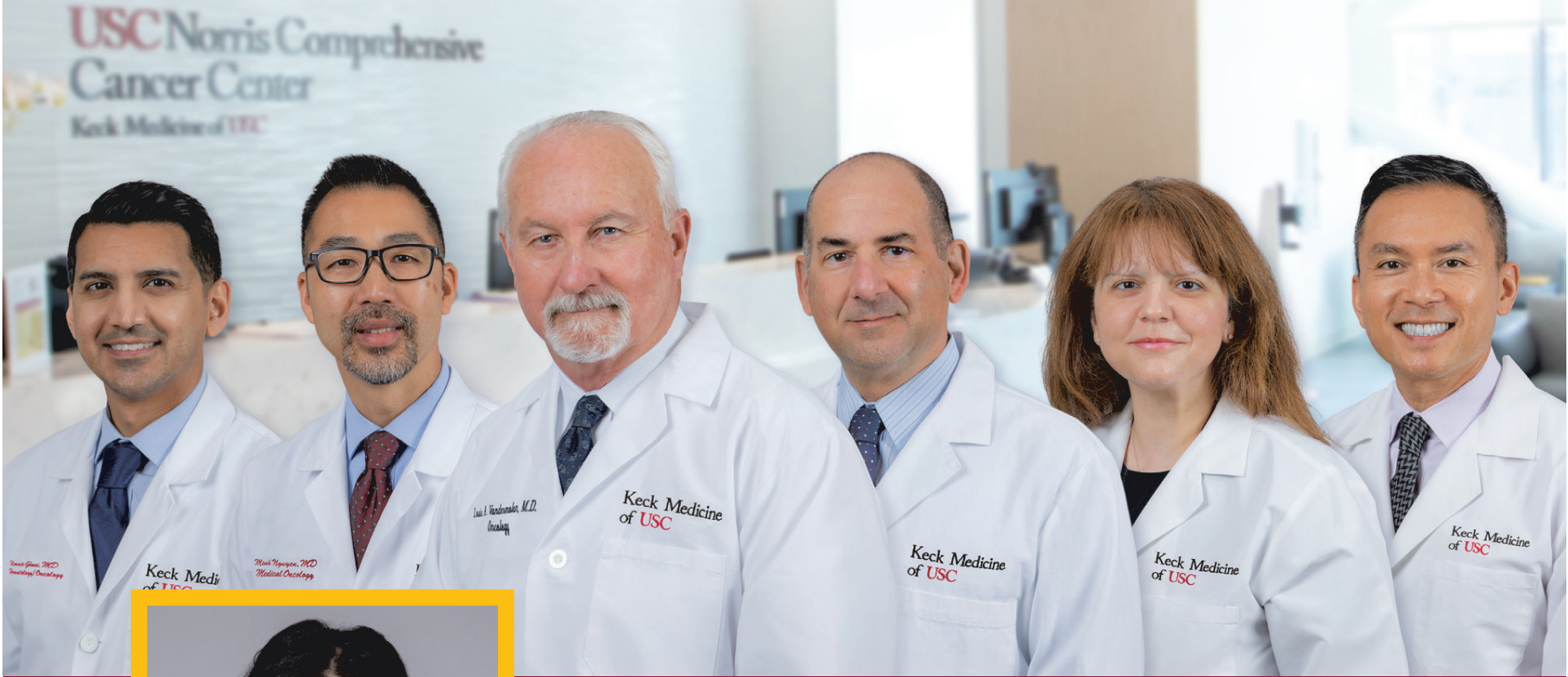
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Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

**DON RAMSEY**, center, smiles for photos after tandem jumping out of a plane with the U.S. Navy Leap Frogs on Thursday morning in Huntington Beach.

SIGNS

Continued from page A1

cal notoriety as the founder and organizer of the Kowabunga Van Klan, a group that shares love of old Volkswagen buses.

Ramsey, who is happily married to his wife Michelle, also has a son, Chad, who lives in town and went to Thursday's jump for support. The Ramseys are intertwined with the city like few other families.

Don Ramsey, the owner and president of Ecology Tires, serves on the board of directors of the Huntington Beach International Surfing Museum and the Surfing Walk of Fame. He's also on the city's Fourth of July Executive Board and is event director for the International Surfboard Builders Hall of Fame.

When he has any spare time, he performs in the Ramsey Brothers Band with his brother, Jim.

"He's like the busiest guy I know," said Val Aipa, who serves with Ramsey on the H.B. Board Riders board. "I don't know how he has time for work-life balance, but he seems to make it work. He's a really rad dude. There's not anything that goes on in the city, I don't think, that Don Ramsey hasn't consulted on or been involved in directly."

Chris Moreno started the H.B. Board Riders, and

soon the West Coast Board Riders Club, with friends including the late surfer Casey Wheat in late 2015. He said that Ramsey was instrumental from the beginning.

"He came into our shop and said, 'What do you guys need? Anything you need, let me know,'" Moreno said. "We needed tents so we could get the branding off right, so it looked good. And he wrote us a check right there, like not even a question, and bought the very first tents for the West Coast Board Riders and the H.B. Board Riders Club.

"His time commitment to the city and the organizations that benefit the city is unsurpassed. There's no one, zero, not a kid, not a young man who can beat him or keep up with him energy-wise. The amount of time he donates to our city has changed our city for the better ... There is nobody like Don Ramsey. He is the super-grom."

Ramsey is arguably one of the most recognizable people in the city. Earlier this year, he received the first Community Partner Service Award from the Downtown Business Improvement District.

But recognition isn't why he does it. When his good friend and local surf personality Rick "Rockin' Fig" Fignetti passed away last year due to a heart attack, Ramsey did much of

the work to put together a huge paddle out.

"It was just so comforting, and it took so much stress off me and my family because we were still mourning my dad's loss," said Chanel Fignetti, Rick's daughter. "I could never repay him for that. He was like an angel sent from heaven. He does everything out of the kindness of his heart. He doesn't expect or want anything in return. He just wants to help people. He wants to help Huntington Beach become a better place, a better community, and he wants to keep legacies alive.

"That's what makes him so different from other people. People are always wanting something. He doesn't want anything; he just wants to do it because he's a good person."

Ramsey keeps busy, promoting the surf culture he loves. Last year, he said he drove the Navy Leap Frogs back from the landing site on the beach to their hotel in Volkswagen buses.

This year, he was a more direct part of the action.

"I'm glad that we're Surf City," he said. "We always were, and we are officially. We've got eight miles of some of the best surf around, so I love it. At my age, I still get to surf."

And jump out of a plane, too.

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THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

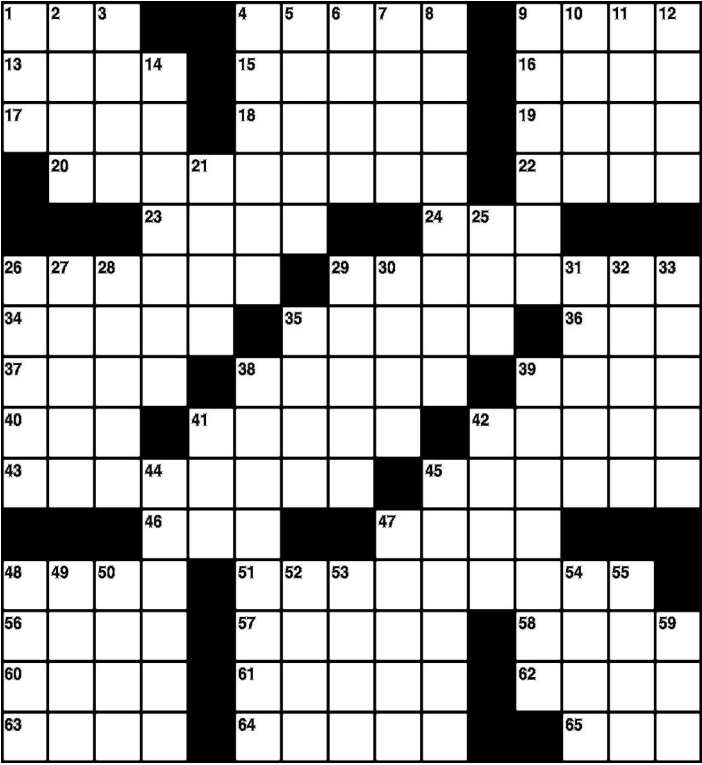
By Jacqueline E. Mathews

ACROSS

- 1 Satchel
- 4 Cake maker
- 9 Ken of "Thirtysomething"
- 13 El Paso school, familiarly
- 15 Still breathing
- 16 Female animal
- 17 Singer Tennille
- 18 Mosquito marks
- 19 Forest animals
- 20 Asleep at the switch
- 22 Final
- 23 Problem during a home sale
- 24 In \_ of; blown away by
- 26 Make someone resentful
- 29 Complete turn
- 34 Shred cheese
- 35 Part of MPH
- 36 Twosome
- 37 Permits
- 38 Forest
- 39 "W" on a light bulb
- 40 Dine
- 41 Craves
- 42 Chevy SUV
- 43 Songbirds
- 45 Dimwits
- 46 Bizarre
- 47 Impoverished
- 48 Word with baking or club
- 51 Uprising
- 56 African nation
- 57 Rowed
- 58 Musical work
- 60 Teacher's helper
- 61 Fearless
- 62 Cincinnati team
- 63 Three- \_ sloth
- 64 Said no more
- 65 State-of-the-art

DOWN

- 1 However
- 2 "Well, that went over like \_ of bricks!"
- 3 Trait transmitter
- 4 Pampered



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).

7		3			4	8		
9			3		1	6		
			9					
6						4	8	
	7		8		9	1		
5	8						3	
				8				
		2	4	7			1	
		6	2		4		5	

For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A9.

- 5 Straighten

6 Toy with a string

7 Level; balanced

8 Says in a new way

9 Eggy dish

10 In \_ land; detached from reality
- 11 Rankles

12 Hornet's home

14 Farm babies

21 Draw the \_; set limits

25 " \_ it something I said?"

26 Makes eyes at

27 \_ out; go

- ballistic
- 28 Silent film actor
- Arbuckle
- 29 Mob disturbances
- 30 Cutlass maker
- 31 "The Gem State"
- 32 Skip \_;
- abandon
- 33 Musical symbols
- 35 Trappist or Benedictine
- 38 Clothes closet
- 39 TV's "Xena: \_ Princess"
- 41 Fistful of cash
- 42 Implement
- 44 Drunk
- 45 Worked with clay
- 47 Aggravate
- 48 "Take a hike!"
- 49 Neighbor of Indiana
- 50 Miami- \_ County
- 52 Deserve
- 53 Actor Garrett
- 54 \_-minded; willing to reconsider
- 55 Unclothed
- 59 90 degrees from ESE

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# Weeping Witch aims to scare up fans at Cross Roads Escape Games

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

The first time Madison and Luke Rhoades participated in an escape room, the husband and wife admit they didn't get very far.

"When we got there, there was 10 other people and they locked us in room and told us to figure out how to get out," said Madison. "It was super fun, but we didn't get far at all because it was Halloween night and the other people we were with were drunk. At the end, the host came out and said, 'Yeah, you guys got like 60%.'"

An escape room or escape game is hosted in one or sometimes multiple rooms with clues and puzzles that must be solved by a team of players to "escape" from the room. Sometimes the game is scary — but not always. Escape games centered around solving a crime or pulling off a bank heist are popular too.

During their first experience, the Rhoades weren't familiar with the concept.

"This was 2014," said Madison. "Escape rooms were not a thing. I thought we were going to a haunted house."

The experience captured their imaginations and despite not solving the puzzle they felt inspired to create their own game.

"We were driving home thinking if we did one, what would we do?" said Luke. "The basic concept of the Hex Room was born on that drive home."

Today, the duo own and

operate Cross Roads Escape Games on East La Palma Avenue in Anaheim, which they opened in 2016. They host three games nightly, Wednesday through Sunday, that include the Hex Room, the Fun House and their latest creation, the Weeping Witch.

"This was our first time opening a game and closing one in the same space," said Madison. "The Hex Room has been around for six years, but we do refreshes of it every year or so, and Fun House is six years old."

The couple met during high school in a theater class, and both went on to pursue degrees in the theater arts, with Madison studying set design at USC and Luke studying scenic construction at Vanguard. The breakdown of the previous game, Psych Ward, and the build-out of the Weeping Witch took about four months.

"I design it and he builds it," said Madison. "We are able to get things done pretty fast."

Then a lighting, sound and special effects team comes in after to handle the tech.

"I just do what she tells me to do," laughs Luke, who also plays all the acting roles within the games.

Their expertise and talent is part of what makes the games at Cross Roads such an exhilarating experience, with immersive sets and special effects. The couple was even featured on an episode of "The



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**OWNERS MADISON AND LUKE RHOADES** have changed the escape room industry with their award-winning games the Hex Room, the Fun House and the Psych Ward at their Cross Roads Escape Games in Anaheim.

World According to Jeff Goldblum" about puzzles.

"He didn't play here; we were his teammates for an escape game," said Luke.

The Weeping Witch is 60 minutes long for three to eight players over the age of 14. The game features flashing lights, fog scents, jump scares and loud noises, though no one ever touches the participants and security cameras ensure everyone is safe at all times. The cameras also let the staff give hints or help out if a group isn't having much luck solving the game.

The game is set in Madam Ruby's study, which resembles a creepy antique store or paranormal investigators Ed and Lorraine Warren's artifact room.

"A lot of it comes from going to thrift stores and going, 'What looks cursed?'" said Madison.

Among the Victorian death portraits, however, there are some items that have a more personal back story.

"This landscape hung above my family's piano all growing up," Luke said of a horizontal oil painting. "It's a family heirloom."

The object of the Weeping Witch game is to solve the puzzles to rid yourself of a family curse before the witch, who cries to lure her victims near, gets to you.

Before they opened their own game, Madison and Luke played every escape game in the Southern California area, which at the time was about 30.

"Now there are 30 companies, let alone 30 games, just in Orange County," said Madison.

On National Escape Room Day, Oct. 1, many of those companies will gather at Stereo Brewing in Placentia for a free event that will include mini games, raffle prizes, food trucks and beer from 6 to 11 p.m.

"We have a 10-minute mini game called the Box," said Madison. "One person is in a hydrotherapy box



**TAROT CARDS** are displayed at Cross Roads Escape Games.

and you have 10 minutes until the temperature inside reaches a 'deadly' level. There is actually a fog machine, so you see steam and the person can feel for clues and the people outside can see clues. They have to work together to get the person out."

Mini games from other companies like Exit Game OC and Trapped! will also be onsite for the event.

At Cross Roads, the

Weeping Witch is now open, and it's among the couple's favorite games they've created.

"I love this one," said Luke. "The lighting design and the sound design just fits each moment so well. And the actual physicality the actor has to do is minimal, but the effect is enormous."

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COLUMN | PATRICE APODACA

# Why are Americans fascinated by the royal family?

I was shopping recently at one of my regular haunts in Newport Beach. When I reached checkout I expected the usual friendly banter from the employee behind the register: “How’s your day going so far?” Or, “Oh, these are so good!”

But this time the clerk followed with, “It’s so sad about the Queen.”

Seemingly everywhere these days people are discussing the passing of Queen Elizabeth. At parties and family dinners, on television talk shows and during podcasts, in news articles and commentaries, everyone has something to say about the late British monarch.

And now, apparently, so do I.

More precisely, I have a question: Why are so many Americans fascinated with the royal family?



After all, they are not our royal family. A long time ago we fought a war to sever ourselves from the British crown. The divorce eventually became amicable, even affectionate — there’s that whole “special relationship” thing between us and the Brits — but the point remains. We purposefully rejected a system based on a sovereign ruler.

I raise this topic with full acknowledgement that I, too, could be considered an Anglophile. I adore Jane Austen, “Midsomer Murders” and afternoon tea, and I’m enamored with an idealized image of life in a charming village in the English countryside.

Nevertheless, I find the preoccupation with the royal family curious. So I’ve been posing my question to people I’ve encountered over the past several days, and I’ve received



Chris Jackson | Associated Press

**BRITAIN’S QUEEN ELIZABETH II**, right, walks with President Joe Biden during his visit to Windsor Castle in June 2021. The Queen’s reign spanned over seven decades.

some thoughtful responses.

Many spoke of their

admiration for the late queen’s poise. They referred to Britain’s storied

history and to her longevity. As head of state for seven decades — hers was

the longest reign of any British ruler — she was simply always there, a point of stability and stick-to-itiveness in an ever-changing world.

Granted, the monarchy no longer has any real political power, and it serves mainly as a colossal PR machine that trades on nostalgia for a once-mighty empire. Yet through the tumult of modern life, her highness could be counted on to wave the same wave, grace the masses with that aloof smile, steadfastly maintain a regal bearing, and inspire so-called commoners to keep their chins up and march forward. That is power, of a sort.

No, she was not our queen. Even so, many Americans seemed to take comfort in her dignified air and adherence to tradition, however archaic or abstruse those customs

See **Family**, page A9

COMMENTARY | GEOFF WEST



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**A RENDERING OF** One Metro West, a proposed residential development by Rose Equities on display at a neighborhood block party hosted by the developers at the OC Mix in Costa Mesa in 2021. A commentator argues in favor of Measure K.

## Voters in Costa Mesa can change the stifling effects of Measure Y

In 2016 Costa Mesa voters passed Measure Y by more than 68%. The result? Measure Y requires a “vote of the people” if a property owner wants to update their property and if that update changes certain parameters of the property or is located close to any other development that might retroactively trigger Measure Y.

After going through the time and expense of hiring architects and engineers and then pushing projects through the approval process, including an affirmative vote by the Planning Commission and the City Council, then being faced by an expensive “vote of the people,” property owners and developers simply choose to take their development dollars elsewhere or not bother upgrading their existing properties at all.

Virtually all development in the city has dried up, including attempts by existing property owners to simply upgrade existing buildings. There has not been a single “vote of the people” on developments since Measure Y passed.

### MEASURE K TO THE RESCUE!

On Aug. 2, 2022 the Costa Mesa City Council voted, 6-1, to place on the Nov. 8 ballot an item identified as Measure K. This ordinance, crafted by an ad hoc committee of Mayor Pro Tem Andrea Marr, Councilwoman Arlis Reynolds and Councilman Jeffrey Harlan after months of deliberation, is designed to loosen the grip Measure Y has imposed on all development in Costa Mesa.

Most of the recent rhetoric against Measure K has been from the same people

who created and marketed Measure Y six years ago. In 2016 these well-intentioned folks, seeing a developer-friendly, heavy-handed City Council approve uncontrolled development and spot zoning, effectively said to the then-council “No more!” The exclamation point on that election was the ouster of sitting Mayor Steve Mensinger, who finished fourth in a three-seat race.

The subsequent election in 2018 — the first with district voting — saw a dramatic change in the mix of council members. That’s when the core of the current council was elected to guide our city. They have done an exemplary job, navigating through the pandemic, effectively dealing with our homeless problems and enhancing support for the public safety organizations. They have earned the confidence of the voters in doing so. It was with that same concern for the future of the city that they approved Measure K being placed on the ballot — so the voters can help decide the future of Costa Mesa.

If the voters fail to pass Measure K in November the cost to our city could be catastrophic. The impact of Measure Y is recognized by state officials as a roadblock to meeting state housing element compliance. It prevents well-meaning property owners from upgrading their properties, leading to “tenants of last resort” like massage parlors and illegal dispensaries, and eventually vacancies and blight as we currently see on Harbor Boulevard. It inhibits creation of new, much needed and required housing. If

See **Measure**, page A9

A WORD, PLEASE | JUNE CASAGRANDE

# How to respond when someone asks for you on the phone

The phone rings. You answer. “May I speak with Ms. XYZ?” the caller asks. You’re Ms. XYZ. How do you reply?

A reader in Orange County isn’t sure.

“Many will respond with ‘This is she.’ I usually reply, ‘That is me.’ Are either of these correct? Should I instead just say, ‘I am Ms. XYZ?’”

Before I answer, let’s be clear about something: This is an academic exercise. You can reply “This is she,” “This is her,” “That is me,” “I gave at the office” or “Sup, homie?” It’s up to you. Formal, proper grammar is optional — especially when you’re dealing with someone who just interrupted your dinner to try to sell you a home warranty.

But that’s what my Orange County reader wanted to know: From a standpoint of proper, formal grammar, which reply is best?

If you apply the grammar lessons you got at school, you’d likely get the wrong answer. We’re taught that subject pro-



**LUCILLE BALL**, as Lucy Ricardo, talks on the telephone in a scene from an episode of the television comedy “I Love Lucy.”

CBS Photo Archive  
Getty Images

nouns like “she” do the action in the verb: She gave at the office. And we’re taught that object pronouns like “her” receive the action of the verb: The donation was given to her. That could lead you to think that “This is me” would be the correct way to answer your caller, since the sentence already has a subject, “this,” leaving the second pronoun in what looks like an object position.

So you’d conclude that the answer is “This is me.” And you’d be left wondering why that’s so out of sync with everyday use. After all, almost no one says, “This is me.” The more formal-sounding

“This is she” is more common.

This seems odd. Usually, people speaking casually go for the less formal option instead of wording that sounds proper. For example, you never hear “Whom are you talking to?” It’s always “Who are you talking to?”

So if everyone uses the more formal-sounding “This is she” in place of the seemingly more logical “This is me,” there must be a reason, right?

Yes. And we would know their reason if, in school, we were taught about either copular verbs or the predicate nominative.

Copular verbs, also called linking verbs, are

different from most other verbs because they create a different relationship between the first part of the sentence and the second part. Non-copular verbs usually express some kind of action, sometimes with an object of that action. Bob made coffee. Ellen watched the movie. Sue teaches math. So with a verb like “make,” “watch” or “teach,” you can get a simple subject-plus-verb-plus-object sentence structure.

Copular verbs express being, seeming or the senses. The main copular verb is “be,” seen often in conjugated forms includ-

See **Phone**, page A9

MAILBAG

## Newport should consider owners’ perspectives

We understand from coverage in the Daily Pilot that the Newport Beach City Council plans to study the issue of second home co-ownership (Newport Beach City Council discusses fractional home ownership, Sept. 14). We hope they’ll consider our perspective as Pacaso owners in Newport Beach.

During the pandemic, we did a tremendous amount of research into second homes. We ultimately decided on Pacaso. The model is exceptional whereby you get a taste of the lifestyle, own a piece of the property and have the opportunity to purchase more shares as the years progress. It is our goal to later retire in Newport Beach.

We looked into purchasing a whole second home, but the cost and hassle just didn’t make sense for us. Not to mention the fact we’d have to worry about covering mortgage costs by virtue of multiple renters or short-term visitors, which would be the case if

we were to be the sole owner of a second home. We also enjoy owning a home with others as we trust they too will treat the home with the utmost respect.

Consolidating second home demand into fewer houses is also of benefit to the community as it reduces competition for housing and ensures houses are used rather than sitting empty like most second homes.

I cannot express enough how much this home means to us. We have two daughters and two sons, and this home constitutes a “promised” vacation for us. We spend ample weeks each year enjoying everything Newport has to offer and contributing to the

economic growth of the area.

I want nothing but good relations with the community and can say we have received a warm welcome from the majority of our neighbors. I ask that the City Council keep the benefits of this model in mind.

**Anthony and Claire Kumar**  
Newport Beach

### Will O.C. have local election deniers?

With so many election deniers running for municipal, state and federal office, I think it’s time to ask: If Michelle Steel, Diane Dixon and Scott

Baugh lose this November, will these down-ballot, GOP candidates contest the election results? More to the point, will they clog the courts with lawsuits like the ones Donald Trump filed after being defeated in 2020?

I believe the Daily Pilot’s readers (i.e., voters) should know in advance how Steel, Dixon and Baugh will react if they lose their races this fall. With this last thought in mind, I hope your reporters will ask each of them to answer questions about election integrity, voter fraud and their willingness to concede defeat should that be the outcome in November.

**Denny Freidenrich**  
Laguna Beach





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# Artists bring ‘hidden truths’ of epilepsy to light in art exhibition at Marina Park

BY LILLY NGUYEN

A unique art show in Newport Beach last week-end sought to promote awareness of epilepsy and to empower individuals living with the neurological disorder that causes seizures.

“1:26 The Art of Epilepsy,” held at the Marina Park Community Center, was hosted by the Hidden Truths Project, founded by Dr. Julie Thompson-Dobkin. She describes epilepsy as an invisible disability.

The name of the show reflects the number of people in the population — one in 26 — who live with the disorder.

Costa Mesa artist Zach Beckemeyer is one of them.

For Beckemeyer, art turned out to be just the balm he needed.

Beckemeyer was first diagnosed in 2011 when he was 22, after he had a seizure in the passenger seat of his mother’s car while they were on their way to a nephew’s birthday party.

He’s since had two surgeries to address his epilepsy that removed 3 millimeters of his brain. The operations, after which he had to relearn to walk, speak, read and write, allowed him this week to say he’s been seizure-free since August 2018.

Beckemeyer said he found art by accident in 2017, but that it has since become a therapeutic in ways that he hadn’t expected for him both physically and mentally.

“I was just feeling like I was in a good mood one day. My niece was turning 13 at the time. She’s starting to really get into music. I’m a huge music fan. I play instruments myself,” said Beckemeyer. “We would always play around. I’m going to try and draw something for us. I ended up finding an idea in my mind and it was a little cheeseburger monster type of a thing.”

“It was kind of goofy. It had these wiggly arms, these big eyes. It was black and white and it said happy birthday on it and she still has that today. Turned out she loved it so much she wanted it on a T-shirt.”

So, Beckemeyer printed out a few T-shirts, sold them and said that the



Photos by James Carbone

**ZACH BECKEMEYER**, 34, of Costa Mesa shows his art of the Newport Beach Pier during the “1:26 Art of Epilepsy” show presented by the Hidden Truths Project at Marina Park Community Center in Newport Beach. Beckemeyer has had two brain surgeries to control his seizures. Following the procedures, he had to relearn to walk, speak, read and write.



**DR. JULIE THOMPSON-DOBKIN**, co-founder and CEO of Hidden Truths, seated next to her artwork “Masks.”

sales gave him the confidence to keep going. He said he would frequent local cafes every morning, order coffee and draw in a small sketchbook until he started experiencing tremors and struggled with his mental health. So, he took a break from that ritual.

It wasn’t until the last two or three years that he picked up a pen again and completed a drawing every day, he said.

“I just realized, wow, this feels great. This is nothing I’ve ever experienced. The only thing I’ve ever experienced of that nature that really made me feel comfortable was playing my drums and playing my guitar,” said Beckemeyer, who

added with a laugh that his apartment walls are too thin to even consider playing his drums today.

“The thing with artwork is that it was helping out the physical problems I was having, such as the shakiness and the tremors. But all of my perspective ... it was a deep concentration on an entirely new universe and ... it was some kind of a high that I got out of it,” said Beckemeyer. “Before then, all I did all day was smoke marijuana and cigarettes. But when I realized how much of a better feeling [art gave me] ... that completely cut me out from smoking anything.”

He creates his artworks first by pencil, then by



**“ONE-EYED LADY”** by Alysha Kostelny is one of the many art pieces displayed during the “1:26 Art of Epilepsy” exhibit.

Sharpie pen and then he’ll scan the image into Adobe Illustrator to add color. He said drawing makes all the negative thoughts about his situation, about challenges he’s facing, evaporate.

“I was not expecting this to turn into anything more than a hobby,” Beckemeyer said of his art being selected for the exhibit. “I feel less like a grain of sand in a beach more like a stone that’s rolling around on top of it.”

Hidden Truths founder Thompson-Dobkin is a neurologist and mother to an epileptic son.

“This began as a personal journey to raise awareness, make epilepsy speak-

able, and empower people with this condition,” said Thompson-Dobkin. “We also seek to help these individuals find acceptance, understanding, and not become labelled by their diagnosis. The use of this creative platform became a tool to engage the public and educate them to the realities of what it means to live with epilepsy.”

The organization works with about 500 epileptic artists globally. This year the artists showcased in the exhibit are patients in neurologist Dr. David Millett’s practice at Hoag Pickup Family Neurosciences Institute.

“One in every 26 people will develop epilepsy over

the course of their lives. That’s one kid in every classroom. Most organizations, you can look around the boardrooms, the lunch room — there is someone in there that probably has epilepsy and if not in that room, then has a relative or someone close that deals with it,” Millett said in an interview this week. “It’s extremely common.”

But, the caveat is that many living with the disorder, he said, are fearful of telling people or feel that they are unable to for a variety of circumstances.

“Most people have well-controlled seizures, but they don’t want anybody to know. Not their friends, their employers, their neighbors, even if they take medication every day,” Millett said.

Millett said it’s not unusual for people who cannot control their seizures to attend exhibits that promote awareness for the condition because they feel accepted there.

“[It’s a] lack of understanding of the different causes of epilepsy. The majority of [patients], at least two-thirds, can be well controlled on medication, but ... there is a silent burden of disease in the community,” Millett said. He noted patients live knowing there is a potential for breakthrough seizures. They also might experience side-effects of medication that can inhibit their ability to handle tasks the general population takes for granted, such as driving and going to work.

Millett said Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian sponsors a number of health and wellness events for patients with epilepsy, including the Hidden Truths Project exhibit.

Millett said he’s been in communication with Thompson-Dobkin for several years and noted that art provides outlets for patients to not only grapple with the psychological effects of epilepsy but also to celebrate their ability to overcome it and create objects of beauty.

“It’s a statement to the human will to overcome and to not be controlled by the disease process, but to use it for their own personal development and expression,” Millett said.

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## GOURD

Continued from page A1

Starting next weekend, additional areas on the site will become available, including a range where people can launch gourds via a pumpkin catapult or shoot turns out of a two-handed device powered by compressed air.

Tanaka, a fourth-generation farmer whose family also owns Tanaka Farms in Irvine, leased the property last year with the idea of creating a sort of annex to the family’s main farm, located on University Drive.

“During the last three weeks of October, we’re pretty impacted, because there’s a demand for more unique pumpkins,” he said of the Irvine location, which hosts thousands of visitors in a single day.

By comparison, about 6,000 people visited the Hana Field pumpkin patch in its first open season in 2021. Operators are hopeful that once enough people check out the Costa Mesa location, visits will even out between the two locations.

“It’s going to take probably a couple of years for it to pick up the way we’d like it,” Tanaka said of the Costa Mesa location. “But the people who came last year really enjoyed it.”

Admission costs \$10, with free admission for members of the military and children under 2. Parking is \$10 but is free with the online discount code “HANA-PARK22.” Pumpkins and sunflowers may be purchased separately.

The Hana Field pumpkin patch is located at 427 Anton Blvd., in Costa Mesa, and is open Fridays through Sundays, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. with last entry at 5 p.m. For more, visit [tanakafarms.com/hana-pumpkin-patch](http://tanakafarms.com/hana-pumpkin-patch).

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## OCMA

Continued from page A1

proximity to South Coast Plaza,” said Zuckerman. “We are connected by this footbridge, and it is an incredible opportunity for us to have a world-class shopping experience as part of the Orange County Museum of Art experience.”

The Mind will be divided into five sections, each designed to cultivate a distinctive experience. Zuckerman said the retail space will be immersive, experiential and unique, and she hopes the space and its content stimulate visitors’ thoughts and imaginations about the future by connecting to the past.

The Post Office, for example, will feature limited-edition postcards of artworks, starting with images from OCMA’s collection along with complimentary postal service.

“Part of what we are interested in is things that are sort of countercultural, and one of those things is handwritten communication,” said Zuckerman. “Being able to take the time to reflect and put something in writing, it has a different sense of longevity and intention. It is a bit of a lost art.”

The Library section at the Mind won’t be a lending space but a resource to buy artist books, magazines and prints.

“There will be museum publications, but also rare, hard-to-find books and also books on topics that connect to our exhibition programs,” said Zuckerman.

At the OCMA Exclusive section, museum merchandise, developed exclusively in accord with its contemporary exhibition will be available. Zuckerman said visitors will find OCMA-branded hats, shirts and keychains in high-design styles

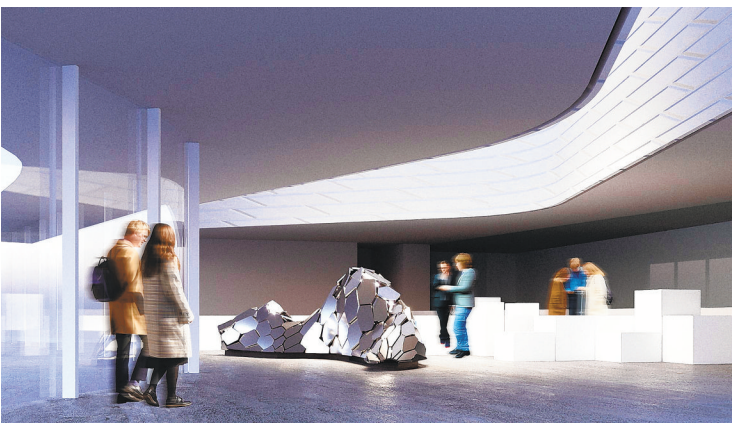


Image rendering courtesy of Please Do Not Enter

**RENDERING OF** French artist Sébastien Léon’s work designed for the Mind, the planned retail space of the Orange County Museum of Art.

that match the museum’s aesthetic.

At the Collection, a themed, rotating assemblage of mostly limited-edition jewelry, art, fashion and design pieces will be available.

“In the way that the museum has its own collection and people are getting to come and see it, the connection with the Mind is that these are objects that are related to or of the quality of some of the things that the museum owns,” said Zuckerman. “It allows people to build their own collections.”

Emmanuel Renoird and Nicolas Libert, creators of the concept store Please Do Not Enter in downtown Los Angeles, have been tapped for the Mind as well. Their presence will particularly be felt at the Collection and the Vintage Gallery, which will be stocked with treasures from the past — a bold move according to Libert.

“This is unusual because normally you have contemporary art museums going with a contemporary design or art store,” said Libert, “and not really making any reference to what has been done in the past.”

The Vintage Gallery will feature carefully sourced vintage jewelry, fashion and design.

“It will be a rotating collection,” said Zuckerman. “There is that treasure-hunting aspect, and we want people to come often because you never know what you are going to find other than knowing it will be fabulous.”

Among the “fabulous” items Libert has pulled is jewelry from French fashion designer Pierre Cardin, who passed away in 2020 and was known for his avant-garde style and Space Age designs.

“We will bring a collection of [Cardin] vintage jewelry pieces, which are mostly runway pieces from the ’60s and ’70s,” said Libert.

A limited edition line of handbags made with human hair by French surrealist hairstylist Charlie le Mindu is also planned along with another collection Libert considers a special link between the past and present.

“We will have surfboards and skateboards using some vintage, iconic paintings from the 17th century and the 19th cen-

tury,” said Libert. “That is how you cross iconic paintings that are in the most celebrated museums with very young culture. These worlds usually never meet. We love the idea of mixing these things.”

The entire space will be centered around a functional art piece from French artist Sébastien Léon. Known for his sculptures and sound installations, Léon has created in his Los Angeles studio a functional work for the store’s opening.

“It is made of stainless-steel mirrors, it will reflect the existing architecture, and from a far you will see it is a monumental art piece,” said Libert. “But then if you get closer to the piece you will realize there is actually a sound installation, and you will start hearing some music coming from the inside of the piece.”

The soundtrack, which Léon composed in collaboration with musician and producer Joshua Carter of Phantogram, will play from inside the sculpture.

“Then if you really get close to that monumental piece in the middle of the retail, you will realize in the piece, built in, there is display cases. And these cases will feature the vintage jewelry pieces,” said Libert. “From a far it is a sculpture, but then when you get closer, you start the experience.”

Overall, Zuckerman said she intends the Mind to be a place where the different connections inspire visitors to connect with the world around them and with each other.

“We want to bring those elements of the past into the present and use them to hopefully help define and structure our future,” she said.

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# Student’s book set to hit school shelves

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

In 2013, farmers in Haryana, India were scammed into selling their farmland for unfairly cheap prices. The Delhi Land and Finance land grab case, as it became known, saw many Indian families lose their means of supporting themselves. The incident isn't an isolated one; there are thousands of cases like this in India each year.

That was the realization of Oxford Academy high school student Rahil Luthra when he made a 2016 visit to India to see his uncle.

“My Uncle Bupinder, he was actually scammed out of his land in the DLF Land Grab case,” Luthra said.

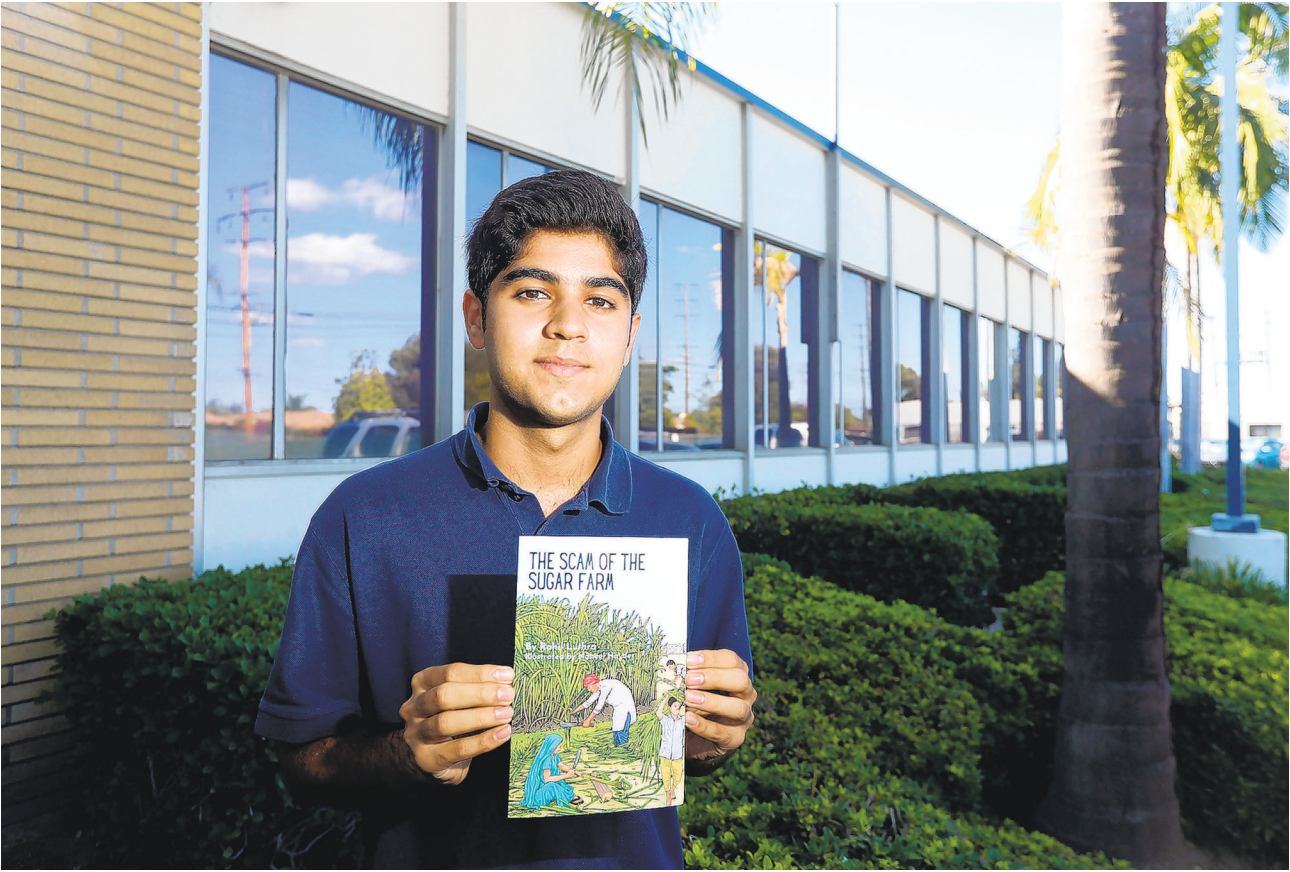
Bupinder was coerced to sell his farmland in Amipur for a quarter of what it was worth.

“He lost his entire farm and was forced to go to the slums,” said Luthra. “We actually went to see him there and it was really sad, my cousins were there. After I came home from that, I knew I needed to do something about it.”

Luthra thought about ways to raise money and awareness and eventually landed on writing a book, aimed at children age 8 to 12, to help educate them about financial literacy. He spent a year and half, writing, revising, getting the artwork done and then looking for a publisher. His father found publisher Caitlyn Jones online and her company, Artist Madrid Books, helped make Luthra’s book a reality.

The result is “The Scam of the Sugar Farm,” written by Luthra and illustrated by Nabeel Hayder.

“This book is a fictional story about a family in India that gets



**RAHIL LUTHRA**, a high school student at Oxford Academy in Cypress, wrote a children’s book, “The Scam of the Sugar Farm,” loosely based on the Delhi Land and Finance land grab case of 2013 in Haryana, India that convinced Indian farmers to sell their land for unfairly cheap prices. Anaheim Unified School District recently agreed to order over 100 copies of the book.

Don Leach | Staff Photographer

scammed out of their land and then is saved by lawyer who is financially literate,” said Luthra. “The point of the novel is to convey the importance of financial literacy, especially to the younger generation.”

Luthra is an active ambassador for the CRY America charity, a nonprofit that works to educate children in developing nations, and all author royalties from his books sales will go to the organization.

The book was published in April and is available on Amazon, but it will soon be found in Ana-

heim school libraries too. Anaheim Unified School District recently agreed to order over 100 copies.

“They are actually implementing a new financial literacy curriculum,” Luthra said. “They are going to buy about 110 copies of the book for all the elementary schools in the area.”

Financial literacy is a skill set Luthra feels is lacking not only in India but in the U.S. public school system.

“I feel like it is an obligation of society to make sure that our younger generation knows how to

handle their money,” said Luthra. “When people leave school, they leave not knowing how to pay taxes, how to do anything like that, and we are not really doing a good job of preparing them for the real world.”

Not being financially literate also makes you vulnerable to scams or being taken advantage of, like Luthra’s Uncle.

After graduation, Luthra plans to pursue a career in financial law and is hoping to create a task force to increase educational resources in the remote villages of India.

He has also reached out to other school districts who might be interested in copies of the book like Anaheim was.

“Of course, I alone can’t make a difference in the world, but if we can get the younger generation to read these books and get inspired, then together as a community we can try to make change and hopefully make a future where everyone is a little more secure with their money.”

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## PHONE

Continued from page A6

ing “is,” “are” and “am.” And these copular verbs don’t create the same subject-object relationship non-copular verbs do. When you say, “Charles is king,” the second noun isn’t an object of the verb. Instead, it’s a reference to the subject. Charles and the king are one. They’re both the subject.

The same is true in “This is she.” The first and last words both refer to the subject because of the dynamic created by the copular verb “is.” That’s why, if you’re aiming for proper English, “this is she” is correct.

There’s a special term for this that almost no one knows and you can

forget immediately if you want to. It’s called the predicate nominative. The word “nominative” means basically a subject. The “predicate” part means that the subject appears in the last part of the sentence, the predicate. When you’re dealing with non-copular verbs, the predicate is where you’d find an object like “her” or “him.” But with the predicate nominative, the noun after the copular verb is the subject itself.

So when someone calls for you, you can answer “This is she” with confidence.

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

## MEASURE

Continued from page A6

the impact of Measure Y is not mitigated the city could be subject to debilitating penalties, including fines of \$100,000 per month, loss of eligibility for state grant funds and the probability of the state taking control of all development in the city — the complete loss of local control.

Measure K will allow for much-needed reinvestment on Harbor and Newport boulevards, loosen the stranglehold of Measure Y on development, permit planning for good development in industrial-commercial corridors and protect residential neighborhoods from large developments. Measure K will allow the city to conform

with state requirements and prevent penalties from being imposed. It will require developments to conform with all development standards and permit concerned residents to express their views on developments through the normal vetting process.

Measure K will not repeal Measure Y. It will not permit uncontrolled development or encroachment on residential neighborhoods. It will not remove the opportunity for “the people” to express their views on developments.

Measure K is not just OK, it is essential. Please vote “yes” on Measure K in November. The economic viability of our city depends on it.

**GEOFF WEST** is a resident of Costa Mesa.

## FAMILY

Continued from page A6

might be. Her bland, take-no-sides-ism was viewed as a salve for our chaotic, polarized society.

But there’s more to it than that, and I think we all know it.

The answer to why a store clerk in Orange County, Calif., mourns the death of a distant queen also lies in the fact that the British royal family presents a near-perfect mashup of the cultural ingredients we love best: celebrity, extreme wealth and status, and Disney princess fantasy.

No matter that the late Queen’s clan is often a hot mess of epic proportions. That only makes us royalty-deprived Yanks more obsessed.

They’re the “Keeping Up With the Windsors” reality show, in which participants live in castles and wear fabulous clothes and ridiculous hats, are constantly the target of gossip and rumors, instigate scandals,

try to gloss over those scandals with patrician authority, and feign gratitude and humility while accepting honors and riches they didn’t earn.

Egged on by an overzealous British press and social media trolls, we scrutinize every sideways glance, hair flip, hand gesture and wardrobe choice. We choose our favorites to root for and pretend we know them. Sometimes, secretly, we want to be one of them.

And many of us just can’t look away when the whole exalted apparatus skids off track, as it often does.

We don’t even need to go back in time to the days of colonial oppression and exploitation or to the sad story of Princess Diana. There’s plenty of ignominy in recent years, including Prince Andrew’s friendship with convicted sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein, and the accusation by one of Epstein’s victims that now-King Charles’ younger brother sexually assaulted her. Andrew denies the claim but agreed to a fi-

nancial settlement with the young woman.

You might think we’d reserve our outrage for that nasty episode. Instead most of the attention, far as I can tell, has been focused on the controversy surrounding Prince Harry and his American wife, Meghan Markle, the former actor who stokes criticism merely for being herself — biracial and not to the manner born.

Despite such ugliness — or maybe because of it — I don’t think our fixation on British royalty will subside anytime soon. The suggestions that King Charles’ dour personality could lessen public interest in royal goings-on are wildly premature and probably wrong.

So here’s what I suggest:

If we’re going to maintain our hobby of Windsor-watching, we should also be aware of, and acknowledge, that racism, misogyny and the extreme snobbery at which the British aristocracy excel are just as much a part of the royal package as palaces

and primogeniture.

And we should be more clear-eyed about why we’re so spellbound by a faded system that, underneath the jewel-encrusted exterior, has also represented a dark side of humanity.

Perhaps we could do with a little less fractured fairy tale and a bit more reality — emphasis on the real.

**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.

# Daily Pilot

A Times Community News publication incorporating the Huntington Beach Independent, Coastline Pilot, Orange Coast Daily Pilot and the Newport Harbor News Press combined with Daily Pilot

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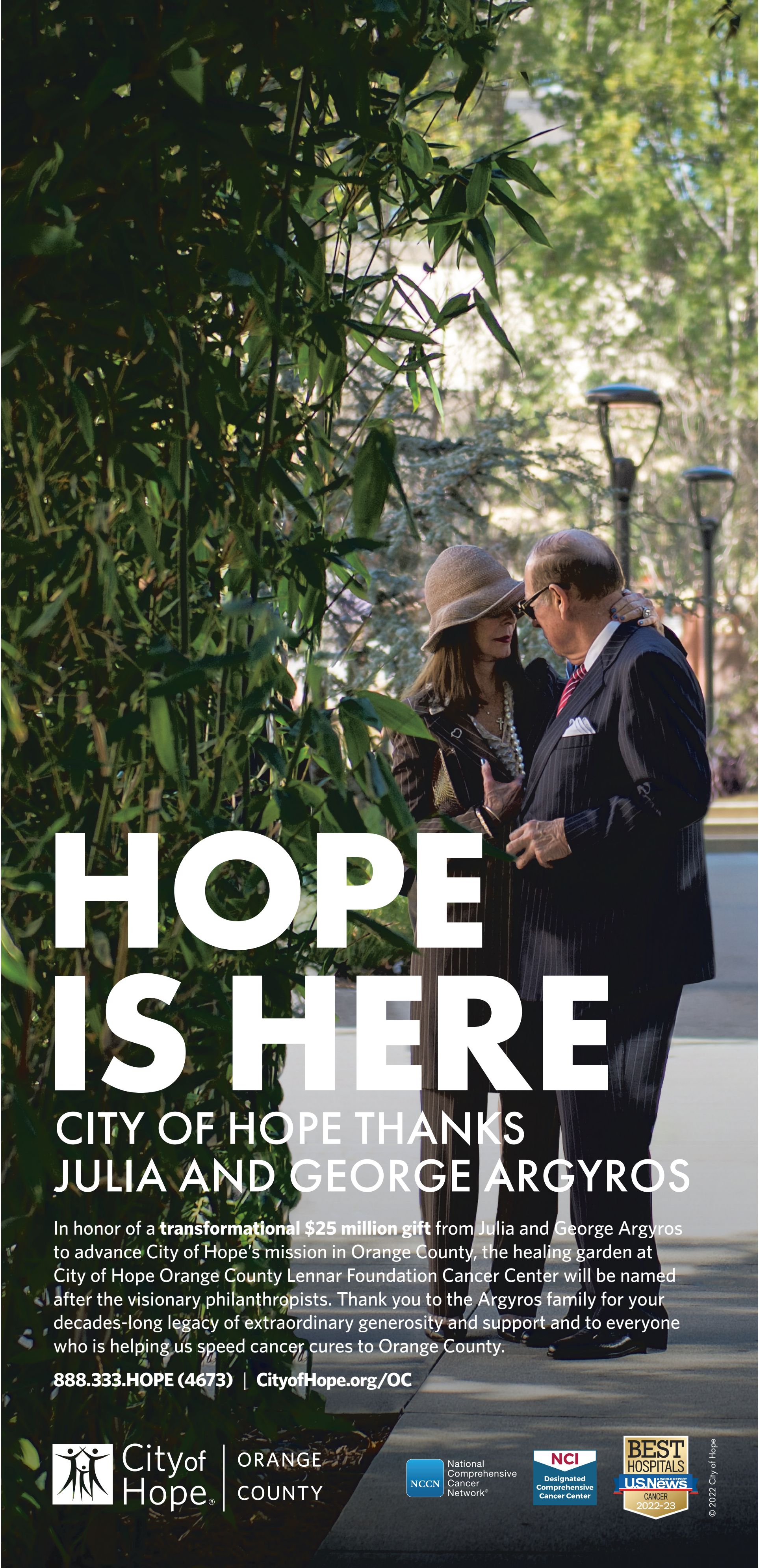
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