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Cold, rotting foods in O.C. jails, report says

The ACLU is pressuring the Sheriff's Department to reinstate hot meals that were suspended during the pandemic.

BY BEN BRAZIL

Incarcerated people in Orange County jails have been served nutritionally inadequate, cold and sometimes rotting foods, according to a report from a coalition of advocacy groups.

The report comes as the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California has put pressure on the Orange County Sheriff's Department over the last year to reinstate substantial hot meals in the jails since they were suspended during the pandemic.

"This report shows that the diets offered in the Orange County Jails are high in processed foods, carbohydrates, fat and sodium," the report says.

"This type of diet, together with limited opportunities for physical movement and exercise, can lead to weight gain, high blood pressure, and increases the risk of heart disease and stroke for incarcerated people. The report also mentions concerns regarding food safety related to the offering of spoiled foods. Eating spoiled foods can lead to foodborne illness."

The report, "Cold, Rotting and Moldy Meals: Food Oppression in the Orange County Jails," was published Wednesday by the Stop the Musick Coalition, which is made up of various Orange County social justice organizations that advocate for the rights of incarcerated people.

One of the primary goals of the group is to stop the expansion of the James A. Musick jail near Irvine.

According to the coalition's report, inmates have been eating three bagged, cold meals every day for almost two years. They generally consist of bologna sandwiches, and sometimes an apple or carrots. Inmates have reported

See **Foods**, page R2

INTO O.C.'S COMIC-VERSE

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Wednesday is new comic book day at Comics, Toons & Toys in Tustin. The shop, also known as TNT, has been in business for 36 years. On Wednesdays when new releases drop, regulars shuffle in when the store opens at 11 a.m., most of them greeted by name.

"They all know each other," said Mike Kadin, owner of TNT. "The people that come here on Wednesdays and Saturdays, they all know each other and interact."

Most shops have subscribers who have a pull list, meaning when new comics come in for a series they collect, the shop will pull them aside for the subscriber.

Kadin, who worked in the shop in his youth and took over the store from the former owner, said TNT has about 350 subscribers.

New comics drop on Tuesday too, since there are three distributors when there used to be a monopoly of one distributorship for comic books.

"We get three shipments a week. In those three shipments two of them are the major two, Marvel and DC, and the rest are everyone else," Kadin said.

Comic books have long been associated with nerd-dom as a hobby that was decidedly uncool. But in more recent years the Orange County comic-book-collecting community has seen an increase in interest.

"There is a huge community here in Orange County who collect comic books," said James Gurrola, store manager at Torpedo Comics in Irvine. "And it just keeps growing every year too."

Torpedo, which is owned by John Dolmayan, drummer for System of a Down, has a location in Old Town Orange. Gurrola said they are taking the second O.C. location he manages, which opened this year at the Irvine Spectrum, in a new direction.

"We are more of a collectibles store," Gurrola said. "We are not a traditional comic book store with new books and back issues. We mostly sell graded books, so more of a curated selection."

Books are graded on a scale of 1 to 10, by a reputable company that appraises the comic book to make

See **Comics**, page R4



TOP PHOTO: Comic book collectors shop for comic books on new comic book release day at Comics, Toons & Toys in Tustin on Wednesday, Dec. 8. Wednesday is one of the days of the week many new comic books drop. **ABOVE:** Peter Swanson of Aliso Viejo shops for comic books at the store.

Photos by James Carbone



Courtesy of Elliot Lee Hazel

JOHNNY MATHIS brings his Christmas classics to Costa Mesa's Segerstrom Center in celebration of 65 years in the music business.

Johnny Mathis, 'the Voice of Christmas,' is still caroling

The 86-year-old crooner is back on the road to perform songs from his decades-long career, with a stop in Costa Mesa for a holiday concert.

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

With his velvety vibrato, a youthful Johnny Mathis melted mid-century America with "Chances Are," a feathery love ballad that rose to the top of Billboard's pop charts in 1957. The singer from

San Francisco notched a number of hit singles early on in his recording career and an appearance on "The Ed Sullivan Show" when he decided to take a chance of his own with Columbia Records.

A very merry Mathis wanted to record a Christmas album next for his loving mother and father.

"After I had success in the beginning of my career, all I ever wanted to do was to sing something for them," Mathis said. "The only thing that came to mind was the fact that they made Christmas so special for me and my six brothers and sisters."

The balladeer, now 86, remains effusive with praise for his late parents.

Clem, his father, briefly moonlighted as a musician and imparted his passion for singing to his impressionable son.

He took a teenage Mathis to apprentice under Connie Cox, a vocal teacher who honed his talents in those early years. Mildred, his mother, reared his siblings with unconditional love.

Later on, Mathis became a fixture at San Francisco's jazz club scene, first in the audience

See **Mathis**, page R6

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Santa Ana clamps down on business that helps homeless

With O.C. drug overdose deaths rising, the city threatens to revoke its occupancy permit.

BY BEN BRAZIL

As scores of homeless people continue to die of overdoses in Orange County, a business that provides care to homeless people and drug users in Santa Ana may have to shut down as the city threatens to revoke its occupancy permit.

But the founders of the Harm Reduction Institute at the American Addiction Institute of Mind and Medicine are not going quietly. They contend that the institute performs an essential function for the city's homeless population by providing counseling, clean syringes, wound care and the lifesaving opioid reversal drug, naloxone, to people who rely on the resources for survival.

The institute has been operating out of an office at 1533 E. 4th St. since 2019, when it was co-founded by Dr. Faried Banimahd and Mahan Naeim, a UC Irvine medical student.

But on Nov. 17, the city sent a letter notifying the institute that the city plans to revoke its certificate of occupancy because the institute is not operating as a medical office. On Monday, the institute hit back with a letter from its attorney, which took issue with the city's claims.

Naeim believes that the institute is being targeted because it serves people who use drugs, who are typically homeless. Naeim said over the phone that the institute serves more than 1,200 clients.

"They are definitely targeting our service, and they're using the certificate of occupancy as a means of targeting it," Naeim said. "I think they are primarily targeting it because of the people that we serve, as a part of a coordinated effort from Santa Ana to deny services to those who are unhoused."

According to a notice

signed by Minh Thai, executive director of the city's planning and building agency, the institute has not been operating as a "medical office," despite the city approving it under that designation. Therefore, Thai wrote, the institute is violating zoning laws.

The notice contends that the counseling and syringe services, along with wound care, are not the functions of a medical office. Instead, the city defines the institute as an "outpatient addiction treatment clinic."

If the business loses its certificate of occupancy for a specific use, it can't use the building for that use, but it could get a new certificate for other business activities that are allowed, Santa Ana city spokesman Paul Eakins said in an email.

Jeremy Tolchin, an attorney representing the institute, said that the business will essentially be kicked out of the building if the certificate is revoked.

In a response letter Tolchin sent to the city on Monday, he argued that the institute fits the criteria of a medical office.

"The city's effort to revoke my client's certificate of occupancy is a pretextual, illegal, unconstitutional, and counterfactual effort to prevent my client from continuing its operations in the city of Santa Ana," the response reads.

"The notice is premised on the position that AAIMM is not operating as a medical office; i.e. that counseling and substance use disorder treatment services are not medical in nature or performed at a medical office. In advancing this argument, the city cherry picks facts and ignores science, medicine, law, reality, and its own practices."

In his letter, Tolchin said that the city's position that providing counseling or substance use treatment services is not a function of a medical office is "anachronistic nonsense."

"As the city may or may

See *Business*, page R4



Gabriel San Román

TRAVIS RANCH SCHOOL sent sixth-graders home last week for instruction following a rash of COVID-19 cases.

Placentia-Yorba Linda school board seeks to oppose COVID-19 vaccine mandate amid outbreak

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

A fold-out sign outside Travis Ranch School in Yorba Linda warns that face coverings are required before entering. The quaint, hillside campus also advises people to maintain physical distance.

Following a recent COVID-19 outbreak, the sign could have just as easily read: "No sixth-graders allowed beyond this point."

A cluster of coronavirus cases sent the entire sixth-grade class home last week for remote learning instruction right before winter break. Travis Ranch School Principal Taylor Holloway alerted parents of the move to quarantine on Sunday over email.

"Please know we do not take this decision lightly and apologize for any inconvenience it will certainly cause," Holloway wrote. "It is important that we keep our students, staff and families safe while limiting academic disruptions such as this."

Earlier this month, administrators became alarmed about a rising number of positive cases among students and staff. Holloway first sent an email to parents about COVID-19 cases on Dec. 9. At the time, she reported that 26 students and two staff members had tested positive since returning from Thanksgiving break; Travis Ranch is a K-8 school site with 1,395 students and staff.

"A large majority of the cases reported to us originated outside of campus," Holloway wrote.

The Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District and Travis Ranch school nursing staff investigate cases in tandem with Orange County Health Care Agency officials.

Holloway stressed to parents in the email that the school continued its adherence to the district's "Return to School" plan for the academic year, which included universal masking, HEPA purifiers in every classroom

and additional hand-washing and sanitizing stations on campus.

But a case count that continued to rise ultimately trumped such safety measures for sixth-graders, who comprised a majority of those who tested positive, in favor of an off-site quarantine.

With additional cases confirmed over the weekend, the district reported 37 students and two staff members had tested positive for coronavirus on its dashboard, which was updated Monday morning.

"District and school administrators will continue to monitor this situation very closely in partnership with local healthcare officials," read a district statement released on Monday. "The district empathizes with those impacted and shares in the many challenges that have emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As is the case with any troubling situation, the district's team of health professionals is ready to serve and support students, staff and families affected by this situation."

A district spokeswoman declined to offer any further comment, including any possible identification of the source of the outbreak, beyond the official statement.

The O.C. Health Care Agency deferred comment on the outbreak to the district.

Holloway's alert to parents on Sunday informed them that hundreds of students had been identified as close contacts.

Teachers began instruction over Zoom on Tuesday.

The outbreak also caused administrators to cancel or postpone a slew of scheduled gatherings and events for students at all grade levels this week. That applied to color guard practice, after-school club meetings and a wintertime choir show out of fear of students spreading more than holiday cheer.

Reviewed by TimesOC, individual "close contact" notices sent to parents before quarantine placed the date of exposure as early as Dec. 2. Other parents continued to receive notices this week that their children were identified as "close contacts," an alert often accompanied by the determination that mask compliance was consistent in the case.

By Wednesday morning, the number of confirmed cases jumped to 54, which accounted for more than a third of current coronavirus infections in the district.

Administrators encouraged parents to monitor their children for potential COVID-19 symptoms and made free testing kits available at Travis Ranch School's front office.

Before the outbreak sent hundreds of children home for remote instruction, the PYLUSD board of trustees was already set to discuss a resolution opposing COVID-19 vaccine mandates at schools.

In October, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced a forthcoming COVID-19 vaccine mandate for the state's schools once the U.S. Food and Drug Administration grants full approval to the shots for children in staggered age brackets.

For students ages 12 and up, that could come as soon as early next year.

Sarah Clark, a parent with children at the district, spoke against any such mandate at the Dec. 14 school board meeting.

"The parents are the ones with stewardship over their children," Clark said. "The majority of the parents in this district, they don't want their kids to be forced to take an experimental injection and they want their kids to be able to breathe free, fresh air."

Another speaker rallied for "Mask

See *Mandate*, page R6

FOODS

Continued from page R1

that the sandwiches are "frequently" spoiled. Inmates also reported that deputies leave food trays on the floor before giving them to inmates, which causes bugs to infest the food.

"People living inside Orange County jails report that sandwiches are given to them with molding bread and rotting, discolored meat," the report says. "The bologna sometimes leaks a dark juice and is blotched with green spots. Several people have described becoming so sick that they needed medical attention. People have to skip meals when the food is too rotten, often skipping several meals in a row."

Orange County jails previously provided two hot meals a day, including spaghetti, hamburgers and stew, the report says. But those meals were suspended in March 2020 when the pandemic took hold, the report says. Sheriff's spokesman Todd Hylton said in the past that the hot meal services were suspended for the health and safety of inmates.

Since that time, inmates and advocates worked to get hot meals reinstated, including contacting the Board of State and Community Corrections. After being contacted by the ACLU, the board told the agency in April that it was violating a regulation by not providing inmates with at least one hot meal a day in the Orange County men's and women's jails, the Intake Release Center, Theo Lacy jail or Lamoreaux Justice Center.

Following that letter, Hylton said that the jail started



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

THE ORANGE COUNTY Sheriff's Department Headquarters and O.C. jails in Santa Ana. A coalition of advocacy groups released a report criticizing the food conditions of county jails.

oatmeal and the other hot foods.

"The small change was inadequate to address the nutritional deficiency and otherwise poor condition of jail meals," the coalition's report says. "OCSD has since discontinued the cereal in some parts of the jail."

The coalition argues in its report that the Sheriff's Department has significant funds to reinstate hot meals and improve the food conditions in jails since it has saved money due to the closure of jail kitchens and reduction in the county jail population.

A judge ordered Sheriff Don Barnes in December to cut the jail population in half due to COVID-19 outbreaks among inmates.

The report says that in 2020, the department spent nearly \$1 million less on jail food than was provided in its budget. This year, the department has continued to

shift an average of more than \$50,000 per month away from food for incarcerated people, putting the money back into its general budget, the coalition says.

The coalition also says that the department continues to make about \$10 million a year from commissary purchases despite the decreased jail population. This may be due to inmates' need to supplement the cold meals they have received, the report says.

According to the report, inmates who could not afford to purchase extra items at commissary have become sick.

"It's so sad," an unnamed individual who is incarcerated at the Theo Lacy facility said in the report. "It breaks your heart to see the elderly people and the people without funds on their books getting sicker. You can't imagine."

The coalition says that the addition of hot cereal

and soup didn't improve the situation.

"For them to be telling people they're giving us hot meals — they're just keeping up appearances," an unnamed inmate in Orange County Jail said in the report. "The 'soup' is awful, it's a lukewarm liquid substance with no substance. It's broth with a few floating tomatoes and onions. You dip a spoon in and get nothing. It's been three sack lunches a day for almost two years. They've been murdering us for two years. If I didn't get commissary once in a while, I would have starved."

In addition to the lack of hot meals, the report says that jail personnel are also not honoring medical dietary restrictions for inmates, despite some of them having heart conditions, Crohn's disease, allergies or diabetes. Jail personnel are also not honoring inmates' religious diets, such as Halal or Kosher food restrictions, the report says, calling the denial of the diets "dehumanizing."

"Food is not only sustenance but a fundamental component of cultural identity and spiritual practice, and being forced to break religious dietary rules strips people of an essential part of their spiritual lives," the coalition says.

The food conditions offered in Orange County jails can have a significant impact on inmates' health. In its report, the coalition compiled data on the nutritional value of the foods that inmates have been served. The organization found that inmates are given food containing more than twice as much sodium recommended by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which can contribute

to hypertension and other health complications. A 2019 Orange County grand jury report found that jail staff failed to monitor and treat inmates with high blood pressure and hypertension, leading to hospitalizations and deaths.

The coalition also determined that Orange County jail menus contain more than 150% of the FDA-recommended daily fats, almost 290% of the recommended daily carbohydrates by the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and 125% of the recommended daily cholesterol by the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Excessive fats, carbs and cholesterol can contribute to health issues like hypertension, heart disease and diabetes.

At the end of its report, the coalition makes a number of recommendations to the Sheriff's Department, including reinstating full hot meals with fresh ingredients, providing fresh fruit and vegetables and a variety of meat, properly storing food, ensuring that inmates have adequate time to eat and honoring the religious and medical dietary restrictions of inmates.

The coalition also provides a number of recommendations to the Orange County Board of Supervisors, including directing the Orange County Health Department to perform regular inspections of the Orange County jails, requiring the Sheriff's Department to publicly post current jail menus and ensuring that inmates can report health code violations to the health department, among other recommendations.

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Moving forward together

We've been through a lot together and have proved to be resilient. The approaching new year brings with it new possibilities to help our clients, communities and teammates move forward and prosper — safely.

Using our industry-leading digital tools, like mobile check deposits, Erica®, CashPro® and access to Zelle®, individuals and businesses are finding it easier to do their everyday banking. Across the country, the expertise of our specialists and our teammates in financial centers is helping clients meet all their financial needs at every stage of their lives.

In our communities, we continue to collaborate with local partners, business leaders, experts and academics across the public and private sectors to fuel job growth and financial stability. More than \$400 million of our \$1.25 billion commitment to advance racial equality and economic opportunity is already supporting diverse small businesses and partners, including many recipients here in Orange County who provide job skilling and hiring programs.

We've also increased resources to support our teammates' emotional and financial well-being. Recently, we raised our minimum hourly wage for U.S. employees to \$21 per hour, moving closer to our goal of \$25 by 2025.

My teammates and I look forward to growing existing partnerships and creating new ones as we work together to make a difference. Have a safe and happy holiday season.

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Mujeres Market pops up Sunday in Santa Ana



Rochelle Ulloa

MUJERES MARKET is a pop-up market in Santa Ana featuring women of color, queer and transgender creators and artists.

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

For Yesika Salgado, Mujeres Market is a necessity. “I don’t think we realize how much of a need for things like Mujeres Market there is, until we go to it,” said the well-known Salvadorian poet. Mujeres Market is a community-based pop-up market featuring women of color, queer and transgender creators and artists, co-founded by Gloria Lucas from Nalgona Positivity Pride, a body positivity organization based in Los Angeles in 2017. “These community

events and vendor pop-ups were a thing Gloria would kind of curate and I would participate whenever I was invited,” said Salgado, who has published three books of poetry that tackle subject matter that speak to the core values of Mujeres Market. “I write poetry about my life, my culture, my fat body, but mostly of love.” On Sunday, the Mujeres Market comes to Orange County at the Heritage Museum in Santa Ana, where Salgado will be signing books and performing poetry. Mónica Virgen Zamora,

chief executive director of Mujeres Market, said the Heritage Museum is the perfect venue for the market because it aligns with the market’s mission. “We try to be very community-oriented and very conscious of the spaces that we enter, and we do not pick them lightly,” Zamora said. “I could not have created a better venue in my mind.” Zamora said they have also worked hard to give local artists priority at Sunday’s market. “In this case we prioritized anybody specifically from Santa Ana,” Za-

mora said. “Gentrification is a really serious issue and an ongoing problem in Santa Ana and we want to do our best to support people there ... we really want to honor the true people of Santa Ana first and foremost.” Salgado said knowing you are supporting local artists in your community is part of the draw. “It feels good to know that you went shopping but also that it is directly contributing to somebody’s house, family, going back straight into your commu-

See *Mujeres*, page R6

Anaheim’s Jägerhaus closes after more than 40 years of service

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Jägerhaus, Orange County’s iconic German restaurant in Anaheim, closed on Dec. 12 after more than 40 years of service. The closure comes shortly after owner and manager, Sandie Schwaiger, passed away in October. Schwaiger ran Jägerhaus for more than 21 years. “It was beautiful even though it was so sad,” said Kay Jones, longtime friend

of Schwaiger and acting proprietor of Schwaiger’s estate, regarding the restaurant’s final dinner service. The restaurant was in talks with the Anaheim Planning Commission as early as 2019 to keep the location from being developed into a 24-hour 7-Eleven gas station and car wash by a Los Angeles-based developer. “We really tried very hard not to allow that center to become a car wash,” said

Jones. “Sandie was adamant about that because there were small businesses in that center that really didn’t have another option. And the homeowners behind the center were beside themselves because it is one thing to have a quiet little business center behind your house, but to have a carwash and 7-Eleven with the traffic and the noise and everything?” The shopping center is

home to six other small businesses besides Jägerhaus, owned by locals, like New Look Beauty Salon, Melchor Bakery and Ace Flower Shop. All now face displacement. Jägerhaus opened in 1979. Schwaiger and her then-husband, Anton, took over the restaurant in 1990. “Anton was a German chef and Sandie was of German descent,” Jones said.

See *Jagerhaus*, page R6



OTHER businesses besides Jägerhaus at the Sunkist Plaza in Anaheim have closed as well.

Kevin Chang

COMICS

Continued from page R1

sure it’s legitimate, gives an evaluation of the condition of it, and then encapsulates it to keep it preserved. “It is kind of like you have a piece of history right there,” Gurrola said. Comic book collecting hasn’t always been regarded with such reverence, however. “When I was a kid, if you were into comic books you were a dork,” said Felipe Zelay, a comic book collector who buys and sells comic book collections on Instagram under the handle, @flipmode_comics. “But now it’s like everybody is into these characters.” Besides TNT and Torpedo, Orange County is home to several comic book shops, including Comic Book Hideout in Fullerton and Nuclear Comics in Laguna Hills. The longevity of TNT has given the shop a rich history. “Being here in my youth, I saw kids bike into the store, and then being here again later, I have seen those kids drive into the store with their kids,” Kadin said. “We definitely have roots.” And like any iconic establishment, it’s not without its lore. “The guy who created Deadpool originally worked here, Rob Liefeld,” said collector Peter Swanson, while picking up his pull at TNT on Wednesday. The increase in comic books’ popularity can partly be attributed to movies and television shows helping to bring the culture to mainstream audiences. “The Marvel movies and

TV shows and streaming services are an immense part of the industry now,” Kadin said. The Marvel Cinematic Universe, which is owned by Disney, released its 26th film, “Eternals,” this year and its fifth television series, “Hawkeye,” in November. There are more than 20 projects planned over the next two years, including “Thor: Love and Thunder” and “Black Panther 2.” “Literally, almost weekly or monthly there is a new commercial airing for this industry,” Kadin said. “I don’t necessarily feel it is bringing in a new audience but it is keeping the audiences that are involved with it, invested.” Although Kadin admits when “Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse” came out and “Wonder Woman 2,” new fans came into TNT looking for books. Zelay said sometimes the movies can drive up prices. “A lot of people who have never been into comic books before are coming in, because these movies have mainstreamed these comic books and now everyone wants to get a piece of the first appearance of Iron Man, or the first apprentice of Thor,” Zelay said. “It drives the value of the comic book much higher, so it makes it much more expensive to buy.” Some collectors, like Jimmy Farias, a comic book collector since 1979, don’t mind the shift to the big screen. “It is great that they have advanced to the cinema, because nowadays with the special effects and everything, they can actually represent the characters the way the books do,” Farias said. “You are not



James Carbone

JIMMY FARIAS of Orange, a comic book collector since 1979, is ready to check out with two boxes of books on new comic book release day at Comics, Toons & Toys in Tustin.

seeing this herky-jerky flying and what not. The cinema brings them to life, and then it brings readers in to find out how good the books really are.” Gurrola said the movies have inspired a younger generation of comic book fans and creators. “It has brought a lot of younger people back into it,” Gurrola said, “and there are a lot of new books that are coming out that are written by younger people too.” “Something is Killing Children,” written by James Tynion is being developed into an original series for Netflix, for example, Gurrola said. People certainly have different reasons for collecting. “There are people who love and enjoy it and do it simply out of that,” Kadin said, “and then there are people who also want to monetize off it.”

“For me it’s both the art and stories,” Farias said. “Sometimes the art doesn’t match the stories, sometimes the story is better and sometimes it’s the other way around. But they are fun to read.” Swanson said he enjoys the stories but also the thrill of maybe finding a treasure. “There is a speculation factor that books may increase in value as soon as a day after buying them. It is not super common but it kind of gives it a little bit of excitement, kind of like buying stocks,” Swanson said. The comic book community’s reach has also expanded due to e-commerce, with sales on sites like Ebay and Instagram Live. “I have been selling on Instagram Live for quite awhile and kind of pride myself on being one of the pioneers that started the

online sales,” Zelay said. Typically sellers use the live feature on Instagram and sell comic books in an auction style, with consumers commenting or direct messaging to claim the book. “We saw something that we felt was going to be the future in getting more comic books out there through more outlets than just a comic book store,” Zelay said. “People want to just order things through their phone.” Torpedo utilizes live sales via Instagram too. “That grew out of the pandemic actually, because we all had to shut down and get creative about new ways of staying open,” Gurrola said. Now that they are open again, the live sales have continued. “It is just a way for people who can’t get to the local comic shop to still buy things, and it’s a lot of

fun, they talk them up and make it exciting to buy things,” Gurrola said. Swanson said there are risks with buying online. “If you buy a book online and it arrives damaged, that could affect the value of the book,” Swanson said. “And when you buy from Ebay you are kind of rolling the dice.” But across the board, collectors agree e-commerce can’t replace shopping for books in person. “There is nothing like going to your local comic book shop, especially on new comic book day. You want to be there to see all the new books,” Gurrola said. “The thing for me though is, I like to come in and open the book and look at the artwork,” Swanson said. Gurrola also points out comic book shops host events and conventions. “Local comic book shops will also have signings and events going on that also adds to the excitement of going there,” Gurrola said. “You can do it online, but it is more fun to be there.” Kadin said the community inside the shop is part of why TNT has lasted so many years. “If I was to get up and move to Washington tomorrow and move the store to Washington, it wouldn’t be successful. It isn’t necessarily the four walls and the product and the brick and mortar, it is the goodwill and longevity of the shop. You can’t replicate that,” Kadin said. “You can purchase goods anywhere, but you can’t replicate the people.”

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BUSINESS

Continued from page R2

not be aware, the human brain is in fact attached to the human body,” Tolchin said in the letter before providing a diagram of the internal organs of the human body, which did indeed reveal that the brain is encased in the human body. “Because the brain is a part of the body, the professional treatment of its afflictions (including substance use disorder) is medical in nature. “The treatment of mental health and substance use disorders, in fact, have parity with the treatment of other medical afflictions as a public policy and by law ... Mental health and substance use disorder treatment (including counseling services) are within the purview of those services offered by a medical office. More importantly, the services that are offered by AAIMM are those that fall within the purview of a medical office.” Tolchin said that the city has not been consistent with its contention that counseling services are not a permitted business in the Professional Zone, which

the institute is located in. The attorney provided a list of businesses that offer counseling and substance use disorder counseling services that the city approved for operation in a Professional Zone. Tolchin said that the city appears to be isolating the institute, which he said is unconstitutional. “As evidenced by the city’s approval of certificates of occupancy for dozens of other businesses offering mental health and substance use disorder counseling services in the Professional Zone, it is quite clear that ‘counseling services’ — i.e. mental and behavioral health care — are encompassed by the uses specifically enumerated in [the city’s zoning code],” Tolchin wrote. “The City, however, wishes to exclude only AAIMM’s business and only the mental health and counseling services offered by AAIMM. “...”The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment commands that no State shall ‘deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws,’ which is essentially a direction that all persons similarly situated

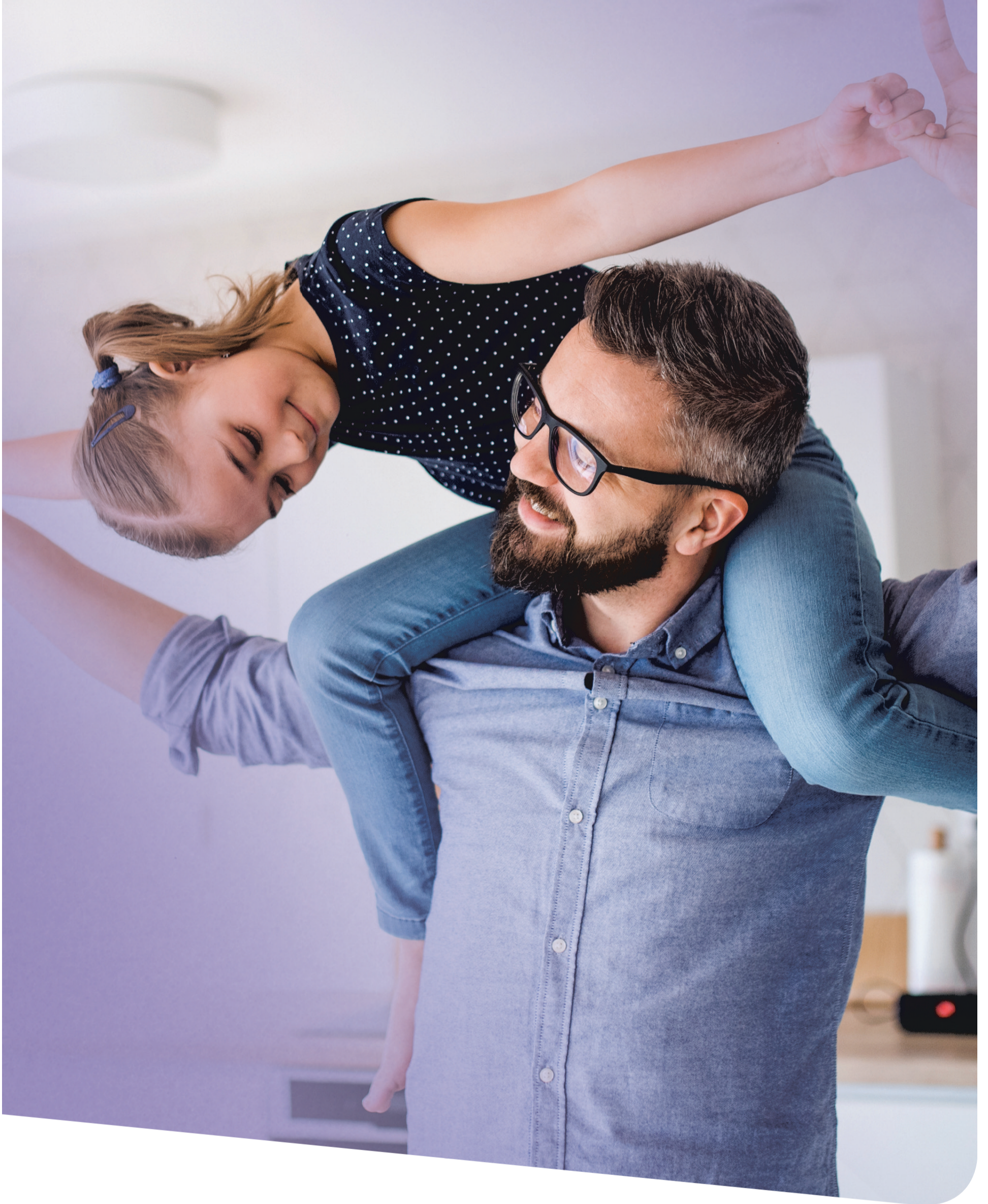
should be treated alike,” Tolchin wrote. “The city has offered no legitimate basis to treat my client in a different manner than those that are similarly situated. Such disparate treatment is itself actionable against the city.” Eakins said in an email earlier this week that the city is not commenting on the “pending code enforcement matter.” Whether the city has changed its outlook since Tolchin’s letter was also unclear during an administrative hearing on Wednesday. During that short hearing, the institute’s legal team reiterated its argument from Tolchin’s letter and sought an update on the city’s view on the matter. But Thai, who led the hearing, refused and said the point of the meeting was to allow the institute to be heard before he makes a decision on the permit, which will occur within 30 days of the hearing. Tolchin said they could appeal the city’s verdict. “Nonetheless, we expected that the city would provide a hearing that offered a minimal level of due process,” Tolchin said in an email following the hearing. “We expected the city to

allow a neutral arbiter to consider the issues, address the arguments laid out in our response, or at least make a statement of some kind. This did not happen. “Instead, the city offered a show trial — a pig leaf. We were forced to present our position to the very person who decided to revoke the certificate of occupancy in the first place. At the same time, the city provided no further justification and no substantive response to the merits of our client’s position.” Naeim said that the harm reduction services that the institute provides is crucial for Orange County public health. There is currently a deficit of harm reduction services in the county and the U.S. just topped 100,000 overdose deaths this year for the first time. Meanwhile, Naeim said that naloxone distributed by the institute has saved about 2,800 lives. Orange County is also seeing a record year in the number of homeless deaths, many of which result from drug overdoses. Naeim said that the institute is the only program in the county providing sterile syringes and disposing of

used ones. Advocates of syringe exchanges say that access to clean needles keeps intravenous drug users from sharing syringes and spreading HIV, hepatitis C and other bloodborne pathogens. The practice is endorsed by the American Medical Assn., the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, among others. “Harm reduction is an investment in the community,” Naeim said. “It’s very clear that the city doesn’t want to invest in its own people and would rather leave them to die in the street. “It is sad and it is shameful that the city is trying to shut down its only point of harm reduction services when its goal should be expanding harm reduction services and establishing much more.” This isn’t the first time Santa Ana has sought to shut down an organization that distributes clean syringes. The saga of the O.C. Needle Exchange — the county’s first and only dedicated needle exchange — started in early 2018, when it was forced to shut down after Santa Ana city officials de-

nied its permit application. The O.C. Needle Exchange came back with a proposal for a mobile program in Costa Mesa, Santa Ana, Anaheim and Orange. In response, the Board of Supervisors approved a resolution opposing the concept, but the state still approved the program in July 2018. The county, Costa Mesa, Anaheim, Orange and Newport Beach sued to block the exchange. And in October 2019, a judge sided with the county and cities. Last year, the Santa Ana City Council banned California Syringe Exchange Programs, but the ban doesn’t apply in this specific instance because the institute is not part of the state program. Naeim, a former member of the O.C. Needle Exchange, said there wasn’t a link between how the city went after the prior needle exchange and the institute other than that the city seems to be targeting people who use drugs, who are predominately homeless. “Santa Ana has chosen to target services to those populations,” he said.

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JAGERHAUS

Continued from page R4

"When they divorced he didn't want the restaurant, so Sandie kept the restaurant."

The restaurant had an extensive menu that served traditional German dishes like *szegediner goulash* and *holstein schnitzel*, based on recipes that were said to go back seven generations in Germany.

The restaurant also notably served beers from two of the world's oldest breweries, with Weihenstephan lager (established in 1040) and Weltenburger (established 1050) on tap.

Jones said Schwaiger's hospitality became a mainstay in the Jägerhaus dining room.

"Sandie just had sparkle and she brought that to everybody in her world," Jones said.

Jägerhaus wasn't just a restaurant but a pillar of the Anaheim community. Los Amigos de Orange



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

THE ICONIC Jägerhaus German restaurant in Anaheim closed on Dec. 12 after unsuccessful attempts to relocate. The restaurant was in talks with the Anaheim Planning Commission to keep the location from becoming a 7-Eleven and car wash.

County, a Latino activist group, regularly held meetings there.

"People were bringing

their grandchildren here, when they had come as youngsters," Jones said. "We were a part of so many

families memories."

Attempts to relocate were unsuccessful. Jones said the restaurant was giv-

en notice in November to vacate by the new year. At that time, Jones had not yet been appointed executor.

"I couldn't name a day and time to close the business," Jones said. "We knew — the employees and everybody knew we were going to have to leave by Jan. 1, but we didn't know what day we were going to be able to close until I got that."

Then on Dec. 12, the restaurant announced its closure on social media, stating that evening would be Jägerhaus' final dinner service.

The send off, Jones said, was bittersweet.

"Sunday was horrible, and yet it was beautiful," Jones said. "The outpouring of love for Sandie was astonishing. It was just wave after wave of love for her and the restaurant that meant so much to her."

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MANDATE

Continued from page R2

less Monday" protests.

Even as the FDA found the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to be safe for children between the ages of 5 and 16 before granting it emergency use authorization, a majority of trustees expressed vaccine skepticism and sided with outspoken parents opposed to both vaccine and mask mandates.

Trustee Shawn Youngblood requested that the vaccine mandate discussion be placed on the agenda.

"One of the things that is concerning is the liability issue," he said during the meeting. "When we start forcing these vaccines on kids then, we, as the district, are going to be held responsible, as well, for any damage [that] happens to these kids now and possibly in the future."

Along with a majority of his colleagues, Youngblood previously voted in July to formally ask the California Department of Health to change its guidelines to allow schools to make masks optional.

This time around, he wanted to spearhead a resolution formally representing the board's opposition to COVID-19 vaccine mandates in favor of parental choice by January.

Trustee Marilyn Anderson backed her colleague and called for a survey of parents in the district on the topic. She claimed that enrollment at the district has dropped by 1,600 students since the start of the pandemic and favored a multilayered approach that included sending a letter to Newsom.

"We have time to advocate," Anderson said to applause. "We have time to influence people and speak out for parents, for parental choice."

At no time during the vaccine mandate discussion did the Travis Ranch outbreak come up in the conversation.

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MUJERES

Continued from page R4

nity," Salgado said.

Since its inception five years ago, the markets inclusivity has evolved.

"Originally, Mujeres Market was a place for women of color entrepreneurs to gather. Since then we have grown and the world has changed in many ways," Zamora said. "We have expanded to be more of a BIPOC marketplace."

The market on Sunday will feature more than 80 vendors, all of which will not only be owned by Black, Indigenous or other people of color but also owned by people who identify as womxn, genderqueer, femme, transgender or two-spirit.

"We love mujeres, Gloria and I are mujeres, but it is a privilege to live in a CIS-gendered body and to be a fairly light-skinned person at that," Zamora said. "We need to make more room for our trans, queer, nonbinary friends, and there needs to be room for all of

us who often are marginalized ... our moto is literally creating our own opportunities together and we can't do that if we are not including our trans, queer and nonbinary allies."

The market's leadership is also evolving as Zamora will be taking the reins on the Mujeres Market from Lucas.

"I have been slowly taking over the marketplace since 2018 or so," Zamora said. "And as we enter the new year, I will be the official owner of Mujeres Market, an entity separate from Nalgona but still mutually part of the family."

Zamora also said Salgado is one of the earliest supporters of the market and she is happy they all can support each other.

"Gloria and Yesika had actually been really good friends for a long time," Zamora said. "Yesika likes to say that Nalgona put her on the map, but I feel like we keep each other on our own map."

Salgado said she is happy to lend her voice to the cause.

"I really am a strong be-



MUJERES MARKET takes place Sunday at Heritage Museum of Orange County in Santa Ana.

Rochelle Ulloa

liever in supporting woman and femmes, marginalized folks when they are doing amazing things," Salgado said.

"One of the ways that I can show support to things I really, really believe in is by lending my own following and showing up and sharing it with my own audience. Because not only is it beneficial for the people putting it on, it is also really dope for my audience to be able to see

events made for them, by people that look like them."

Salgado will have her three poetry books, "Corazón," "Tesoro" and "Hermosa," for sale and will do a book signing and meet and greet from 1 to 3 p.m.

"At the end of the event, I will be closing it with a performance," Salgado said.

Besides Salgado and so many unique vendors, the

market will also have food trucks, a cash bar and DJ Gfunk Trece, DJ Zuri Adia and the Santa Ana chapter of Chulitas Vinyl spinning. Mujeres Market takes place Sunday from noon to 6 p.m. at Heritage Museum of Orange County, 3101 W. Harvard St. in Santa Ana. General admission is free for this outdoor event.

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MATHIS

Continued from page R1

and then onstage.

He met Nat King Cole, a musical hero who was to become a friend, after a performance one night at the Black Hawk.

"Nat King Cole was, to me, the epitome of excellence in not only vocal qualities but musician-ship," Mathis said. "Most people never realized what an extraordinarily gifted pianist he was. He also sang better than anybody in the world."

Helen Noga, the Black Hawk's co-owner, took notice of Mathis' own gifts. After headlining acts cleared the smoky corner nightclub, the young crooner took the stage along with a pianist friend. Noga liked what she heard and introduced him to music industry bigwigs, including Columbia jazz talent scout George Avakian.

The rest is still unfolding history; Mathis remains the longest-running recording artist with the label.

In 1958, with Avakian's help and producer Mitch Miller's blessing, Columbia granted Mathis' Christmas wish.

The singer headed into the studio to record "Merry Christmas," that spring and brought Percy Faith, a conductor and fellow label mate, along with him.

"He was a brilliant musician and became a very close friend of mine," Mathis said. "I begged him to accompany me on the Christmas album because I loved his orchestrations. I was blessed because he ended up accompanying me and making one of the best Christmas albums I've ever heard."

The collection, with spirited renditions of "Winter Wonderland," "I'll Be Home for Christmas" and "Sleigh Ride," has withstood the test of time and has earned new accolades along the way.

"Merry Christmas" quickly peaked at No. 3 on the Billboard 200 chart before becoming certified gold two years after its release.

By 1999, Mathis' "Merry Christmas" sold 5 million copies and cemented its place among the top 10 best-selling Christmas albums of all time.

He's since recorded six Christmas albums, most recently 2013's "Sending You a Little Christmas."

And thanks to the release of "A Sentimental Christmas With Nat King Cole and Friends," off Capitol Records this year, Mathis had the opportunity to join his late friend and early inspiration for a "Deck the Halls/Joy to the World" duet, which serves as the lead-off track of reimagined classics.

He deemed the studio session with Cole's voice in his headphones a "special occasion."

With the return of live music, Mathis is heading out of the studio and back on the road for a tour celebrating the 65th anniversary of his musical career, including a Christmas concert at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts in Costa Mesa on Tuesday.

"I hear '65th year' and think, 'my goodness, gracious,' but singing to me has always been as much a part of my life as getting up in the morning and going to bed at night," Mathis said.

"I've done it from the time I was a little kid. It's been such a big part of my life that it's very difficult to explain to people why I do what I do musically."

The tour will take him nationwide through 2022.

Mathis credits his stamina as an octogenarian to habits honed as a prolific high school athlete, back when regular calisthenics and exercise routines conditioned him to be an almost Olympian; in 1956, at the guidance of his father, Mathis chose to head to New York to work with Columbia Records instead.

Another piece of advice he's heeded from friends in the music industry since is that if he wanted to continue performing, he had to take care of himself physically.

"I've continued with that until how old am I now?" said Mathis with a laugh. "I still get up in the morn-

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

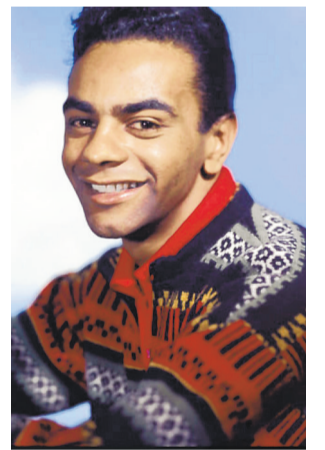
What: Johnny Mathis Christmas Concert

Where: Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa

When: Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.

Cost: Tickets start at \$69

Information: (714) 556-2787; scfta.org



Courtesy Rajon Productions

JOHNNY MATHIS feeling festive in the late 1950s.

ing and go to the gym five days a week."

Mathis has much to celebrate over the span of 65 years. In that time, he has recorded nearly 80 studio albums, earned five Grammy nominations, seen three of his songs inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame and received a lifetime achievement award in 2003 from the Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

Between all his accolades and endurance, "Merry Christmas" continues to occupy a special place in Mathis' heart.

"It meant so much to my parents to have that recording that I made of Christmas songs, especially at Christmastime, of course," he said.

"All of their friends and neighbors congratulated them on the success of my Christmas music. There's been so many blessings along the way, in my career, and that's been one of the finest."

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