

Daily Pilot

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Sara Cardine

ATTORNEY SAM SOLEIMANY, left, with Bree Anne Lee Thacker Thursday explain their claims against the city of Huntington Beach.

Mother of toddler bitten by coyote plans to sue H.B.

BY ERIC LICAS AND SARA CARDINE

Attorneys for the mother of a 2-year-old girl who was bitten by a coyote in Huntington Beach in April announced plans to sue the city during a news conference Thursday.

A claim filed by Bree Anne Lee Thacker on Aug. 31 alleges negligence by the city led to the injuries her child suffered on the evening of April 28. She and her daughters — ages 2 and 3 — had

A claim filed by Bree Anne Lee Thacker on Aug. 31 alleges negligence by the city led to the injuries her child suffered on the evening of April 28.

traveled to the city from their home in Chino Hills and were taking a walk on the beach near the pier. The younger girl was just a few steps away from her mother when a coyote knocked her down and bit her face.

“Frankly, she is lucky to be alive at all,” Thacker’s attorney, Sam Soleimany said during the news conference held in Pasadena. “Had this bite been just a

few inches [lower], we’d be talking about a completely different type of case.”

Since then, scars have formed on the child’s face. She now panics at the sight of most dogs, including a family pet she had once been very attached to, Soleimany said.

At the time of the attack, city officials had approved a coyote management plan outlining a

course of action to deter interactions between the wild animals and humans. The version viewable on the city’s website Thursday included instructions to create volunteer hazings teams to scare away coyotes that may have been frequenting human-inhabited areas.

“Why were no hazing teams,

See *Mother*, page A6

Mistrial declared in case of 2019 homicide

A hung jury could not decide if the defendant should be convicted of second-degree murder or a lesser charge.

BY ERIC LICAS

Jurors were unable to agree on a verdict in the case of a middleman in a sports betting operation accused of killing the bookie he worked for three years ago in Huntington Beach, prompting the declaration of a mistrial Thursday.

The defendant, Dennis Tri Gia Dang, was accused of shooting and killing Linh Ho on Oct. 20, 2019. He claimed he acted in self-defense, while prosecutors alleged during trial that he planned to assassinate the victim to escape a \$60,000 gambling debt.

Jurors heard five days of testimony. They then spent seven days deliberating the facts of the case.

“Some people are extremely convinced of a verdict on one side, some on the other, and others are undecided,” the jury’s foreman told Judge Richard King in a note Thursday morning. “And those groups are not overlapping.”

As of Thursday, the opinions of the jury were split with seven leaning toward a verdict of second-degree murder, and the rest favoring voluntary manslaughter. But they all agreed that spending more time in deliberation would not result in a unanimous decision.

See *Mistrial*, page A6

H.B. City Council candidates talk business at forum

BY MATT SZABO

A grandfather, Ken Inouye, who has lived in Huntington Beach for nearly five decades, sat in the middle of the stage on Wednesday night.

A few seats to Inouye’s left sat a student, Gabrielle Samiy, who plays basketball at Orange Coast College.

This year’s Huntington Beach City Council race has certainly brought a wide variety of ages, experiences and viewpoints with its 18 candidates.

Sixteen of them attended a forum at the Senior Center on Wednesday night, put on by the Chamber of Commerce. Questions largely related to business in the city.

The 100-minute forum, moderated by Sheik Sattaur, found commonalities and differences between the candidates, who are vying for four vacant seats this November. Only two, Jill Hardy and Billy O’Connell, have served on the council in the past.

The other candidates who attended include, in alphabetical order, Bobby Britton, Brian Burrely, Pat Burns, Gina Clayton-Tarvin, David Clifford, Vera Fair, Amory Hanson, Casey McKeon, Oscar Rodriguez, Tony Strickland, Gracey Van Der Mark and Mike Vogler.

Most agreed that homelessness is a key issue that the city needs to address.

See *Forum*, page A4



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

HUNTINGTON BEACH CITY COUNCIL candidates participate in a forum at the Senior Center on Wednesday night. Sixteen of the 18 candidates vying for four vacant seats addressed mainly business-related questions.

A car show that saves lives, Cruisin’ for a Cure rolls into O.C.

BY SARA CARDINE

Cruisin’ for a Cure — an event that will draw thousands of classic vehicles (and their mostly male caretakers) to the Orange County fairgrounds this Saturday — may seem like just a car show, but it’s got ulterior motives.

In addition to a dizzying array of cars and trucks, the event will feature nearly 200 vendors and exhibitors, live music, cash prizes, food and activities for children. But beyond all that, the show will also provide free prostate cancer screenings for



Dave Parker Photos

THE ANNUAL Cruisin’ for a Cure car show, seen in 2019, offers free prostate cancer screenings for men over 40. The show comes to Costa Mesa’s O.C. fairgrounds on Saturday.

See *Show*, page A4

Irvine doctor will plead guilty to illegally prescribing opioids

BY CITY NEWS SERVICE

An Irvine physician agreed in federal court Wednesday to plead guilty to illegally distributing opioids, including some prescribed to a man convicted of running over and killing an off-duty Costa Mesa fire captain riding his bicycle in Mission Viejo.

Dr. Dzung Anh Pham of Tustin, who owned Irvine Village Urgent Care at 15435 Jeffrey Road, agreed to plead guilty to conspiracy to distribute controlled substances.

Pham and co-defendant Jennifer Nguyen, a pharmacist, al-

See *Drugs*, page A6

L.B. looks to take on South Laguna beaches

BY ANDREW TURNER

Laguna Beach has set in motion plans to assume ownership of South Laguna beaches that continued to fall under the oversight of the County of Orange after the city annexed the territory in 1987.

The Laguna Beach City Council on Tuesday unanimously supported bringing the county-owned beaches under local control, directing staff to pursue an agreement with the county to that effect by Nov. 15.

In a letter dated Aug. 17, county executive officer Frank Kim stated the county would offer \$22 million to transfer the county's coastal properties within Laguna Beach. The Orange County Board of Supervisors will have to sign off on the transfer for final approval.

The lump-sum payment from the county would go into a fund intended to aid specifically with city operations in South Laguna. Revenue raised from the South Laguna parking lots would also go into that fund, city officials said.

"I think it's just going to be a real benefit to our community long term, a real benefit to people in South Laguna [and offer] better enforcement operations," Mayor Pro Tem Bob Whalen said. "I also do want to thank Supervisor [Lisa] Bartlett. She's really been great for our community. She's coming to the last couple of months of her tenure before she terms out, but I think this is something she really wants to get done before she leaves."

An agreement between the city and the county would see Laguna Beach



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

BEACHGOERS CHAT at Aliso Beach in South Laguna on Thursday. Laguna Beach plans to assume control of the area.

take over Aliso Beach, including parking and concessions, as well as the beaches at Camel Point, Laguna Royale, Table Rock, Thousand Steps and West Street.

The city would then manage the properties, including maintenance such as trash collection and landscaping at the locations, capital improvement projects and marine safety operations.

Assistant City Manager Ken Dormer said one of the beach-related complaints the city receives from residents is a lack of enforcement of the state's ban against smoking on a public beach. "The contract lifeguards with the county basically are looking eyes on the water all the time, where our lifeguards are city employees. "They're looking at not just the water, doing an exemplary job, but also at the quality-of-life issues that occur on the beach around them."

Dormer said the hours of the now county-owned beaches would remain the same if transferred over to the city.

City officials estimate

that assuming control of the beaches in South Laguna will be accompanied by start-up costs of about \$1 million, while it's estimated staffing and maintenance will cost \$2.25 million annually.

During a presentation to the council, Marine Safety Chief Kevin Snow told the panel the city would need to add approximately two dozen part-time lifeguards to cover the expansion in territory to be serviced.

Ed Almanza of Laguna Ocean Foundation said the organization was "doing backflips" at the prospect of bringing South Laguna's beaches under local control.

"We think that our guards, our lifeguards are such an asset," Almanza said, adding that they contribute as stewards of environmental protection. "Why wouldn't we deploy them down there? Our guards would improve public safety, would improve marine protection. I think our marine protection function would be more active down there."

andrewturner@latimes.com
Twitter: @AndrewTurnerTCN

THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

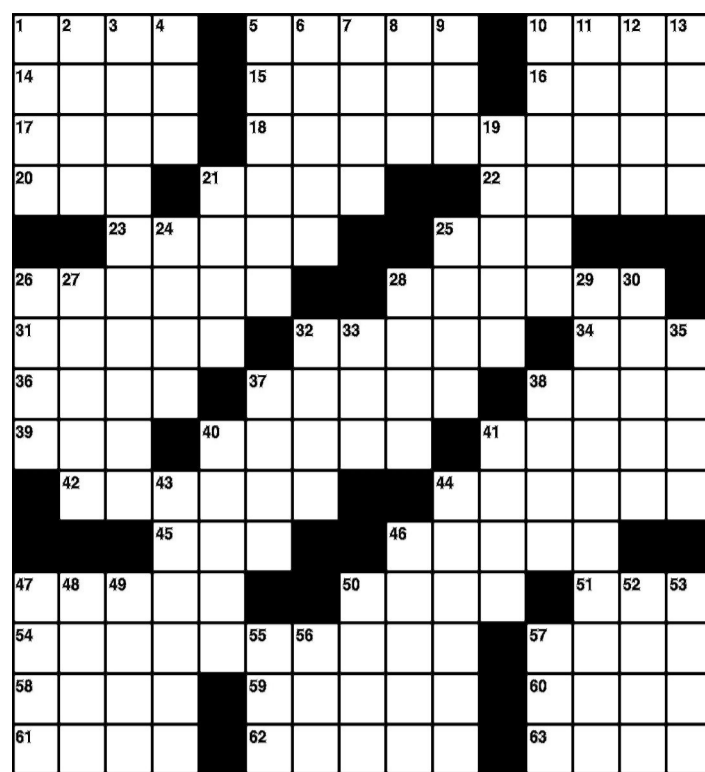
By Jacqueline E. Mathews

ACROSS

- 1 Birthday party dessert
- 5 Sleep disturber
- 10 Perón & Gabor
- 14 Out of town
- 15 African nation
- 16 Dissolve
- 17 Kelly or Siskel
- 18 Dressing choice
- 20 Sullivan & Sheeran
- 21 Fanny
- 22 Cupid's projectile
- 23 Top room in the house
- 25 TV's " _ Sky"
- 26 "Put up _ up"
- 28 Woods
- 31 Nut variety
- 32 Aerosol
- 34 Sing without words
- 36 Lanky
- 37 Clip sheep
- 38 Talus or humerus
- 39 Took a load off
- 40 Wacko
- 41 Ankle-length gowns
- 42 _ days; long ago
- 44 Minor malfunction
- 45 Journal
- 46 Food holder
- 47 Farewell
- 50 Pretense
- 51 Org. for Eagles & Ravens
- 54 District attorney
- 57 Rummikub piece
- 58 _ away at; erodes
- 59 Give one's views
- 60 Billfold items
- 61 Stick around
- 62 Merchandise
- 63 Quite some time

DOWN

- 1 Hamster's home
- 2 Filled with wonder
- 3 Royals' home



SUDOKU

By The Mepham 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.

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

For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A4.

- 4 Pupil's place
- 5 Even though
- 6 Shade of purple
- 7 Lie next to
- 8 Deli loaf
- 9 Big _; fast-food burger
- 10 Come forth
- 11 Swerve

- 12 Hemingway's "The Sun _ Rises"
- 13 Crock-Pot meal, often
- 19 As _ as an ape
- 21 Shock
- 24 Other _; besides
- 25 Wild pig

- 26 _ for; picks
 - 27 Drug addict's need
 - 28 Ravel at the edges
 - 29 Crisco product
 - 30 Long shirt
 - 32 Moccasin or loafer
 - 33 Animal enclosure
 - 35 Net fabric
 - 37 Musical number
 - 38 Fisherman's need
 - 40 Baggy
 - 41 Grand _; batter's delight
 - 43 Gleaming
 - 44 Angry looks
 - 46 Verizon store purchase
 - 47 Chimps & gibbons
 - 48 Word of disgust
 - 49 Greek letter
 - 50 Begin to wake up
 - 52 Run away
 - 53 "I couldn't care _"
 - 55 Farm animal
 - 56 " _ Lazy River"
 - 57 _ man; unanimously
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FREE SHIPPING TO YOUR DOOR

Lido Village Books turns a page

BY LILLY NGUYEN

Lido Village Books is officially reopening in a new location just a stone's throw away from its old place — about a minute's walk, in fact.

The store, previously on Via Oporto, can now be found at 3424 Via Lido in Lido Marine Village. The move came about after the lease at the Via Oporto site was up for renewal, accompanied by a rent hike. So, the store found a new home and began occupying it about two weeks ago, according to owner Michelle Pierce.

Pierce said she'd looked at other locations, but decided that the business, first established several decades ago — she believes it was in the mid-1970s — needed to stay as close as possible to its original location.

"It was 'No, it has to stay here.' This is a place with heart," said Pierce, noting that the store's longtime customers have cherished memories of the shop. "We're here for the community and its individuals."

The bookstore has been open since the move, though the official reopening will be celebrated this Saturday with a number of activities, including story time, an open mic night for writers and banned book trivia night, a nod to Banned Books Week, which highlights books that have been banned or challenged over the years.

Prior to coming into ownership of Lido Village Books, Pierce lived in Alaska, where she operated restaurants. She de-



Photos by Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

OWNER MICHELLE PIERCE stands inside Lido Village Books in Newport Beach. Pierce bought the store in 2020, which will reopen on Saturday.

cided in 2019 that she wanted to try something new.

She'd always wanted to own a bookstore and, as chance would have it, family members in California caught wind of the news Lido Village Books would be going up for sale. Things fell into place. Negotiations happened in October 2019 and Pierce moved out to California in January 2020. Escrow was completed March 24, 2020.

The state shut down for the pandemic on March 19.

"We closed our doors for 2½ months. It was closed solid. I did inventory; I redid a lot of the business things on the back end, built out the inventory. But honestly, it's the community [that kept us open]," said Pierce. "The community would knock on the door and say, 'Hey, I really need this book' or 'You're still here!'"

Pierce said she and her staff would wear masks and keep their distance when customers stopped by after she made an Instagram announcement about

the store's change in ownership. She remembered people waving and chatting through the windows, oftentimes introducing themselves, talking about their own memories of Lido Village Books and their willingness to continue to support it throughout the pandemic.

"It was the fact that the community already had a love for the bookshop," said Pierce. "Really, it was the community who helped keep things going."

So much so that Pierce plans to open a sister location in Malibu next month.

Store regular Steve Churm said he's shopped at Lido Village Books since he and his family moved to Newport Beach at about the same time Pierce took on ownership of the store. Churm said he feels the team at the store represents "the best of retail" and that they really understand books.

"That's the ultimate retail experience," said Churm. "That builds culture for us who live in the area. You want to stop by



VISITORS BROWSE through books at Lido Village Books. The bookstore has found a new home a few minutes from its old location.

and say hello even if you're not buying a book. You want to see how they're doing. You want to see other people you know from the neighborhood."

He said the store's small but mighty team — about six employees total and one volunteer, in addition to Pierce — cares

about his interests and love for reading nonfiction, history and current events.

Heather Hendrickson said her mother has long been a regular customer at the store and she herself grew up in the area,

See **Books**, page A6

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SHOW

Continued from page A1

Lake Forest resident Debbie Baker started the show back in 1999, after her husband Jim, a car afficionado, was diagnosed with prostate cancer.

"Men are the worst. They have so many excuses — they don't want to go to the doctor, they don't want to fill out paperwork," she recalled in a recent interview.

"What better way to have guys get tested than to have their hotrods there, their toys?" she reasoned.

Her reasoning, it turns out, was sound. So far, the event has performed more than 15,000 free screenings for prostate-specific

antigens, an indicator of abnormal prostate function, including cancer. From those screenings, more than 4,000 men were found to have high levels of PSA in their blood.

Among them is Carson Lev, a car enthusiast who used to work for Hot Wheels and started coming to Cruisin' for a Cure in its early days to set up racing tracks for kids at the show.

"She'd come up in her golf cart, literally grab me by the arm and say, 'Did you get your blood tested?'" the Laguna Niguel resident recalled in an interview.

As Lev approached 50, however, Baker doubled down in her efforts to get him tested and finally succeeded in 2003. He was shocked two weeks later when he got a letter in the mail from the clinic that had performed the screening, telling him to talk to a doctor.

His PSA levels were unusually high and would rise month after month, as doctors tested and treated him for other conditions. A biopsy later revealed Lev had early-stage prostate cancer. After undergoing surgery and treat-

ment, the cancer was eradicated.

Lev recalled his doctor asking him what made him get tested at a relatively young age and with no symptoms. He told him about Baker.

"He told me, 'That woman is your guardian angel. If you'd have been waiting for a symptom, you'd be waiting five to 10 years and, I'm going to tell you, I would have been fighting to save your life at that point,'" he said.

"Debbie is a very important person in my life."

Over more than two decades, Cruisin' for a Cure has drawn together not only car lovers of all kinds but also those who have a close and personal connection to prostate cancer.

Costa Mesa resident Beverly Morgan, for example, comes each year to show off the 1965 Mustang her father, Bill Morgan, lovingly restored for her as a gift in 1984. The show gives her an opportunity to talk more about her "Pops," who died of prostate cancer in 2011.

"He loved cars and wrenching on them," Morgan said, recalling how her dad found the car in a barn with a nest of mice living in the engine and spent the next year tinkering away, sending photos of his progress through the mail.

After he passed, she began at-



Dave Parker Photos

LAKE FOREST resident and Cruisin' for a Cure organizer Debbie Baker rides a golf cart at a recent event. Baker started the show in 1991 as a way to incentivize men to receive free on-site prostate cancer screenings.

tending Cruisin' for a Cure. Now her 18-year-old nephew, Daniel Morgan, will take the Mustang out for a spin, care for it and attend the show alongside her.

"I just want to keep Bill Morgan's spirit alive and do it through this car he lovingly restored in such detail," she said. "I think he'd be proud of that."

Saturday, from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m., with a vehicle procession starting at 9 a.m. Admission is \$17, and kids under 12 are free. Parking costs \$10. The fairgrounds are located at 88 Fair Drive in Costa Mesa. For more, visit cruisinforacure.com.

sara.cardine@latimes.com Twitter: @SaraCardine

FORUM

Continued from page A1

"I pledge that if I'm elected, I'm going to work with the city attorney as an attorney myself to develop comprehensive municipal ordinances that are going to address this problem," Vogler said. "I don't want to intrude on anybody's civil liberties or civil rights, but we do have to get serious about this. We don't want Huntington Beach to become Venice Beach."

Crime was an issue that seemed related to home-

lessness to some, including Burns, who worked as a police officer in Long Beach for 30 years. Burns, Van Der Mark, McKeon and Strickland have been campaigning together to try to capture the four open spots on the dais.

McKeon noted that some businesses flee to neighboring cities that offer fewer restrictions.

"We bleed sales tax dollars to other cities," McKeon said. "It's unacceptable."

Clayton-Tarvin identified inflation as a major issue, not just nationwide but

specifically in Surf City. As the Ocean View School District Board of Trustees president, she has seen the realities of the economy firsthand.

"We've seen our construction costs for rebuilding our schools through Measure R literally triple," she said. "It is damaging the school district and it's damaging Huntington Beach."

Samy said she has seen labor issues firsthand as an employee at a local hotel.

"I have discussed with a couple of businesses what they feel the issues are, and a huge one is labor, espe-

cially in this post-COVID economy where no one wants to go back to work," she said. "I work at Hyatt Hotel in Huntington Beach, one of our most beautiful hotels. They are paying the most minimum job \$22 per hour, and they can't get anyone that would want to work right now."

Sattaur also asked the candidates about industry sectors the city should pursue, beyond tourism and car sales revenue.

Fair and Clifford pointed out that the population of Huntington Beach is aging, making medical services

even more vital.

"I think we need to bring closer-to-home medical care to our seniors," said Clifford, a business owner in the transportation industry. "Those are more high-paying jobs. I also agree with Brian that we need more manufacturing, bringing in good blue collar high-paying jobs."

O'Connell said revitalizing downtown Huntington Beach is important.

"Families do not want to go to downtown Huntington Beach," he said. "We've got to invest. I'm all about free and fair trade, but when you don't have free

and fair trade, we have to step up and support small business and American workers. If we don't start encouraging our supply chains from being overseas to come back into the United States, that's going to be a huge challenge in the future."

Strickland, a former state Assemblyman and state senator, said he will listen to community input if he is voted onto council.

"God gave you two ears and one mouth for a reason," he said.

matthewszabo@latimes.com Twitter: @mjszabo

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Daily Pilot
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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS

Table with crossword and sudoku answers. Crossword words include CAKE, AWAY, GENE, ED S, ATTIC, BIG, OR SHUT, PECAN, THIN, SAT, BYGONE, LOG, ADIOS, PROSECUTOR, EATS, STAY, ALARM, LIBYA, BLUE, SEAT, SPRAY, SHEAR, LOONY, OPINE, WARES, EVAS, MELT, CHEESE, ARROW, FOREST, HUM, BONE, SARIS, GLITCH, SHAM, TILE, ONES, AGES.

Sudoku grid with numbers 1-9 in a 9x9 grid.

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Environmental film festival returns

BY SARA CARDINE

Locals who find themselves concerned about the impacts of climate change but don't know what they can do to make a difference in their own communities may draw inspiration from a film festival coming to Costa Mesa this weekend.

Now in its fourth year, the Orange Coast Wild & Scenic Film Festival returns Saturday to the Orange Coast Unitarian Universalist Church with two screenings of 10 short documentary films focused on issues related to nature and environmental activism.

Operating under the tagline "Where activism gets inspired," the film festival aims to spark conversations and generate ideas among those who watch the films.

"The Hunt for the Giant Asian Hornet" depicts scientists racing to stop the spread of a new invasive species, while "Shaba" tells the story of a young elephant rescued in Northern Kenya after losing her mother to poachers.

"We try and hit hard topics — these films are strong — but also give people hope there can be ways these things can be resolved," said Linda Spery, a member of the Costa Mesa church who helped organize the first local festival in 2018.

Selections are made from a menu of productions created all over the world and submitted to a flagship festival held annually in Northern California's Nevada City, where nearly 200 films are shown during the five-day event. Local festival organizers review submissions and build their own individual programs.

Spery said a 30-member festival committee watched 180 short films, looking for entries that caught viewers' attention, were engaging or evocative and that included a call to action.

"The films we've chosen show people looking at an issue and not just stepping away and feeling like it's impossible but, rather, joining together to do something about it," she said. "We've come up with a pretty good lineup."

The Costa Mesa festival features a matinee from 2 to 5 p.m.



Courtesy of Mangrove Media

A STILL from the 2021 film "A River Reborn," which plays Saturday at the Orange Coast Wild & Scenic Film Festival. In-person admission is \$25.



Courtesy of Linda Spery

ORANGE COAST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH member Craig Spery hangs a banner Wednesday announcing the return of the Orange Coast Wild & Scenic Film Festival.

and an evening screening from 6 to 9 p.m. Both showings feature Q&A sessions with two of the filmmakers from the lineup. An online-only version of the festival is also available.

One of the Saturday's speakers is Ben Kalina, a Pennsylvania filmmaker whose 2021 film, "A

River Reborn," introduces the Little Conemaugh River. Grossly overrun with toxic pollutants from nearby abandoned coal mines, the river is being restored by local organizations and activists.

"These mines were just left, and as they gradually filled up

with rainwater, that water mixed with heavy metals, then traveled out of the mines and into the river," Kalina said, describing how environmentalists used settlement funds to build water treatment plants capable of replenishing the river.

"They are making huge strides at Little Conemaugh, and there's a lot of money in the new infrastructure to pay for mine remediation."

Also speaking Saturday is Amanda Lipp, a California filmmaker who created "Rebuilding Butte," which follows Alyssa Nolan-Cain, a Northern California single mother who learned how to build tiny homes for survivors of the 2018 Camp fire by watching over 2,000 hours of YouTube videos.

Participants Saturday may also meet with organizations and agencies who share the festival's mission and values. Among them is Costa Mesa Councilwoman Arlis Reynolds, who's attended past festivals and the flagship event and plans, in her

individual capacity, to share information on local sustainability efforts.

She cited the creation of the California Coastal Act in 1976 and the formation of the Banning Ranch and Bolsa Chica conservancies as examples of citizens banding together to make huge environmental changes.

"It's a really hard balance to express the urgency of the global issue but to make people feel empowered to make a difference," she said. "It's so important to share the success stories."

Admission is \$25 for the in-person screenings and \$20 per household for the online-only format. Tickets can be purchased online at ocuc.org/event/ocuc-2022/register or (in limited quantities) by credit card at the door. Orange Coast Unitarian Universalist Church is located 2845 Mesa Verde Drive East, Costa Mesa. For more, visit ocuc.org/events.

sara.cardine@latimes.com
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