Daily Pilot

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2020 /// Now including Coastline Pilot and Huntington Beach Independent /// dailypilot.com

Orange County obliterates coronavirus record

BY LUKE MONEY, RONG-GONG LIN II

Orange County reported its highest daily number of coronavirus cases over the weekend, the latest record to fall amid the most brutal barrage from a disease that is now infecting, hospitalizing and killing Californians at levels never seen before.

The 4,606 new coronavirus infections announced Sunday shattered the county's previous oneday high of 3,445, according to data compiled by The Times.

There have been 3,000-plus new daily cases logged county-wide only five times throughout the entire pandemic — all since Dec. 13.

Over the last week, Orange

See **Record**, page A3



Christina House | Los Angeles Times

OVER THE last week, Orange County has seen roughly 693 new coronavirus cases per 100,000 residents, the 14th-highest county rate in the state, Times' data show. Above: Triage tents are set up at UC Irvine Medical Center.

Healthcare agency reports a single-day high of 4,060 cases on Sunday, as officials ask people to not gather.

BY LILLY NGUYEN

Cases in Orange County have continued to push past previous records as county health officials plead with residents to refrain from gathering this Christmas and New Year's.

On Sunday, the Orange County Health Care Agency reported 4,060 new daily cases, breaking records set just last week.

On Monday, the county health agency reported 3,753. Tuesday's numbers fell further to 2,233.

Hospitalizations are now up to 1,806 with 390 patients currently in intensive care units.

Just two deaths were recorded, both residents not currently living in a care facility. Data on Tuesday show that adult bed capacity in intensive care units across the county are up to an unadjusted 7.5%

The adjusted number of beds available is 0%.

This mirrors the rest of Southern California, which the state defines as Imperial, Inyo, Los Angeles, Mono, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. The region bottomed out on Thursday.

Orange County is deploying mobile field hospitals as the county continues to respond to an uptick in hospitalizations. County officials said one such

See **Orange,** page A3



Blaine Ohigashi | Angels Baseball LP

ANGELS BROADCASTER Victor Rojas, his wife and the couple's two teenagers run Big Fly Gear, a boutique apparel company, out of their Texas home.

The voice of the Angels sells Dodgers championship T-shirts

BY BILL SHAIKIN

The holiday shopping season is on, and with it the hunt for merchandise to commemorate the Dodgers' first World Series championship since 1988.

One T-shirt is particularly eye-catching, with its homages to Vin Scully, the Dodgers' classic uniform, and the hexagonal Dodger Stadium scoreboard.

Who sells that shirt? The voice of the Angels.

The "It's Time for World Champions Baseball!" shirt is the newest item in the collection of Big Fly Gear, a boutique apparel company run by Angels broadcaster Victor Rojas and his family.

Rojas, his wife, and the couple's two teenagers run the business out of their Texas home. He collaborates in designs, stuffs T-shirts into packages for shipping, sends handwritten notes and makes telephone calls to thank customers. He just might be the person on the other end of your email question.

"Some people don't believe it's me when I reply to emails," he said.

Some people did not believe, either, when Rojas revealed last month he had interviewed to become the Angels' general manager. Some might not have taken him seriously,

but he believes Angels owner Arte Moreno, President John Carpino and senior advisor Bill Stoneman did.

"The interview went well," said Stoneman, the GM of the Angels' 2002 championship team. "He had a lot of competition, but he came across very well. His thoughts were good. He understands the baseball side of things pretty well. He's got a great background for it."

As Rojas manned the microphone last summer, a positive spin became increasingly difficult to find. The Angels stumbled to their

See **Voice**, page A3

Orange County bishop tests positive for the coronavirus

BY ALEX WIGGLESWORTH

The Roman Catholic bishop of Orange County has tested positive for the coronavirus, church authorities announced last week.

Bishop Kevin Vann, 69, has mild symptoms and is isolating at his home, the Diocese of Orange said in a statement. Initial contact tracing suggests that Vann contracted the virus from a member of his support team, the statement said.

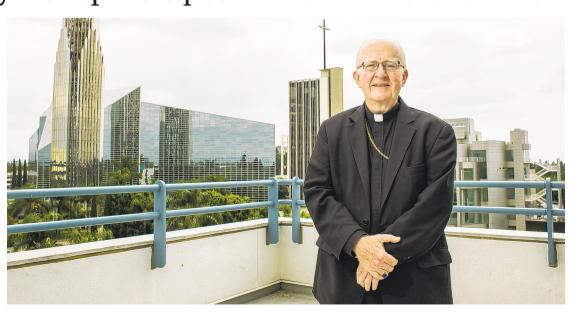
Vann has canceled all appearances and won't resume his normal activities until he's cleared by a doctor, the church said.

The announcement came as Orange County, like most of the state, continued to record an unprecedented surge in new coronavirus cases and related hospitalizations.

There were 1,806 coronavirus patients in county hospitals on Tuesday. A month before, there

were 270 patients.

The rapid rise prompted the



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

BISHOP KEVIN VANN is shown with Christ Cathedral in Garden Grove behind him. Vann has tested positive for the coronavirus, church authorities announced last week. Vann, 69, is isolating at his home.

county public health department to issue an order that forbids hospital emergency rooms from redirecting ambulances to other medical facilities.

The order — the first of its kind in the region — went into

effect last week after 20 of the

county's 25 emergency medical centers became so overwhelmed

See **Bishop,** page A2

H.B. City Council members spar over mask usage

Mayor Pro Tem Tito Ortiz and Erik Peterson did not wear face coverings at Monday night's meeting.

BY MATT SZABO

Tempers flared at Monday night's Huntington Beach City Council meeting, as a clear divide has been established on the dais on the issue of mask usage during the coronavirus pandemic.

Mayor Pro Tem Tito Ortiz and City Councilman Dan Kalmick, each of whom were elected in November, were at the heart of the dispute.

Following a COVID-19 update by City Manager Oliver Chi and Huntington Beach Fire Department Chief Scott



Tito Ortiz

addressed the council. He noted that two of the seven members, Ortiz and Erik Peterson, were not wearing masks.

Haberle, Kalmick

masks.

"We have to lead by exam-

ple," Kalmick said. "I'd just like to register my formal disappointment in council members Ortiz and Peterson ignoring the mayor's letter asking them to wear masks as this meeting. I feel that it puts us at risk, and I'm just very disappointed that that's the position that you're taking."

Ortiz, who also did not wear a mask at his swearing-in ceremony earlier this month, responded by accusing Kalmick of taking off his mask at a Veterans Day event last month that both attended.

"As soon as the cameras turned off, you took your mask off amongst a bunch of older veterans that were there," Ortiz said.

Kalmick immediately denied Ortiz's claim during the meeting and again on Tuesday.

"There was video footage and many, many other folks there that can attest that I wear my mask all the time," Kalmick said in a text message. "I do so for both the safety of myself and others and because I'm not a hypocrite."

During the meeting, Mayor Kim Carr was passionate about the need to wear masks.

"This is not a 'plandemic,' " Carr said, using a word that Ortiz used during his speech two weeks earlier.

"This is very real, and it's up to us as Huntington Beach residents to protect one another ... I'm sorry if I sound a bit exasperated, but it is absolutely emotional for me that we cannot get people just to do something simple as to wear a mask."

SHORT-TERM RENTALS APPROVED FOR REGULATION

The City Council unanimously approved short-term rentals in Surf City, as long as the unit is owner-occupied as a "hosted

See **Mask**, page A2

THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Jacqueline E. Mathews

ACROSS 1 Clutch 5 Hidden supply 10 Get ready for surgery, briefly 14 Actress Anderson 15 Edgar _ Poe 16 In a _; furious 17 As strong _ ox 18 Tovs "R" Us merchandise 20 Last calendar 21 Washerful 22 Uneasy feeling 23 Close friend 25 Damone or Tayback mark

26 Black-and-blue 28 Outspoken; forthright 31 Merits 32 Aerosol 34 TV's "Car 54, Where You?" 36 Doe's mate 37 Walk off with 38 Donkey's comment 39 Facial twitch 40 Benny Goodman's music 41 Postpone; put on hold 42 _ stew; creamy white soup 44 Path less traveled

45 Hippie's home

46 _ aback;

51 MLK's wife

57 One-liner, e.g.

59 On the _; free

60 "Éand on that

54 Subdues

58 European

capital city

to roam

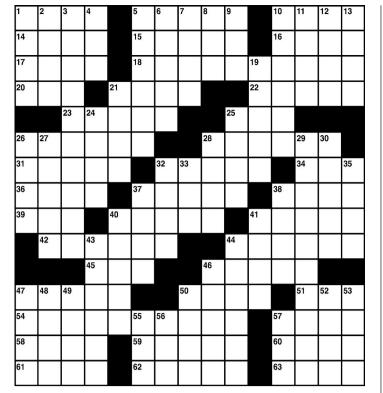
surprised

47 Boring

50 Snout

farm there was _, EIEIO" 61 Individuals 62 "__ touch"; museum sign 63 Fitness centers

DOWN



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*.

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

For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A3.

1 Pleased
2 Stood up
3 Error
4 Neat as a __
5 Gangster Al
6 Calm, as
another's fears
7 Not naked
8 Barn breakfast

9 Suffix for depend or differ 10 Charles, William or George 11 _ out; pealed 12 Potato salad ingredients 13 Pain in the neck 19 _ as an ape 21 Team defeat 24 Jewelry store purchase 25 Lab bottle 26 _ man; wedding party member 27 1-to-10 or 3:5 28 Pull along with 29 Exact duplicate 30 Refrain opener 32 _-fry; wok dish 33 Bic product 35 Black-_ peas 37 Scandinavian nation: abbr. 38 Uncovered 40 55-cent item 41 Tricycle rider 43 Rejects with disdain 44 _ hound; long-eared dog 46 Human trunk 47 Bum 48 JennAir appliance 49 In this place 50 Element whose symbol is Ne 52 _ milk; nonfat beverage 53 Beer containers 55 Aged 56 Wine and dine 57 Coughing spell

Tribune Media Services

Chapman University president self-isolating at home after testing positive for coronavirus

BY SARA CARDINE

As Chapman University students crammed for exams last week before the end of fall semester, President Daniele Struppa announced he was self-isolating at home after testing positive last Wednesday for the coronavirus.

"I want to share the news that today I tested positive for COVID-19," Struppa began in a Dec. 16 message to staff, faculty and students. "I am feeling tired and am resting at home, but overall, my symptoms are not extreme and currently limited to a slight fever and cough."

Struppa, 65, said he likely caught the virus from his 16-year-old daughter, who'd tested positive on Monday, the same day he himself began experiencing symptoms

Given the timing of everything, Struppa estimated his window of contagion likely began sometime around Dec. 12.

"Since the stay-at-home order, my contact with the community has been very limited," he continued. "I am working with our contact tracing team to ensure

we identify any possible exposure so we can limit the possible spread."

Early in the pandemic, Chapman University officials established a line of succession in the event senior staff members should fall ill or become incapacitated. Struppa said in the announcement. The move was made to ensure the institution would "continue to function smoothly during this period."

In a follow-up video made Thursday, the president thanked students, staff and faculty for their overwhelming comments and correspondences conveying their support. He said his daughter's best friend had also been stricken by coronavirus and, since her parents were out of town, was staying with them.

"We now three corona people in this house — it's definitely the house of corona," he said.

According to an online dashboard intended to track the number of confirmed coronavirus cases on campus, as of Tuesday, a total of 44 infected individuals were identified, including five students living

on campus, 33 students living off campus, four staff members and two

faculty members.

A resident of Newport Beach, Struppa is married to Orange County Board of Education member Lisa Sparks. In July, the board approved a recommendation to reopen county public schools without mask and social-distancing mandates, with Sparks voting in favor of the measure.

Lawyers representing the county school board in August filed a lawsuit with the state Supreme Court challenging Gov. Gavin Newsom's authority to issue health orders during an emergency, but the court ultimately refused to hear the matter.

Struppa said he planned to self-isolate and work remotely from home in the coming weeks.

"Thank you for your affection and for your prayers," he said in his Thursday's video message, recorded in his bedroomturned-office. "I look forward to seeing you all again pretty soon."

sara.cardine@latimes.com Twitter: @SaraCardine

MASK

Continued from page A1

stay."

Short-term rentals had previously technically been prohibited, though hundreds were rented throughout the city. According to a staff report, Chapter 5.120, which will be added to the Hunting-Municipal ton Beach Code, has a purpose of protecting the character of residential neighborhoods, maintaining the long-term rental housing stock and ensuring the collection and payment of Transient Occupancy Taxes.

Unhosted short-term rentals in Sunset Beach will be allowed.

THIRD BLOCK OF MAIN STREET TO REOPEN

The City Council voted 4-3 to keep the second block of Main Street closed to traffic but to reopen the third block as soon as possible with modifications.

Peterson's motion, which would leave the second block closed through at least the end of February, was also supported by Ortiz, Carr and Councilwoman Natalie Moser. Council members Barbara



and third

blocks of Main Street have been closed to vehicular traffic since last summer.

Scott Smeltzer Staff Photographer

Delgleize, Mike Posey and Kalmick voted no.

The original agenda item would have kept the second and third blocks closed through Labor Day 2021.

The second and third blocks of Main Street were closed last summer to encourage outdoor dining, though some business owners in the third block have expressed displeasure at the setup.

The second block closure will be reexamined at the Feb. 15 City Council meeting.

H.B. JOINS ORANGE COUNTY POWER AUTHORITY

The City Council voted 5-2 to join the Orange County Power Authority, a Community Choice Energy program.

Huntington Beach will be one of the initial cities to be involved in the program, which has been spearheaded by the city of Irvine. The CCE is a public energy program that would buy different types of energy for residents and businesses.

Other cities that have agreed to join the OCPA include Fullerton, Buena Park and Lake Forest. Peterson and Ortiz, who

were absent from an emergency meeting on the subject on Dec. 11, each voted no on the item.

"I just don't think we need to compete with the private market," Peterson said. "That's not our job. Our job's to clear the way, so that capitalism works."

matthew.szabo@latimes.com Twitter: @mjszabo

BISHOP

Continued from page A1

with COVID-19 patients that they began diverting ambulances to other facilities in Orange County.

As a result, ambulances were having difficulty finding a hospital that would take patients.

Earlier last week, county officials an-

ploy mobile field hospitals to relieve some of the stress on the region's healthcare system.

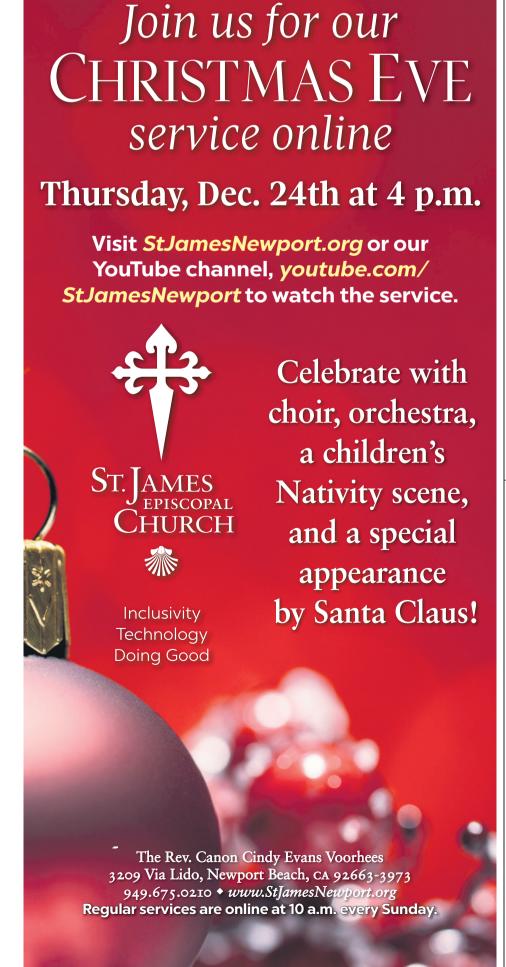
nounced they would de-

"Every day we break the record of the number of people who have been infected," Dr. Clayton Chau, Orange County's health officer and Health Care Agency director, told the county Board of Supervisors on Dec. 15. "So I'm pleading with the community: Please, please do not gather, and make sure you follow the public health guidance, because our hospitals are now bombarded."

Times staff writers Hay-

ley Smith, Luke Money and Rong-Gong Lin II contributed to this report.

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RECORD

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County has seen roughly 693 new coronavirus cases per 100,000 residents, The Times' data show — far lower than other Southern California counties but still 14th highest in the state.

"Our hearts break for our neighbors lost to this pandemic," county health officials wrote Sunday on Twitter. "We ALL have the power to protect each other and #stopthesurge."

More than 130,000 Orange County residents have been infected throughout the pandemic, and officials say more than 75,000 of those have recovered.

Almost 1,800 county residents have died from COVID-19.

Orange County is far from alone in rewriting the coronavirus record books. The pandemic's worst wave is washing over the state and hitting Southern California especially hard.

Overall, the region which the state defines as Imperial, Inyo, Los Angeles, Mono, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego,

San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties – has recorded 828 new coronavirus cases per 100,000 residents over the last seven days, Times data show.

That figure is easily the highest of the five stateoutlined regions and is more than double the percapita caseloads seen in rural Northern California and the Bay Area.

Along with Orange County, four others in Southern California rank among the top 14 statewide in terms of newly confirmed infections 100,000 residents in the last week. San Bernardino is second, at 1,448; Riverside is fourth, with 1,180; Imperial is seventh at 1,045 and Los Angeles is ninth, at

"The number of infections in our county, in our surrounding counties, has been rising every day," Dr. Clayton Chau, Orange County's health officer and Health Care Agency director, said last week.

"Every day, we break the record, the number of people who have been infected. So I'm pleading with the

cause people are gathering

and not following public

health guidance — period,"

afraid of Christmas and

New Year's in my life like I

am now — I can't imagine

what it would be like after

the holiday if people are

not listening and people

Here are the latest cu-

mulative coronavirus case

counts and COVID-19

deaths for select cities in

Ana:

• Anaheim: 22,027 cases;

25,454

Beach:

are not complying."

Orange County:

cases; 357 deaths

• Huntington

Santa

381 deaths

"I have never been so

Chau said.

community: Please, please do not gather. And make sure you follow the public health guidance because our hospitals are now bombarded.'

Just because counties don't rank among the hardest-hit in terms of new infections doesn't mean they're escaping the latest surge unscathed. San Diego County health officials on Friday also reported a record number COVID-19 cases, 3,611.

"I urge San Diegans to follow the public health orders, avoid gatherings and wear a facial covering whenever they leave their residence so we can get this virus under control," Dr. Wilma Wooten, the county's public health officer, said in a statement.

While many of those infected with the coronavirus may experience only mild symptoms, or even none at all, a significant proportion state officials have estimated about 12% — will fall ill enough to require hospitalization within two to three weeks.

In other words, the ramifications of these record case counts won't ripple through the healthcare system for a few more weeks - a frightening prospect, given that hospitals and intensive care units are already inundated COVID-19 patients.

On Sunday, the most recent day for which complete data are available, there were record-high numbers of coronaviruspositive patients hospitalized (17,190) and in intensive care (3,644) statewide.

The situation is particularly precarious in ICUs, which are needed to care for the sickest patients. ICU availability has cratered the relentless amid COVID-19 surge, and bottomed out at 0% in both Southern California and the San Joaquin Valley.

"I'm not going to sugarcoat this: We are getting crushed," said Dr. Brad Spellberg, chief medical officer at Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center.

Hospitals are already having to take steps to keep up with the influx of ICU patients — including placing them in other parts of hospitals not designed for that purpose, clearing out critical care wards of pa-

tients who can survive elsewhere and in some cases keeping patients on ambulances for as long as eight hours until space is available.

The concern, though, is that there eventually may be too many critically ill patients for the limited numbers of available ICU doctors and nurses — a chilling prospect that could result in patients not getting the care they need and, potentially, increases in mortality.

Many hospitals are preparing for the possibility of rationing care in the coming weeks as the number of patients exceeds their staffs' abilities to care for them.

Think New York in April. Think Italy in March," Spellberg said. "That's how bad things could get."

Already, COVID-19 killing more Californians than ever before. The state has averaged 233 daily deaths over the last week, more than double the number two weeks ago.

More than 2,700 Califor-

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educ, training &/or exp is acceptable. Jobsite: Santa

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nians have died from COVID-19 over the last 14 days, a staggering number that accounts for 12% of the state's 22,600-plus fatalities.

Officials have said the surge is being fueled, at least in part, by people ignoring public health guidance and gathering with family and friends to cele-

brate Thanksgiving. Significant numbers of people choosing to do the same for the winter holidays, officials warn, will only pour gasoline on a pandemic that's already blazing out of control.

"I have yet to see any clear signals that things are slowing down, and I'm very concerned about the next two months," said Dr. Timothy Brewer, an epidemiologist at UCLA.

Times staff writers Alex Wigglesworth, Soumya Karlamangla andAdam Elmahrek contributed to this report.

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CONTACT US

ORANGE

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field hospital, designated for UC Irvine Medical Center, will be operational by Wednesday.

Two others will be constructed at Fountain Valley Regional Hospital and St. Jude Medical Center in Fullerton, announced by the county.

An estimated 75,616 have recovered.

"The number of infections in our surrounding county has been rising every day. Every day we break the record for the number of people who've been infected," Orange Health County Care Agency Director and Public Health Officer Dr. Clayton Chau said during a Board of Supervisors meeting last

"Our hospitals are now bombarded. The emergency rooms have no capacity to triage people as quickly as they can. I'm pleading with the community, please, please do not gather," Chau said.

Fatalities in the region have now reached 1,779.

"The reason we have an increase in cases is be-



5,253 cases; 96 deaths 4,292 Costa Mesa:

cases; 51 deaths • Irvine: 4,789 cases; 20 deaths

• Newport Beach: 1,986 cases; 28 deaths

• Fountain Valley: 1,646 cases; 25 deaths • Laguna Beach:

cases; fewer than five deaths Here are the case counts

by age group, followed by deaths: • 0 to 17: 12,093 cases;

one death • 18 to 24: 18,586 cases;

five deaths • 25 to 34: 27,235 cases;

26 deaths • 35 to 44: 20, 613 cases;

HOLIDAY **SHOPPERS**

walk across the Bridge of Gardens at South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa on Saturday.

Kevin Chang Staff Photographer

42 deaths

• 45 to 54: 21,078 cases; 131 deaths • 55 to 64: 15,915 cases;

242 deaths • 65 to 74: 7,978 cases;

350 deaths • 75 to 84: 4,012 cases;

390 deaths

• 85 and older: 2,836 cases; 592 deaths

Updated figures posted daily at occovid 19.ochealthinfo.com/corona virus-in-oc.

For information on getting tested, visit occovid 19.ochealthinfo.com/ covid-19-testing.

lilly.nguyen@latimes.com Twitter: @lillibirds

VOICE

Continued from page A1

fifth consecutive losing season, and their lowest winning percentage this century.

"As an Angels fan, I was getting a little frustrated,"

He started to write a memo to himself about how he would fix the team. He had played one year in the Angels farm system, in 1990, and was a rookie league teammate of Garret Anderson. Joe Maddon oversaw the minor league system. He had once coached, for the Florida Marlins, and had served as general manager of an independent league team.

His father, Cookie, played 16 years in the major leagues and managed the

Angels in 1988. He had called an Angels game almost every day for 11 years. In 2015, when Jerry Dipoto resigned as general manager, Rojas said he talked with manager Mike Scioscia about whether he could make the jump from the broadcast booth to the executive suite.

In 2020, with a memo that had extended to 4,000 words, he asked for an interview. Moreno had fired Billy Eppler, and he granted

Rojas an audience. The first question, Rojas said, was about what the Angels needed to do to get better in 2021. Rojas declined to discuss his plan in detail out of deference to new general manager Perry Minasian — "I think he's a great hire," Rojas said — but said he talked about deficiencies on the major league roster and the 40man roster, player development and international scouting, and the culture

within the organization. Another question, Rojas said, was how the Angels could sell their fans on the

idea of hiring a broadcaster as GM. He said he had already identified two experienced baseball men who would have served as top lieutenants: one a former major league general manager; the other a former major league manager and current coach.

General managers have had a variety of back-grounds. Fred Claire, the GM of the Dodgers' 1988 championship team, was promoted from publicity director. Andrew Friedman, the architect of the Dodgers' 2020 champs and widely recognized as the best in the business, spent six years on Wall Street and two in baseball operations before the Tampa Bay Rays made him a general manager at age 28.

At 32, Rojas was a customer service representative at Nordstrom in Boca Raton, Fla., "when I had this crazy idea of wanting to become an MLB broadcaster.' At 34, he became one.

"For the longest time, my name was Cookie's son,' Rojas said. "And now it's Victor Rojas, Angels broadcaster. You get pigeonholed. You get put in a box. I think sometimes people get closed-minded to the idea of someone being able to handle a job that is something they're not currently doing or haven't been involved with over the past five or 10 years.'

How about spending a couple of years as an assistant general manager, to make a team more comfortable in any subsequent in-

"I'd certainly consider it, but it's not something I'm looking to do at this time," Rojas said. "You never know. I try not to close any doors. Three years ago, I didn't think I was going to own an apparel business."

Big Fly launched before the 2019 season. The company has filled about 1,500 orders this year, with a business conducted entirely online and reliant on word of mouth until trying social media advertising this fall.

"As a side business, and as a way to teach our kids the entrepreneurial spirit, we're thrilled with where we're at," Rojas said.

He does not have licenses from Major League Baseball or the players' union, so he cannot use team or player names. He focuses on what he calls "a one-of-a-kind piece of art that tells a story. His "Hollywood Ending"

shirt commemorates Kirk

Gibson's legendary home run, a sky full of stars without mentioning the words Gibson or Dodgers. His Hank Aaron shirt simply says "755," a career-home run total exceeded only by

Barry Bonds. And, yes, the Angels broadcaster sells an Angels shirt, a Mike Trout tribute that reads "The Millville Meteor," a nod to Trout's New Jersey hometown.

Rojas is not concerned about any Angels fans that might consider his sale of Dodgers championship shirts as some sort of betrayal of the team for which he broadcasts.

"It's baseball," he said. "We're giving back. We're teaching our kids the business side of things. If they like it, they like it. If they don't, no problem. There's plenty of other options in the market."

The Dodgers' championship drought has been reset to zero years. The Angels' drought is up to 18 years. Rojas' fervent hope is that another option in the T-shirt market soon will be a halo over a championship trophy, held up by a Millville meteor.

BILL SHAIKIN writes for the Los Angeles Times.

CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS

G	R	I	Р		O	Α	С	Н	Е		Ρ	R	Е	Р
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4	6	8	5	1	2	7	9	3
3	1	9	6	4	7	8	5	2
9	7	5	4	2	6	3	8	1
1	8	4	7	9	3	2	6	5
2	3	6	8	5	1	4	7	9
5	4	3	1	7	9	6	2	8
6	9	1	2	8	4	5	3	7
8	2	7	3	6	5	9	1	4

MARKETPLACE

NOTICE OF PETITION TO

ADMINISTER ESTATE OF: PNINA STEIN

30-2020-01169734-PR-LA-CJC Animator Creates To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent Req. Bach in Animation, Communication & Multi-media Design or rel field and persons who may interested in the will or estate, or both, of: PNINA or foreign equiv & 2 yrs exp in job or 2 yrs exp as Animator, Jr. Animator or A PETITION FOR PROBATE has been filed by MICHELLE STEIN in the Superior Court of California, County of ORANGE. rel. occup. Any suitable combo of educ, training Combo of educ, training &/or exp is acceptable. Jobsite: Irvine, CA. Send resume ref#20011 to K. Finnsson, Blizzard En-tertainment Inc., PO Box 18979, Irvine, CA 92623.

THE PETITION FOR PROBATE requests that MICHELLE STEIN be appointed as personal representative to administer the estate of the

THE PETITION requests the decedent's will and codicils, if any, be admitted to probate. The will and any codicils are available for examination in the file kept by the court. THE PETITION requests authority to administer the

estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the personal representative to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the personal representative will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority. A HEARING on the petition will be held on

January 20, 2021 at 10:30 a.m. in Dept. C6 located at

700 CIVIC CENTER DRIVE WEST, SANTA ANA, CA 92701

(1) If you plan to appear, you must attend the hearing by video remote using Microsoft Teams; (2) Go to the Court's website http://www.occourts.org/media-

relations/probate-mental-health.html to appear for probate hearings; and for remote hearing instructions; (3) If you have difficulty connecting to your remote hearing, call 657-622-8278 for assistance.

 $\ensuremath{\mathbf{IF}}\ \mathbf{YOU}\ \mathbf{OBJECT}$ to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.

IF YOU ARE A CREDITOR or contingent creditor of the decedent, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58(b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law.

YOU MAY EXAMINE the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk. Attorney for the Petitioner:

SCOTT FEIG, ESQ FEIG LAW FIRM 800 ROOSEVELT, STE 306 IRVINE, CA 92620 TELEPHONE NO: (949) 689-9715 Published in the ORANGE COAST DAILY PILOT on: 12/23, 12/24, & 12/30/2020

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A CANCER PATIENT NEEDED CRITICAL CARE, BUT DUE TO THE SURGE IN COVID-19, SHE DIED WITHOUT IT

BY GUSTAVO ARELLANO

he last words Kim Folsom told her husband over the phone Dec. 7, as she lay in the emergency room of Hi-Desert Medical Center in Joshua Tree, were terrifyingly simple. "I'm scared."

They were the last words that Billy, a retired mechanic for the city of Costa Mesa who was in the parking lot of the small hospital, ever expected his wife to say.

Kim called Billy just as he had returned from their home with some of her clothes. She was a former nurse with a radiant smile and matronly toughness that could calm down angry drunks at the biker bars she and Billy loved to visit. A three-year bout with pancreatic cancer hadn't diminished her spirit or resolve.

But now, as Billy prepared for a last, desperate dash to save his wife's life, the two faced a sobering reality.

The coronavirus surge was

going to kill her. And she didn't even have

COVID-19.

She had woken up in a pool of blood earlier that day, so Billy had rushed her to Hi-Desert. The facility didn't have the equipment to take care of Kim, he said. So the attending doctor began to call hospitals across the Inland Empire to see if Kim could be transferred to them

None could accept her. They were swamped with COVID-19

Everywhere, too full.

"The nurses were extremely distraught, and I've never seen them that way," Billy told me five days later. "The doctor was getting frustrated."

That's when Billy volunteered to take Kim in his truck, strap on some off-road lights, and speed down California Route 62 toward Interstate 10. The plan: "get pulled over by police so we could get an escort" to the nearest hospital.

But that Hail Mary never came to pass. Shortly after their phone conversation, Kim's health quickly deteriorated. She died at age 60, in the arms of Billy and

her son. Soon after, Billy went on Face-



Photo courtesy of the Folsom family

BILLY AND KIM FOLSOM bought a house in Joshua Tree three years ago, around the time she received her cancer diagnosis, so they could fight it together in an area they loved.

book, where he had kept friends apprised of what was going on, to post: "She's gone.'

Nearly 12 hours had passed since the Folsoms had arrived at the emergency room.

The pandemic had already hit the couple hard. Sixteen of their friends had died of COVID-19, including four of five members of a New Orleans blues group. Billy lost all of his gigs as a concert photographer in February.

They hadn't seen their grandchildren for months, and a UC Irvine clinical trial Kim had enrolled in for an experimental drug was canceled during the surge in June.

Now, the long-feared cratering of Southern California's healthcare system due to the coronavirus is here — and it's killing people like Kim, says Billy. He bears no ill will toward the Hi-Desert staff, whom he described "to a person [as] sympathetic, compassionate and very kind to us. ... They did all they could.'

Instead, Billy lays Kim's ordeal squarely on "maskholes."

'We're never going to know if she could've been saved," said the 68-year-old, his blue eyes weary yet steely. "There was a

surge because people didn't wear masks. Those who don't wear it can deny it all they want, but that's the way it is.

"So, yeah, İ'm angry," he concluded. "Not just for my wife. For all of us."

A representative for the Desert Care Network, which oversees Hi-Desert Medical Center, told me they "won't be able to provide" a comment with regard to Kim Folsom's death.

The ICU bed availability in Southern California currently stands at 0%; Riverside County, whose hospitals are closer to Joshua Tree than those in San Bernardino County, just set a record for deaths reported in one day with 42.

Reports of ambulances waiting up to six hours to unload patients are becoming commonplace. In San Bernardino County, ambulances aren't responding to all 911 calls. They simply can't.

Dr. Mark Ghaly, California's secretary of health and human services, said he's "concerned" about stories like that of the Folsoms and worries that similar scenarios will increase as long as the surge continues.

'We know once ICUs become too overwhelmed, then the hos-

pital wards will have similar issues, and then the emergency rooms," he said. "When hospitals become overwhelmed, it's not just COVID patients that might not receive care, but other emergency issues."

I met Billy on a crisp, windy Saturday morning at his home, located up the road from the entrance to Joshua Tree National Park. He and Kim bought it three years ago, around the time she received her cancer diagnosis, so they could fight it together in an area they loved.

"Look outside my window," Billy said from his living room, decorated with multiple guitars he had built. "Kim loved to sit here. There's life all over the place.'

As if on cue, hummingbirds began to flit around one feeder, while pigeons swooped in to nibble from another. An antelope squirrel scurried across the windowsill to grab some peanuts Billy had left. The ritual was repeated throughout the twohour interview; at one point, when Billy was deep into a point and had forgotten to replenish the treat pile, the squirrel knocked over a trinket.

He and Kim had instituted "germ control" long before the coronavirus on account of her cancer: hand sanitizer on the bar, disinfecting wipes around the house. They hunkered down along with Kim's son and expected the United States to easily beat the pandemic.

But as weeks turned into months, and Kim's condition worsened, all Billy could do was turn increasingly angry. The former Republican (he quit the GOP after the 2016 election of Donald Trump) had to unfriend longtime friends because they derided any lockdown orders, or simply labeled the coronavirus as fake news.

"They're intelligent people. They're not stupid," he said. "But I call them fake patriots. They'll say, 'I'll die for my country against tyranny, but I won't wear a mask for my fellow human being.' Well, you don't have a country without caring for oth-

Kim, on the other hand, "was just worried. She knew what her nurse friends were going through.

They traveled out of their home solely for doctor's appointments and cruises through the desert. It was only in the last week of Kim's life that the two truly experienced how society had changed during their quar-

On Dec. 2, Billy took Kim to Hi-Desert Medical Center for a blood transfusion after she felt woozy. While they checked in, a man barged in without a mask "insisting it was his right to do

Once he tried to shove past a security guard, Billy — whose shoulder-length hair and impressive Van Dyke beard make him look like a Hunter S. Thompson heavy — shot him a stare, and the man harrumphed off.

The following day, the Folsoms went to Kim's oncologist at Hoag Hospital in Newport Beach. Billy had business in San Clemente, so he decided to pass by some old haunts along the coast. "All the bars were packed," he said. "No one was wearing a mask. No one socially distanced. No one

Billy is now more fatigued than angry at a society where people still don't believe the danger of disease "whose tentacles are now everywhere." He had to pick up Kim's body the morning after she passed because more dead were on the way. A request for her original birth certificate will take six to eight weeks instead of just

"And I don't even know when I'm going to get Kim's ashes," Billy said.

He walked me out to show off a large camper he had bought this year in the hopes of traveling with Kim. Now, he wants to rent it out so others can enjoy it.

I asked him what he wanted people to take from Kim's death. His eyes watered, but his voice was firm.

"I hope they learn," he said, "that her last days were chaos."

GUSTAVO ARELLANO is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times





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