

# Daily Pilot & Times OC

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Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**LOCAL HISTORIAN** Chris Epting and former state Sen. and co-host John Moorlach, from left, film a segment for "OC History Hunters" at Arden: Helena Modjeska Historic House and Gardens in Siverado Canyon.

## Tracking down O.C.'s legendary, vibrant past

Regional history buffs co-host the quirky, fact-finding show 'OC History Hunters' on KLCS.

**BY SARA CARDINE**

Tracking down locations, people and artifacts that played a significant role in shaping Orange County's rich and storied past isn't difficult, if you know where to look.

Two local history buffs, and co-hosts of the new

and locally produced television show "OC History Hunters," have combined their talents and interests, honed over decades of scholarly research and experience, to bag the big game for a regional audience.

Former Orange County Supervisor and state Sen. John Moorlach, a Costa Mesa resident, recently teamed up with former Los Angeles Times columnist, author and Huntington

See **Past**, page A4



## Coming soon to Irvine

### UCI Health

## Sand project resumes in San Clemente

With a new dredge site, officials are hoping the 50-year replenishment project can aid efforts to combat coastal erosion.

**BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN**

Faced with an eroding coast, San Clemente has restarted a long-awaited sand replenishment project following months of uncertainty and delay.

Security fencing, heavy machinery and large pipes had already moved back to the beach surrounding San Clemente Pier in preparation. Sand pumping began on Thursday.

"We're only going to be able to do half the beach at this time, and then put off the rest of it until October," said San Clemente Mayor Victor Cabral. "We're hopeful all goes well."

With the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers overseeing the first phase of the 50-year project, beach nourishment efforts first began in December but got off to a rocky start.

Sediment mixed with rock and cobble from an offshore dredging site near Oceanside damaged equipment and pumped sand that officials deemed to be too poor in quality for the project that sought to widen the half-mile stretch of beach between T Street and Linda Lane by 50 feet with 251,000 cubic yards of sand.

The Corps agreed to an initial 70-day delay in January while Manson Construction, its contractor, moved on to another federally supported sand replenishment project at Solana Beach in San Diego County.

With that project now completed, and work wrapped up on beach nourishment in Encinitas, San Clemente is picking up where it left off but with a new offshore dredging site at Surfside-Sunset

See **Sand**, page A2



**CEO MADELYNN HIRNEISE** stands with the diaper shelves at the Families Forward food pantry in Irvine. Orange County families are battling high costs of living, including diapers and food.

Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

## OC Diaper Bank seeks funding for its mission

**BY MATT SZABO**

It's well documented that food costs continue to rise.

For thousands of Orange County families with young children, though, baby diapers are just as necessary.

Families Forward chief executive Madelynn Hirneise has done the math, and it doesn't always add up for those struggling to make ends meet.

"A child will go through about eight to 12 diapers a day, depending on how little they are and where they are in their potty-training journey," Hirneise said. "A pack of diapers, even with a Costco membership, is \$50. So that's \$50 for 75 diapers that are not going to last you very long."

Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020, Community Action Partnership of Orange County's OC Diaper Bank has provided a critical solution. It has distributed more than 47 million diapers through about 80 partners, according to Gregory Scott, CAP OC president and chief executive.

Families Forward runs a food bank through its Irvine location, and Hirneise said the CAP OC diapers go quickly, particularly in the larger sizes. Through the program, families are allowed 50 diapers monthly for each of their children.

Karina Rodarte visits monthly for diapers for her 2-year-old

See **Diaper**, page A4



**A VOLUNTEER** loads a basket at the Families Forward food pantry.



Sarah Mosqueda

### ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:

**CAP OC, WESTMINSTER HIGH CELEBRATE EARTH DAY WITH FRESH PRODUCE DONATED TO OC FOOD BANK**

Westminster High School students and volunteers picked strawberries at the school's Giving Farm, which donated its one millionth pound of fresh produce on Tuesday. **PAGE A6**

**STEM-BASED PROGRAM IN IRVINE FOSTERS THE NEXT GENERATION OF MED TECH TALENT** **PAGE A2**

**PEPPERMANIA TURNS UP THE HEAT IN NEWPORT BEACH WITH AN AWESOME ARRAY OF CHILES** **PAGE A8**



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**PAST**

*Continued from page A1*

Beach historian Chris Epting to create the show's initial episodes, which take viewers on a series of adventures designed to entertain and edify.

The first 27-minute episode — "OC Baseball's Hidden Gems" — explored local venues that, unbeknownst to many, hosted baseball greats such as Babe Ruth, Satchel Paige and Joe DiMaggio. The segment premiered Nov. 6 on PBS SoCal's KLCS-TV.

A second installment in January showcased the untold rock 'n' roll history of Orange County, the birthplace of iconic bands like No Doubt and the Runaways. It featured a taping in Anaheim, on the former site of the Harmony Park Ballroom, where American songwriter Richard Berry penned hit "Louie, Louie" in 1955.

Sort of a cross between a traditional documentary and a history-hopping road trip not dissimilar to Huell Howser's "California's Gold," the show is crafted to give Orange County its due as a place where history, art and culture converge.

"Orange County, to me, has never really been taken as seriously as Los Angeles County, in terms of cultural touch points," Epting said Monday, during a busy production day in Silverado Canyon. "There's a lot of history

that people don't realize happened here."

"The list is infinite of what you can do here," agreed Moorlach.

The co-hosting producers convened with a small film crew outside Arden, the famous Santiago Creekside retreat of 19th-century Shakespearean actress Helena Modjeska, which today serves as a historic house and museum.

In an introductory scene, they offered hints at some of what that episode would reveal, including the spot of the last recorded sighting of a grizzly bear in California and a talk with Farmers & Merchant Bank Chief Executive Daniel Walker, whose family owned the Modjeska House from 1923 until 1986.

Nearby, during a deadly 1857 ambush led by the outlaw Juan Flores, Los Angeles County Sheriff James Barton was killed.

The episode is Moorlach and Epting's fourth historical venture together; aside from the two that already premiered, a third is in the editing stages.

Their styles are not so much opposite as complementary — Moorlach brings an almost native fascination with the area and its historical landmarks, while Epting, who grew up on the East Coast and worked in advertising before moving to Southern California in the '80s, lends what he describes as more of an outsider's perspective.

"John grew up here, and I

didn't," he explained. "So he's the homegrown, deeply rooted historian, and I tend to bring those little-known nuggets that make good conversation. From that comes this good thing."

Though the two historians, brought together by their mutual interests and involvements, have been friends for years, their partnership on camera has been fostered under the direction of Scott Hays, executive producer of production company OC World.

Moorlach recounted Hays reaching out to him last summer and describing the concept behind "OC History Hunters."

"He said, 'We're thinking of doing a history program. Would you be interested?'" he recalled. "I said I would jump on that. Then I told him, 'You've got to meet Chris Epting.'"

Hays, who co-produced the PBS SoCal public affairs program "Inside OC" with award-winning journalist Rick Reiff, recalled teaming up with former UC Irvine Vice Chancellor Manuel Gómez to develop a nonprofit multimedia company that would focus on stories relevant to an Orange County audience.

The result was OC World, whose public affairs news and features segments air on PBS SoCal affiliate station KLCS-TV and are archived on the team's YouTube channel.

"I decided there was this gap in coverage here in Orange



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**CAST AND CREW** record a segment of "OC History Hunters" at the Helena Modjeska Historic House and Gardens in Silverado Canyon.

County, and I was immediately attracted to [Gomez]," Hays said. "He's one of those individuals who is highly respected in his field and, beyond that, he's a very respectful person."

The pair launched the production company just as the COVID-19 pandemic was beginning to shut down studios but managed to release a few documentary shorts. As restrictions began to ease, the workflow picked back up and hasn't stopped as episodes feature sit-down interviews with industry and agency leaders from throughout the county.

From the outset, Hays said he

envisioned "OC History Hunters" as its own standalone program with a decidedly different feel.

"It weaves together in kind of a quirky way. But, quite honestly, I like it, because it's interesting and it's different," he said. "We're open to all sorts of stories. For me, it's all about the storytelling. Does it tell a good, compelling story? If it does, I'm in."

For more information on "OC History Hunters," visit [ochistoryhunters.com](http://ochistoryhunters.com). Find OC World's full lineup of programs online at [youtube.com/@ocworldtv](http://youtube.com/@ocworldtv).

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**DIAPER**

*Continued from page A1*

son. Rodarte, who lives in Aliso Viejo, is the mother of four. She said if the OC Diaper Bank wasn't available, she would probably need to clock extra hours at work to provide diapers for her youngest bundle of joy.

She also gets diapers monthly through another CAP OC partner, Friendly Center, located in Orange close to where she works.

"Little kids go through a lot of diapers, and every little [bit] helps," Rodarte said. "I really love coming here for the help ... right now life is really hard."

Scott said the OC Diaper Bank doles out about 600,000 diapers per month to approximately 10,000 children countywide. The



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**CLIENT KARINA** Rodarte and Families Forward CEO Madelynn Hirneise share a laugh as Rodarte visits the Families Forward food pantry in Irvine on Wednesday.

initial state grant was for \$3.75 million, secured by state Sen. Tom Umberg and Assemblyman Tom Daly.

"We call them the two Toms," Scott said. "They were our champions to go to bat for us, through the

state, and help us obtain additional funding."

Families Forward distributed the program's one millionth diaper in July 2020, just a few months after it was launched, showing the huge need. Hirneise said that having diapers covered has allowed the nonprofit to focus on other concerns, like food, backpacks and other services.

"We take a breath of fresh air and say, OK, we've got diapers covered, now we need more peanut butter, for example," she said. "It really allowed us to redirect our efforts."

But the state funding is going away at the end of June when the fiscal year ends, Scott said. The California Assn. of Diaper Banks is proposing \$23 million for additional funding, he said, but that's for the

entire state.

"We're doing our best to do a lot of advocacy to see if we can get it in the 2024-25 state budget," Scott said, adding that diapers are his nonprofit's second largest request behind food. "We also try to raise private dollars for it. We're talking to a lot of our donors, we're asking people to write letters to their representatives. We're shaking every tree to really push this forward because we know how important it is for the families that we serve."

Families Forward this week participated in the Orange County Community Foundation's collaborative giving day, "Help Them Home." The nonprofit raised \$143,526 in a 24-hour period, surpassing its \$125,000 goal, and overall Help Them Home raised

more than \$1.8 million with the goal of ending homelessness in the county.

Hirneise certainly hopes the OC Diaper Bank funding is obtained because she sees firsthand every day the growing need. Overall, the food pantry is serving more than 200 families a week, whereas before the pandemic she said that number was about 60 families per month.

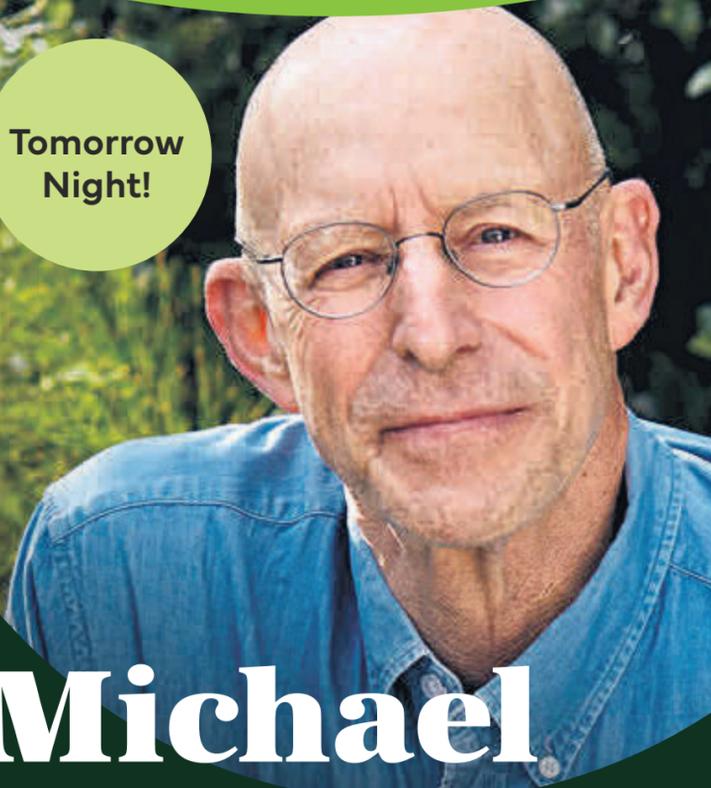
Just last year alone, Families Forward provided nearly 3,500 children with diapers.

"It's important that families can provide basic needs for their children so they can grow," Hirneise said. "We know that the first five years of a child's life are the building blocks."

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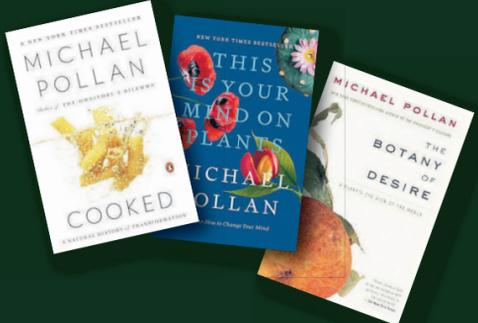
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# A million pounds of produce

Westminster High School students and volunteers picked strawberries to mark Earth Day and help out the OC Food Bank.

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Westminster High School students and volunteers gathered to pick strawberries at the school's Giving Farm under a gray sky. In contrast to the gloomy day, the strawberries growing on the urban farm off Goldenwest Street were bright ruby red and sweet too. The harvest, taking place on Earth Day, was a celebration of the partnership between Community Action Partnership of Orange County and Westminster High School as they prepared the Giving Farm's 1 millionth pound of fresh produce for donation to the OC Food Bank.

"We want to say 'thanks a million,'" said director of the OC Food Bank, Mark Lowry, who was on campus for the occasion.

The OC Food Bank, a program of Community Action Partnership of Orange County, is located just 3 miles from the Giving Farm and dedicated to ending hunger and malnutrition through partnerships with local charities, soup kitchens and programs like Westminster High School's Future Farmers of America program. The farm-to-food bank partnership with the Giving Farm has delivered over 200,000 pounds of produce annually since the two organizations began working together about six years ago.

The 8-acre urban farm had suffered from diminished resources and was down to one teacher when Lowry and his CAP OC team noticed the open land near their food bank facility. They reached out to district officials to inquire about a partnership and learned the district was considering a proposal to pave over the land for RV storage. Instead, CAP OC stepped in to revive the school's agriculture program and provide a connection to local



Sarah Mosqueda

**CAP OC** celebrated its partnership with Westminster High on Earth Day by harvesting its 1 millionth pound of fresh produce.

food networks, while also gaining a resource to help serve Orange County's food insecure communities.

"It is rare to find a jewel like this in the middle of a city in Orange County today," said Lowry. "We were able to protect this resource in the middle of an urban environment."

The Giving Farm is the largest

remaining public-school farm in Orange County, with fields of crops, as well as livestock, aquaponics/hydroponics systems, a greenhouse, shade house, orchard, vertical tower irrigation system and nature center.

The produce area of the farm sits on 3½ acres and uses hydroponics grown on raised beds and aquaponics, a type of fish farming

that uses the waste produced by fish to supply nutrients to hydroponic plants.

Students and volunteers searched the fields for ripe strawberries, bulbous and red, without sun damage or bugs. They loaded their bounty into small carts designed to be wheeled through the narrow rows of crops while another group sorted the berries

into green baskets.

Some of the students who participate in the education project at the Giving Farm are part of the Future Farmers of America program at Westminster High School. FFA is a youth organization designed to prepare students for careers in the science, busi-

See **Produce**, page A9



Gabriel San Román

**A PATRON ORDERS** shawarma for the first time at La Cocina Mediterránea in Buena Park, which shares space with Buena Liquor Market.

## La Cocina Mediterránea serves its tasty menu from inside a liquor store

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

Lunch rush at La Cocina Mediterránea in Buena Park sounded a bit different than at other restaurants.

Ding-dong!

A group of construction workers in orange reflective vests walked into Buena Liquor Market, which shares space with the restaurant's kitchen, triggering its doorbell before loading up on chips and beer.

Ding, ding!

Next to the liquor store's cashier, a customer hit a call bell twice in summoning La Cocina Mediterránea's cook to bring out his to-go order.

Amid the din of dings, La Cocina Mediterránea stood out as one of the unlikely places to munch on flavorful falafels and savory shawarma in Orange County.

"Our chef's food is good!" said Amer Nackoud, who owns the liquor mart and restaurant. "The idea from the onset was to make a fusion of Middle Eastern

and Mexican food."

A husband-and-wife duo split responsibilities between the liquor store and kitchen, respectively.

In general, eateries paired with liquor stores are a rarity in the county.

Station Liquor and Deli in Santa Ana boasts a taco counter and does grilled chicken pop-ups on weekends. There are also Texas-style barbecue pop-ups behind Minute King Market in Newport Beach when the deli isn't already busy making sandwiches.

But La Cocina Mediterránea is true hidden gem where a full kitchen meets a classic convenience store, at least for now as Nackoud is readying remodeling plans.

"The food we have is just a sample of what we're going to have," he said. "We're going to make it a sit-down restaurant called Mama Eve's Mediterranean Cuisine with a full menu. Right now, it's more of a to-go menu."

Nackoud bought the property in late 2021 when the deli market was known

as BP Grill and served teriyaki bowls, burgers and burritos.

The restaurant's new name in Spanish, which means "The Mediterranean Kitchen," translates well for the Mexican working class neighborhood that surrounds it.

La Cocina Mediterránea carried over much of the old staples from BP Grill, but the heart of its menu is Mediterranean, which focuses on falafels, shawarma and salads.

Patrons can order the first two as tacos, wraps or bowls.

Beef shawarma strips come tender, slightly fatty and are delectably seasoned while the chicken shawarma is juicy to the bite.

La Cocina Mediterránea's falafels offer a good crunch and an even better taste. They can be ordered with tacos, bowls and wraps or a la carte from six- to 24-piece options.

The bowls are served more like plates with a side

See **Menu**, page A9



Courtesy of Wahoo's Fish Taco

**WAAHOO'S FISH TACO** celebrates 35 years with a revamped store design and refreshed logo. The Tustin, Costa Mesa and Huntington Beach locations have undergone upgrades.

## Wahoo's Fish Taco dives into a refresh for its 35th

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

When Wing Lam first launched Wahoo's Fish Taco in 1988 with his two brothers and business partners Ed Lee and Mingo Lee, there were two destinations surfers cared about.

"The right of passage for surf trips in the '80s was two destinations: Mexico and Hawaii," said Lam. "Both of those places had what I call local grub. Mexico having fish tacos and Hawaii having lunch plate specials."

Their idea was to recreate the food, fun and

energy captured before and after surf sessions on these trips. The concept also drew inspiration from the trio's childhood in Brazil and years spent working in their family's Chinese restaurant. This year, the Southern California-based legacy chain, known for fish tacos and Pacific-influenced food, celebrates 35 years of business with a refreshed brand image Lam said is more reflective of who they are today.

"We started Wahoo's when we were much younger, and we've come to realize that our original 'college dorm room' aes-

thetic no longer fits the brand," said Lam.

The restaurant remodel is part of the new image Wahoo's is cultivating, with fully renovated interiors. Three Orange County locations, including Huntington Beach on Main Street, Costa Mesa on Placentia Avenue and Tustin on Newport Avenue have completed their renovations, and four more are on track to finish renovations by the end of the year. Updated floors and countertops and modern décor are just some of the changes regu-

See **Wahoo's**, page A9

**forum**

**MAILBAG**



Eric Licas

**SUPPORTERS OF** Measure A, a charter amendment requiring identification to vote in Huntington Beach elections, applauded as Mayor Gracey Van Der Mark pledges to defend the measure during a news conference at City Hall on Thursday, April 18.

# MAGA supporters walk among us

**I**certainly do not want to give disciples of far right dogma any more ideas, but after reading in the L.A. Times this morning that approximately half of the states in the U.S. allow some teachers and other employees to carry concealed weapons on school property, I dreaded the thought that any MAGA disciples would even think of that for California.

Of course, we never thought that MAGA extremist ideas would get a foothold in California, but one need look no further than the city council in

Huntington Beach, the school board in Orange Unified and now the council in Murietta, whose members have been applying some of the same extreme philosophy as that seen in some states.

The book banning is a particularly sensitive issue, conjuring up the image of piles of burning books in pre-World War II Europe. Although not as extreme, all three of these communities have been attempting to give nonprofessional librarians the carte blanche ability to pick and choose what books can remain on

## HOW TO GET PUBLISHED

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designated shelves or even be banned from the school or library completely.

I was proud of Newport Beach for not getting involved in any book choice committees, but it seems like that was premature. I

have been told lately that there is a process underway in the city allowing the public to overrule professional librarians' placement of reading material.

See *Mailbag*, page A8

## A WORD, PLEASE JUNE CASAGRANDE

### Tired of hearing that word? You can find out if it's always been so popular

**Y**ears back, a reader of this column mentioned that, all of a sudden, she was hearing the word "whinge" everywhere. What was up with that, she wanted to know. I had no answer. To my recollection, that was the first time I'd ever come across the word "whinge."

Back then, I didn't know about Ngram Viewer — a Google service you can use to search published writing to learn how popular a word is over time. Ngram Viewer lets you choose from several different databases of published works, some dating back to 1800. Just put in the word and you'll see the percentage of books your word appeared in, plotted over time.

That's how I learned that my reader was right: "whinge," which means to complain or whine, was extremely rare in print until about 1980, when it suddenly began skyrocketing, peaking in 2012. So I wondered: Is "whinge" replacing "whine"? Ngram Viewer lets you plot words in comparison to each other, so I typed in "whinge, whine" and saw that my theory was wrong. "Whine," like "whinge," also started getting more popular around 1980, peaking in the 2010s. Yet "whine" remains far more common — appearing about 40 times as often as



"whinge." This all reminded me of another reader question I couldn't answer many years ago: Is "fraught with" losing ground to just plain-old "fraught"? In my experience, definitely. I never heard "fraught" by itself until pretty recently. So I searched them both. It turns out that the standalone "fraught" has gotten more popular in my lifetime, but that's only because it dipped in popularity in the decades leading up to the 1960s. For a century and a half before then, "fraught" without "with" was about as popular as it is today.

Sometimes, when I notice a word or phrase or spelling getting more popular, I get annoyed. I can't defend my reaction. Language changes, so I need to accept it. But when I've put in the effort to learn, say, how to spell "bandanna" then notice everyone, including professionals, spelling it "bandana," I can't help but bristle. I worry that my little nugget of spelling wisdom is being rendered obsolete by the passage of time. In the case of "bandanna," it is. The single-n spelling overtook the double-n spelling in the early 2010s, and dictionaries allow both spellings, so I don't expect it to recover anytime soon.

See *Word*, page A8

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**THE BUNGALOW**

# Peppermania turns up the heat in Newport Beach

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

For chile pepper enthusiasts who can take the heat and stay in the kitchen, Peppermania at Roger's Gardens is the place to be.

The annual event kicked off on Friday and runs through May 5 with an array of pepper plants to choose from, gardening tutorials and even a designated "pepper of the year."

"It's where you'll find the biggest assortment of peppers anywhere," said Sarah Smith, lead horticulturalist at Roger's Gardens. "During the week, there's going to be around a hundred varieties of peppers."

With that range, Peppermania's offerings span the globe with chiles that originate from Asia to Europe to Latin America.

Some chiles are sweet without much heat like the Carmen pepper. Others scorch up the Scoville Scale like the small but mighty Chiltepin and the Carolina Reaper, which holds the Guinness World Record for being the hottest pepper on earth.

And if pepper enthusiasts

want to get a jump start on New Mexico chile harvest season, Peppermania also offers pots of Hatch and Big Jim peppers.

But only one pepper at Peppermania holds the distinction as "pepper of the year" for 2024, and that's the Carmen pepper.

"It's a sweet Italian roasting pepper," Smith said. "The Carmen has become a favorite of all of us here."

Other event highlights include a presentation by David Rizzo, Roger's Gardens edible gardening expert, on May 4, when he will give tips on how to cultivate chiles in person and livestreamed on the home and garden store's social media accounts.

Roger's Gardens rewards members will also enjoy exclusive offers and can enter for a chance to win a \$500 gift card if they buy gardening products during Peppermania.

For everyone, all the available peppers come in 4-inch plant pots and are alphabetized with Scoville Scales for heat checks.

There's also a chile catalog on Roger's Garden's



Courtesy of Roger's Gardens

**PEPPERMANIA BRINGS** a wide variety of chiles to Roger's Gardens in Newport Beach through May 5.

website where people can study up before coming in to peruse the peppers. "It's a great way to find

something a little different from your traditional chiles," Smith said. "Of course, we'll have jalapeños, too."

True to Peppermania's name, those jalapeños come in different colors and sizes from green to

purple, big and small.

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## O.C. supervisors approve new parking vendor for JWA

BY CITY NEWS SERVICE

Orange County supervisors Tuesday approved a contract with a new company to provide parking services at John Wayne Airport with one abstaining for lack of more information and two others complaining about the company's communications with their offices.

The board voted 4-0 with Orange County Supervisor Doug Chaffee abstaining for Ace Parking, which will take over for LAZ Parking California.

Orange County officials recommended approval of the five-year contract for up to \$60 million with an option for a two-year term. The owner of the company pledged to the board that it would live within the



File Photo

**THE ORANGE COUNTY** Board of Supervisors voted 4-0, with Supervisor Doug Chaffee abstaining, for Ace Parking as the new parking vendor for John Wayne Airport, taking over for LAZ Parking California.

budget.

Orange County Board Chairman Don Wagner

criticized comments company officials made during a presentation to the board

Tuesday about "external forces" attempting to change supervisors' minds on the staff recommendation.

"When you're winning, shut up. Don't talk yourself out of it," Wagner said.

"I find Ace's approach to this where there are legitimate questions — many of which have been asked and answered — the approach from the winning contract vendor to throw mud at this board and suggest we are succumbing to external forces when it is them taking advantage of those forces strikes me as nothing else than very poor advocacy."

Wagner said the comments left him troubled and sparked concerns about future experiences with Ace Parking.

When Orange County Supervisor Katrina Foley noted that both of the top vendors had been "aggressively lobbying," Wagner said he wasn't offended by that and actually found that sort of give-and-take rewarding.

"The attitude that I got was not, 'Supervisor Wagner we want to answer your questions,' it was, 'Supervisor Wagner, we think we have enough votes,'" Wagner said. "It was that approach that turned me off at this point to Ace."

Wagner said he was "disappointed" that the previous vendor, LAZ, did not get a higher score in the request for proposals process.

LAZ "has been a good partner," Wagner added.

Chaffee said he was in a "quandary" on how to vote. Initially he supported the staff recommendation, but he found further questions about the agreement since reviewing it again and added, "I don't have enough knowledge to make an informed decision."

Orange County Supervisor Andrew Do agreed with Wagner.

"I do echo the chair's comments," Do said. "I did take a little offense at that as well."

But Do added that there has been a "sea change in the way the airport has been run," and that has earned the trust from the board for the staff.

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## PROGRAM

Continued from page A2

tional Programs or ROP, which spans 12 local school districts.

Anthony Hsieh, a junior at Legacy Magnet Academy in Tustin, has a busy after-school schedule. When he isn't volunteering at the Petersen Automotive Museum or taking classes at IVC, he is captaining his school's robotics team. But like Zhang, he decided to add the MIRE program to his workload and once a week dons a lab coat after school for ULP's research program for high school students. During the class, he gets the chance to learn about wet lab techniques and technologies at University Lab Partners with education program manager, Samantha Renusch.

"The mentor/mentee re-

lationship I fostered with Sam has probably been one of the most rewarding parts," said Hsieh. "If I have a question I can always ask my team, but if we couldn't figure it out I could ask my mentor."

Hsieh and Zhang were both part of winning teams in a recent MIRE competition. During the 11-week work-based learning experience, students worked to solve an existing unmet pediatric clinical needs problem presented by Children's Hospital of Orange County. Hsieh was recognized for his team's poster presentation on "Wandersync," a gait-tracking app for parents of children with diabetes.

While Hsieh enjoyed working on the project and gaining knowledge on medical technology, he said the program opened his eyes to the entrepreneurial part of the industry.

"You can actually take what you are thinking and turn it into a company if you believe what you are working on is successful," said Hsieh.

Zhang's team won the video competition for "Heart Heroes," a pediatric heart monitor designed to collect electrocardiogram data. The device would be worn as a patch with adhesive from medical-grade silicone, with different colors and shapes Zhang and her team designed.

"We wanted kids to feel empowered by the patch and not burdened by it," said Zhang.

While Hsieh and Zhang both already had an interest in science before MIRE, Koch said ULP is working to reach a diverse population of students who may not have discovered that interest yet.

"When we launched this program, we were very

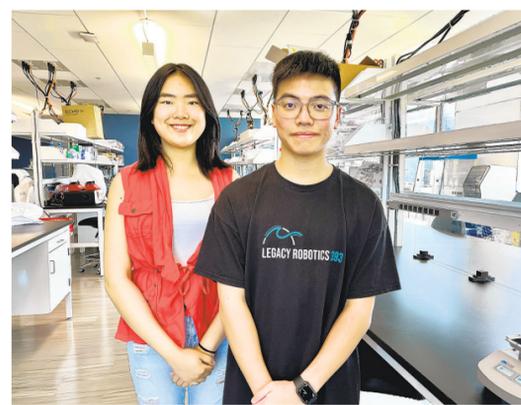
strategic in not putting this class in biology honors classrooms. We love the bio honors kids, but those kids are already engaged in a highly rigorous program through their high school," said Koch.

Instead, ULP intentionally put MIRE into Regional Occupational Programs in Orange County, where the focus is on career technical education and where students might or might not be pursuing higher education.

"That really is a tenant of MIRE, is to bring more access, and that is in how you deliver the program," said Koch.

Koch believes connecting students, like Hsieh and Zhang, who are career-focused and enthusiastic about networking with other like-minded individuals, bodes well for everyone's future.

"If we don't bring this in-



Sarah Mosqueda

**ERICA ZHANG** and Anthony Hsieh at University Lab Partners in Irvine. The two worked together as part of the Medical Innovation, Research and Entrepreneurship program, or MIRE, at University Lab Partners in Irvine

novation economy and thought-leadership for students, innovation is going to become stagnate," said Koch. "The folks in high school now are going to de-

cide what your future and my future looks like."

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## MAILBAG

Continued from page A7

(Have you ever visited a library or school that looked like a breeding ground for subversive behavior?) Parents should

only have the right to select reading material for their own children.

**Lynn Lorenz**  
Newport Beach

The April 19 Daily Pilot included a front-page photo of our Huntington Beach mayor and her extremist compatriots at a rally in support of the recently adopted charter amendment regarding voter identification. Also pictured is a sign setting forth a list of "Things That

Require an ID" which included: buying smokes, buying alcohol, buying a car, driving a car and signing up for school.

Apparently our majority council members and city attorney believe their examples demonstrate that the imposition of additional requirements in Huntington Beach is not a big deal. But my question is: Do any of the example actions require preregistration, which itself involves identification, residence

information, signing a form under penalty of perjury?

**Gene Axelrod**  
Huntington Beach

It's hard for a rational person to understand the motives behind the culture wars that the Huntington Beach City Council majority and the city attorney have ignited in our city. Are they just trying to get attention for their transparent plans to seek higher office (looking at you, Tony Strickland)? Have they

drunk the Kool-Aid provided by their MAGA leader (you, Gracey Van der Mark)? Are they determined to justify their outsize salary by bankrupting the city with lawsuits (you, Michael Gates)? Or are they just followers who can't think for themselves and like the excitement of being in the mix (you, Pat Burns and Casey McKeon)?

Whatever their motives, the scorched-earth policies that this group have wreaked upon our city will

likely haunt all of us for a long time to come. But we will fight back, and we will endure after they are gone, because we the people are the backbone of this beautiful city! We will work tirelessly to repair the damage done by these selfish, unhinged individuals and their blind followers. This is a call to action for everyone who wants to restore Huntington Beach. Protect HB!

**Diane Bentley**  
Huntington Beach

## MARKETPLACE

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Employment

**Patient Coordinator:**  
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an apartment  
through classified

## WORD

Continued from page A7

Because I edit a lot of marketing copy, I get a close-up look at annoying word trends like "immersive." Apparently, some years back, marketers figured this adjective can make any trip, amusement park or museum exhibit sound more intense. Everything is an "immersive experience" these days. Or is it just me? Nope. "Immersive," according to Ngram Viewer, was practi-

cally nonexistent till around 1990, when it began skyrocketing, with no end in sight, unfortunately.

Sometimes the language trends I notice in my work are not mirrored in the culture at large. For example, lately, I keep seeing "wellbeing" in place of "well-being." That's wrong, according to dictionaries and editing guides, and it's also fascinating because it's a window into how hyphenated terms slowly over time become closed terms. "Teen-ager" and "good-bye" are examples. But accord-

ing to Ngram Viewer, "well-being" isn't any more popular relative to "well-being" than it's ever been, at least not through 2019, the last year the database includes. Both terms have gotten more popular, presumably because books and articles about health have been on the rise. But "well-being" remains far more common than its closed counterpart.

Ditto that for "step foot," as in "I wouldn't step foot in that restaurant," which I suddenly hear people say all the time instead of "set foot." They have both got-

ten more popular in print in recent years, but "set foot" has maintained a strong lead over "step foot," I'm pleased to say.

So if you ever find yourself wondering, "Is everyone using this word nowadays, or is it just me?" you can confirm or debunk your fears with just a few keystrokes.

**JUNE CASAGRANDE** is the author of "The Joy of Syntax: A Simple Guide to All the Grammar You Know You Should Know." Reach her at [JuneTCN@aol.com](mailto:JuneTCN@aol.com).

## PRODUCE

Continued from page A6

ness and technology of agriculture. “When this partnership was formed and we were able to invest in getting crops back in the ground again, it sparked interest in the student body and in the community,” said Lowry. “Enrollment in the program doubled, additional teachers were hired so more students are exposed to it not only in the agriculture and FFA program, but Westminster High School principal, Amy Sabol, has been very intentional about making sure that people understand this an interdisciplinary study. It is not just about agriculture, but biology, chemistry and the arts.”

Westminster High junior Luca Hunter has been involved in Future Farmers of America for three years and said he has enjoyed the experiences he has gained through the program.

“Within this program you can raise animals, and I am raising a pig and a lamb,” said Hunter.

Hunter said he had no experience with farm animals before working with FFA but is grateful for the exposure since he plans to pursue a career as a veterinary physician.

“I plan to major in animal science and become a veterinarian, so I feel like this program will help put me on that track,” said Hunter.

As the clouds gave way to a light mist, students finished up their strawberry harvest and came in from the field.

Lowry remarked he is grateful the partnership has turned out to be fruitful for both the OC Food Bank and Westminster High School.

“For us, this checks off all the boxes — especially on Earth Day,” said Lowry.

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**A BEEF SHAWARMA** plate with yellow rice and fattoush salad at La Cocina Mediterránea.

Gabriel San Román

## MENU

Continued from page A6

of zesty fattoush salad sans pita chips to pair with a heaping of fluffy yellow basmati rice.

Bound by a thin but sturdy pita bread toasted on both sides, the wraps are stuffed with sour Lebanese pickle strips, French fries, pungent garlic sauce and a filing of choice inside.

La Cocina Mediterránea also serves hummus, which can be ordered three types of ways, including spicy and loaded with beef shawarma. A trio of salads — tabouleh, Greek, sumac — rounds out its offerings.

But the best deal on the menu comes by way of its platter tray. The “sampler” packs

beef, chicken and falafel wraps cut in half to go along with fries, pickles, chilies and an assortment of house sauces. The tray is great for gatherings or for feeding four to five people for \$30 in these inflationary times.

For first timers at La Cocina Mediterránea, patrons order at the restaurant counter but pay at the liquor store cashier right next to it. There’s even a dining patio outside facing Knott Avenue to sit down and grub.

But Nackoud is looking toward the future with plans to separate the two businesses with a wall and enhance the customer’s overall experience. In a swap, the liquor mart would face Knott Avenue while Mama Eve’s would offer sit-down and patio

dining away from the main street.

“Hopefully, everything will be done before the end of this year,” he said. “Construction is fast. Working with the city always takes time.”

Nackoud is also eager to remodel the kitchen and put a new falafel machine and shawarma spits to use.

For now, being paired with a liquor store gives La Cocina Mediterránea a distinct convenience in offering a drink menu more expansive than most.

Whether a bottle of Topo Chico, Coke or Gatorade, just pay for a drink off the shelf and wash down all the good food, accordingly!

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## CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS

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## WAHOO'S

Continued from page A6

lar diners might notice.

In the past, Wahoo’s depended on surf, skate and other action sports memorabilia to decorate its walls along with haphazardly placed stickers that emulated gear showing off all the places it had been.

“As we would get it, we would throw it up on the wall and find the space for it,” said Lam.

While Lam said the company still values the surf and skate community and the spirit of getting away, the redesign aims to organize some of the chaos.

“We still wanted to have this cool, original, authentic stuff people from the action sports industry were bringing to us, but organize it,” said Lam. “I love the word that museums use: curated.”

The logo has also undergone a redesign with a new tagline, “Living the Wahoo’s Way,” a sentiment that marketing manager Cindy Lee said ushers Wahoo’s into the future.

“Led by a more mature

brand aesthetic, but underpinned by the same brand spirit, we’re excited to introduce and reintroduce Wahoo’s to current and future generations,” said Lee, who is married to co-founder Mingo Lee.

For those concerned that their favorite menu item might get lost to the revamp, fear not. Items like the Baja Rolls may not be listed on the menu any longer, but Lam said that doesn’t mean they are gone forever.

“Our Baja Rolls, because they take a little bit of time to make and are labor intensive, have gone off the menu, but we have all the ingredients there,” Lam said. “If you call us the day before and let us know you’re coming in for dinner we can make it for you.”

Of course, Lam said, fish taco fans can always explore other parts of the menu to find a new favorite.

“If you like the Baja Rolls, you should try our new potato tacos,” said Lam.

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# Daily Pilot

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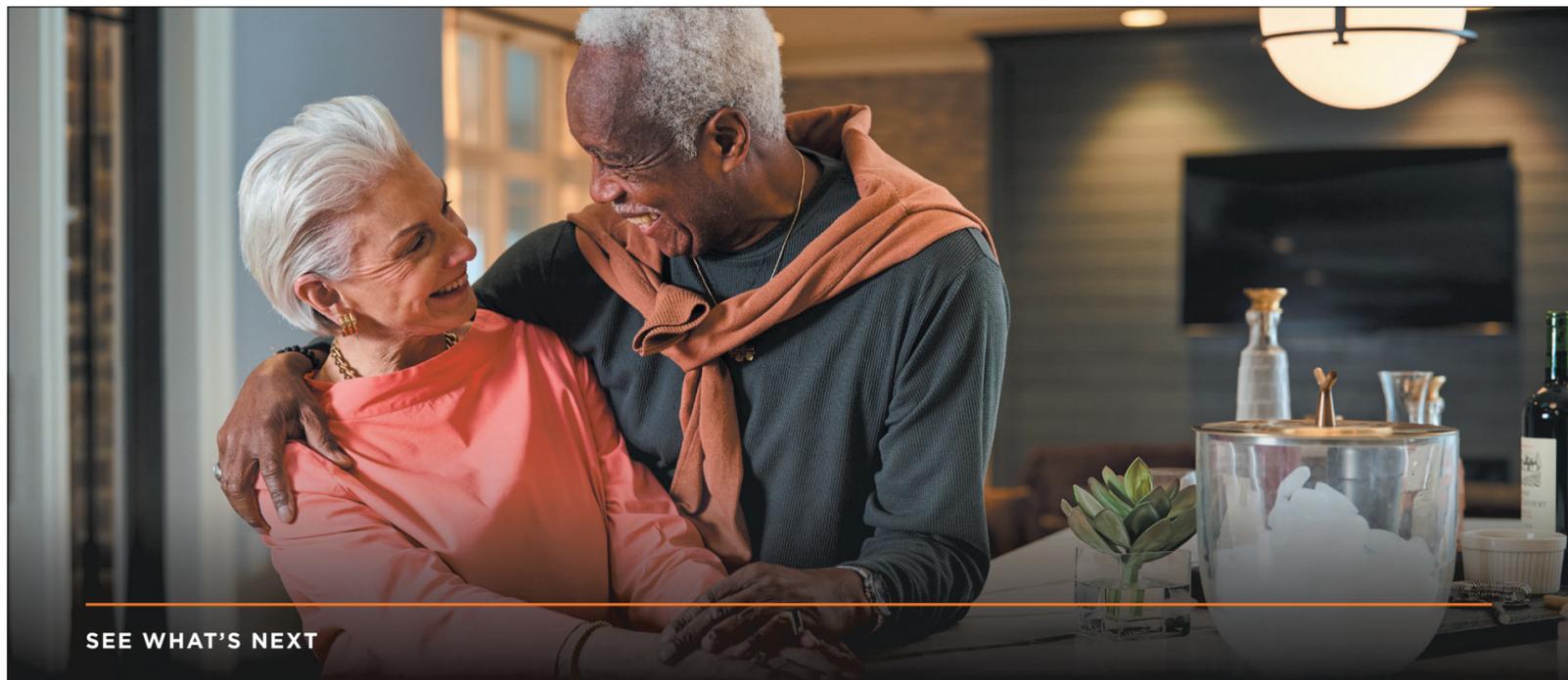
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# Prominent GOP donor lists property for \$25M

BY LILLY NGUYEN

A nearly 4-acre residence that abuts the upper Newport Bay Nature Reserve officially hit the market Wednesday.

The 6,895-square-foot residence, currently owned by prominent Republican donor and businessman Buck Johns, was built in 1951.

The property has seen a number of additions over the years since Johns purchased it in August 1977 for \$550,000. Johns and his wife, Colleen, raised their four children there and played host to a number of Republican candidates, including former gubernatorial candidate Larry Elder and former Vice President Dick Cheney, according to Bill Coté, who is co-listing the property with Brian Sperry.

Coté said he and Buck Johns discussed putting the home on the market for about three years. He noted the property is large and the couple are looking to downsize now that they've "reached a point in their lives and careers" where they feel it's the right time.

One of the property's merits, Coté said, is it is zoned for equestrian usage. About six horses can be kept there.

"But there are also not that many view properties in Newport Beach of that size. It has almost 400 linear feet on the hillside that looks out to the Back Bay and, to the southwest, of the coast," Coté said. "It's a phenomenal property. It really is. It's got a mid-century home that's just under 7,000 square feet and some may like it."

"Some may not, but that depends on the personality and ego of the person who buys the property. It's a very special property, and there's nothing like it that size in its present condi-



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

**BUSINESSMAN BUCK JOHNS'** home at 2600 Mesa Drive in Newport Beach is on the market after 47 years in his hands. Built in 1951, the 6,895-square-foot home rests on nearly 4 acres that abut the upper Newport Bay Nature Reserve in Newport Beach.

tion and its location anywhere in Orange County, and simply, it's a very, very special piece of property in Newport Beach."

The property has six bedrooms and eight bathrooms. Among its features are a bar and wet bar and an atrium, a basement, foyer, great room, laundry room, sauna, utility room, wine cellar and workshop. The rest of the property includes rare features such as a private tennis court, a heated pool and spa, biking and horse trails and a four-car garage.

According to [realtor.com](https://www.realtor.com), the average asking price

for a home in Newport Beach is around \$5 million. The current largest is a 15,219-square-foot residence on a 0.6 acre lot at 26 Deep sea, listed in March for almost \$40 million, and the most expensive is at 19 Del Mar, a 14,958-square-foot home on a 0.44 acre lot listed for \$89 million.

In June 2023, the nearby Duck Farm property on Mesa Drive, was priced at \$25 million at the time of its initial listing and sold for \$15 million.

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**THE FRONTYARD** of the Johns' property, which has been listed at \$25 million. It is zoned for equestrian usage and has horse and bike trails, a tennis court pool and spa.

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### Los Angeles Times TimesOC



California State Parks seasonal lifeguard Sierra Fockler discovered a 14-inch Pacific football fish around 2:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 13, near the lifeguard station located at Crystal Cove State Park in Orange County. It's the second such case of the fish washing ashore over the last three years. (Courtesy of California State Parks)

Good morning. It's Wednesday, Oct. 25. I'm Carol Cormaci, bringing you this week's [TimesOC newsletter](#) with a look at the latest local news and events.

Watch where you're stepping on O.C.'s famed sands, because you may encounter a rare specimen of marine life. One, in fact, that has very sharp teeth.

That's what happened on a recent afternoon to lifeguard Sierra Fockler, who found a spooky-looking black angler fish, specifically a Pacific football fish, while she was walking near the lifeguard headquarters building on Moro Beach, located within Crystal Cove State Park.