

Daily Pilot

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2025 /// dailypilot.com



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

MINORI SAKITA, a female soloist for BalletX, performs in "Mapping Out a Sky" Thursday in the Laguna Dance Festival at the Laguna Playhouse.

BalletX takes center stage at Laguna Dance Festival

BY ANDREW TURNER

Chatter and laughter filled the lobby of the Laguna Playhouse before the planned programming, but a hush fell over the crowd as clips from the past two decades of dance began to play in the theater.

The attendees were there to help mark the contributions and longevity of the Laguna

Dance Festival.

"Twenty years ago, today was just a dream," Jodie Gates, the founder and artistic director of the festival said as she walked on stage to greet those in attendance Thursday, the first night of the four-day anniversary celebration.

When the curtain went up and the lights came down, only pianist John Wilson was on stage. Then female soloist Minori Sakita

glided from stage right — just in front of Wilson — and acknowledged the provider of the evening's live music.

"It was really fun to work with Jodie, finally, because we met earlier two years ago, but I was injured, so we didn't get to work together," Sakita said in a post-performance discussion.

See **Stage**, page A4

Newport police chief offers updates

Drones, automated surveillance and more were points of a discussion at a special meeting Friday, Jan. 31.

BY ERIC LICAS

Newport Beach Police Chief Dave Miner gave the community an update on the incorporation of modern technology to the department's crime fighting and increased enforcement of anti-camping laws to tackle homelessness during a special meeting last Friday, Jan. 31.

Among the new additions to the police force's technology, Miner said, are 69 automated license plate readers, which went online in October.

In July the City Council approved a \$1.4-million contract with Flock Safety for the installation of the devices. They monitor critical intersections throughout the city 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The equipment has already helped detectives identify and arrest people suspected of burglaries in Newport Beach, Miner said. It has also been used to spot people wanted in connection with carjackings and other violent felonies as they enter the city.

"I've talked to our chief and I've talked to our lieutenant," Mayor Joe Stapleton said. "They say this is the single best technology they've seen in the field, maybe in a generation."

Privacy advocates have criticized the adoption of automated license plate readers for contributing to a growing network of constant surveillance at the expense of privacy. Miner noted that the cameras do not record the

See **Police**, page A6

Make-A-Wish sends Seal Beach teenager to Super Bowl LIX

BY MATT SZABO

Seal Beach resident Carson Fox is now not only cancer-free, but he finds himself in a very enviable position this weekend.

Fox, a passionate football fan, is headed to the big game on Sunday.

Make-A-Wish Orange County and the Inland Empire has granted his wish of heading to Super Bowl LIX in New Orleans.

Eighteen other "wish kids" from around the country will also be at the Super Bowl via Make-A-

Wish. Fox and his father, mother and brother got into town on Wednesday.

"It's a dream come true to be here, for sure," Fox, 19, said in a phone interview Friday. "It's cool not only for me, but just for my whole family. We all kind of went through it together, so to be all here together and celebrate as a family is awesome."

After breaking his ankle as a freshman at Los Alamitos High, Fox found out that he had a rare

See **Teenager**, page A2



Lawrence Sherwin Images

MARINES FROM Camp Pendleton arrive for the Crisp Family Super Bowl Party, at American Legion Newport Harbor Post 291, in 2023.

Family goes extra yard for Marines, veterans with Super Bowl party

BY SARA CARDINE

Sports fans who paid thousands of dollars for nosebleed seats in New Orleans' Caesars Superdome for Super Bowl LIX would be kicking themselves if they knew about the party going down in Newport Beach on Sunday.

That's where, at the American Legion Newport Harbor Post 291, hundreds of U.S. Marines on break from Camp Pendleton will join with a contingent of veterans from World War II on up in a celebration for the ages.

Hosted by local residents Gary and Julie Crisp, owners of Costa Mesa-based Crisp Imaging, the invitation-only watch party has become a beloved tradition and a bit of a spectacle since the couple first invited about 80 servicemen and women into the backyard of their former home in Coto de Caza 14 years ago.

"We moved to Corona del Mar about 10 years ago, and the lots are a bit smaller, so we went to the American Legion and sort of sold them on the idea," Gary Crisp recalled in an interview Friday. "At first they looked at us

crooked, now everybody absolutely loves the event."

Like most good things, the Crisp Family Super Bowl Party became larger and more spectacular as years went by and more friends, sponsors and celebrity musicians and athletes began to get in on the planning.

This year, the festivities will run from about 10:30 a.m. — when convoys of service people will step off of six charter buses to a cheering crowd backed by "The Marines Hymn," USC

See **Family**, page A3



Courtesy of Make-A-Wish

SEAL BEACH resident Carson Fox met NFL safety Damar Hamlin in New Orleans as part of his Make-A-Wish wish to go to the Super Bowl.



Photos courtesy of Make-A-Wish

CARSON FOX, center, and his father JD, left, meet music star Jelly Roll.

TEENAGER

Continued from page A1

form of cancer called telangiectatic osteosarcoma. A cancerous tumor forced the amputation of his left leg above the knee in 2021.

Following rounds of chemotherapy and physical therapy, he returned to the track with a running blade as a sprinter and thrower for the Griffins, and he was a long-snapper in football.

Fox is now a freshman at the University of Alabama, where he competes on the para track and field team.

He said he's rooting for the Philadelphia Eagles in the Super Bowl, as they try to thwart the Kansas City Chiefs' hopes of a historic "three-peat." Still, he isn't really a big fan of either team.

"I'm a Texans fan back home, but it's really 'Roll Tide,'" he said. "I'm an Alabama fan."

Fox's experience in New Orleans so far has included a behind the scenes tour of Caesars Superdome, where the game will be played, and VIP access at NFL Honors.

He said he's already met NFL players like Detroit Lions star running back Jahmyr Gibbs, San Francisco 49ers tight end George Kittle and Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin.

Friday's activities included the Super Bowl Experience, and Fox and his family will attend the first-



SEAL BEACH'S Carson Fox, left, meets NFL star running back Jahmyr Gibbs.

ever Super Bowl Host Committee Parade in the French Quarter on Saturday.

Make-A-Wish's official sports partner, Fanatics, has provided wish kids with swag and sponsored pre-event activities.

"Football has been a constant source of joy and strength for Carson, and we are so proud to make his Super Bowl wish come true," said Anne Grey, president and chief executive of Make-A-Wish Orange County and the Inland Em-

pire, in a statement. "For Carson, we hope that the trip provides him with the strength and inspiration needed to face whatever challenges come his way."

Fox called it a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity so far, and he hasn't even made it to game time yet.

"I think the energy will be crazy, for sure," he said. "I don't know what to expect. I've never been to a game this big, so we'll see."

matthew.szabo@latimes.com
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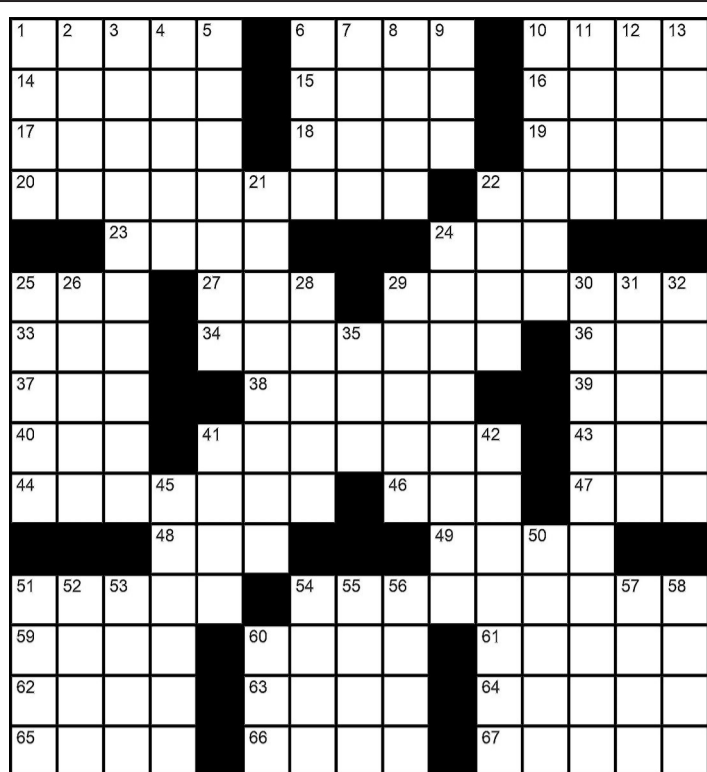
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THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Stella Zawistowski

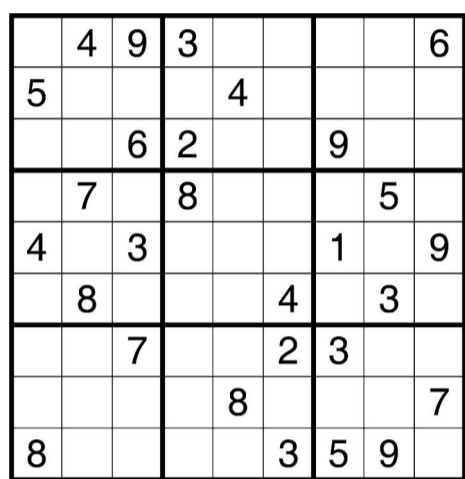
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SUDOKU

By the Mephram Group

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit sudoku.org.uk.



For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A2.

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| 6 Creative thought | 12 Doing nothing |
- 13 Groups of gym reps
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 24 In the _ of greatness
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 26 Smartpants
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 41 Industry big shot
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 57 _ von Teese
 58 Constellation part
 60 Run out of power
- Tribune Media Services



Photos by Lawrence Sherwin Images

HUNDREDS OF Marines attend a Super Bowl watch party at American Legion Newport Harbor Post 291 in 2023, hosted by Corona del Mar residents Gary and Julie Crisp.

FAMILY

Continued from page A1

cheerleaders and members of the USC Trojans Marching Band — until at least 8 or 9 p.m., when a group of Polynesian fire dancers will close the festivities.

Throughout the day, attendees can enjoy free massages and haircuts, a cigar lounge and poker tables with Vegas showgirls. In addition to free boat tours of Newport Bay and limo rides to the iconic Wedge, organizers are offering live bands, meals, raffle drawings with cash prizes and an exhibition from WWE Wrestling's Lucha Libre.

During the main event, spectators can watch the Eagles play the Chiefs on a megascreen or one of seven big-screen televisions set up in different areas.

"We have a whole ring, there's a lot of wrestling going on. But we put it in a tent — we don't want to



CORONA DEL MAR resident Gary Crisp, center, with fellow greeters son Carter, left, and Manny Montanez at a Super Bowl party in 2023.

scare Newport Beach," Crisp quipped.

For Crisp, whose father earned a Purple Heart fighting in the Army's 17th Airborne Division in World War II and whose brothers also served in the Army, including one who served in Vietnam, the annual extravaganza comes from a sincere and hum-

ble place.

"This isn't the Gary and Julie show," he said Friday. "It's really about the young men and women who will sacrifice their lives for us and the veterans who already have. It's a humbling day of gratitude."

sara.cardine@latimes.com
 Twitter: @SaraCardine

FOR THE RECORD

A story in Friday's Daily Pilot about service and infrastructure improvements in Newport Beach misstated the location of the Balboa Branch Library and adjacent Fire Station No. 1. They are located on the peninsula at the 100 block of Balboa Boulevard.

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ORANGE COUNTY ATHLETICS

Huntington Beach Sports Hall of Fame inducts first class

BY MATT SZABO

The 2011 team from Ocean View Little League remains the only team from Orange County to win the Little League World Series world championship.

That hasn't changed. The players themselves? Well, they've grown up.

They were 12 years old at the time. Now, their ages have more than doubled to 26 and many of the players were able to make it to a special event Sunday at the Huntington Club.

The 2011 Ocean View Little League team was among the inductees into the inaugural class of the Huntington Beach Sports Hall of Fame.

"Coming back, it's like we never left each other," said Dylan Palmer, who played third base on the team. "That bond is very indescribable because we spent so much time together growing up. When I see one of the guys, we're still best friends. We're all laughing, joking, having fun like

FORMER PRO SURFING champion Peter "PT" Townend speaks at Sunday's Huntington Beach Sports Hall of Fame induction ceremony.



we're 12 years old."

The inaugural class also included Hall of Fame football tight end Tony Gonzalez, a Huntington Beach High graduate, and Ed Arnold, longtime broadcaster at KTLA and KOCE at Golden West College. Huntington Beach resident and trailblazing basketball player, general manager and announcer Ann Meyers Drysdale also was inducted, as were former world surfing champion Peter "PT" Townend and 12-time state

champion Golden West College women's volleyball coach Albert Gasparian.

Eight of the 13 players on the 2011 Ocean View team attended the ceremony. Some of the players wore adult-sized letterman jackets, which they were given after they won the title and they grew into over the years.

The team's manager, Jeff Pratto, said his son Nick was unable to attend but shared that he and his wife, Hannah, welcomed a baby a couple of weeks ago.



Courtesy of Lisa Windisch

MEMBERS OF the 2011 Ocean View Little League World Series championship team at Sunday's Huntington Beach Sports Hall of Fame induction ceremony. The members were 12 when they won the series.

"That's the first offspring of the World Series champions," Jeff Pratto said, to laughs from

See **Fame**, page A6

HIGH SCHOOL ROUNDUP

Corona takes down Marina girls' wrestling

The Marina girls' wrestling team fell to host Corona 46-30 in the CIF Southern Section Division 1 dual meet championship match on Thursday.

Aubree Gutierrez (115 pounds), Mary Jane O'Neil (125), Eva Garcia (155) and Isabella Lorenzana (235) recorded pins for the Vikings, who were competing in the program's first appearance in the dual meet finals.

Madison Baxter (100) and Nohea Booth (110) also had victories by decision for Marina.

Corona won its second CIF title in its fifth appearance. The Panthers have advanced to the championship match in the top division every year since the tournament was introduced in 2021.



MARINA'S ISABELLA LORENZANA pins her opponent during the CIF Southern Section Division 1 girls' wrestling dual meet championships.

James Carbone

Morgan Starkenburg chipped in with seven points.

BOYS' SOCCER Laguna Beach 5, Portola 0: Dylan Petrie-Norris scored twice, as the visiting Breakers secured the Pacific Hills League title on the final day of the season on Tuesday.

Jackson Arrasin, Jack Hooper and Max Garner also scored for Laguna Beach (10-4-5, 9-2-3, 30 points), which won its first league championship since 1997.

University (9-4-3, 9-3-2, 29 points) controlled its destiny concerning the league title entering the week, but the Trojans were upset by a score of 1-0 at home against St. Margaret's.

— Andrew Turner

GIRLS' BASKETBALL Corona del Mar 55, Newport Harbor 27: Kayly Honig had 14 points to lead the host Sea Kings to victory in the Battle of the Bay on Tuesday in the regular season finale.

Alexa Rokos and Brooke Barry each scored nine points for Corona del Mar (17-10, 9-3), which earned a share of the Sunset League

championship, along with Fountain Valley (18-9, 9-3) and Los Alamitos (19-8, 9-3).

Sienna Knodegah scored eight points, Lark Walz had seven points, and Sawyer Blumenkranz added six points in a balanced scoring effort for the Sea Kings.

Abigail George scored eight points to pace Newport Harbor (9-19, 2-10).

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CONTACT US

Carol Cormaci
Executive Editor
carol.cormaci@latimes.com

Beth Raff
Advertising Manager
(424) 225-9928
beth.raff@latimes.com

10540 Talbert Ave.,
Suite 300 West,
Fountain Valley, CA 92708

Reporters:
Sara Cardine,
Costa Mesa
sara.cardine@latimes.com

Eric Licas,
Newport Beach
eric.licas@latimes.com

Sarah Mosqueda, TimesOC
sarah.mosqueda@latimes.com

Gabriel San Román,
TimesOC
gabriel.sanroman@latimes.com

Matt Szabo,
Huntington Beach and Sports
matthew.szabo@latimes.com

Andrew Turner,
Laguna Beach and Sports
andrew.turner@latimes.com

Send Letters to the Editor to erik.haugli@latimes.com. See Mailbag for guidelines.

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Los Angeles Times

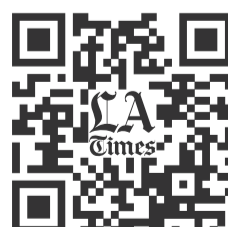
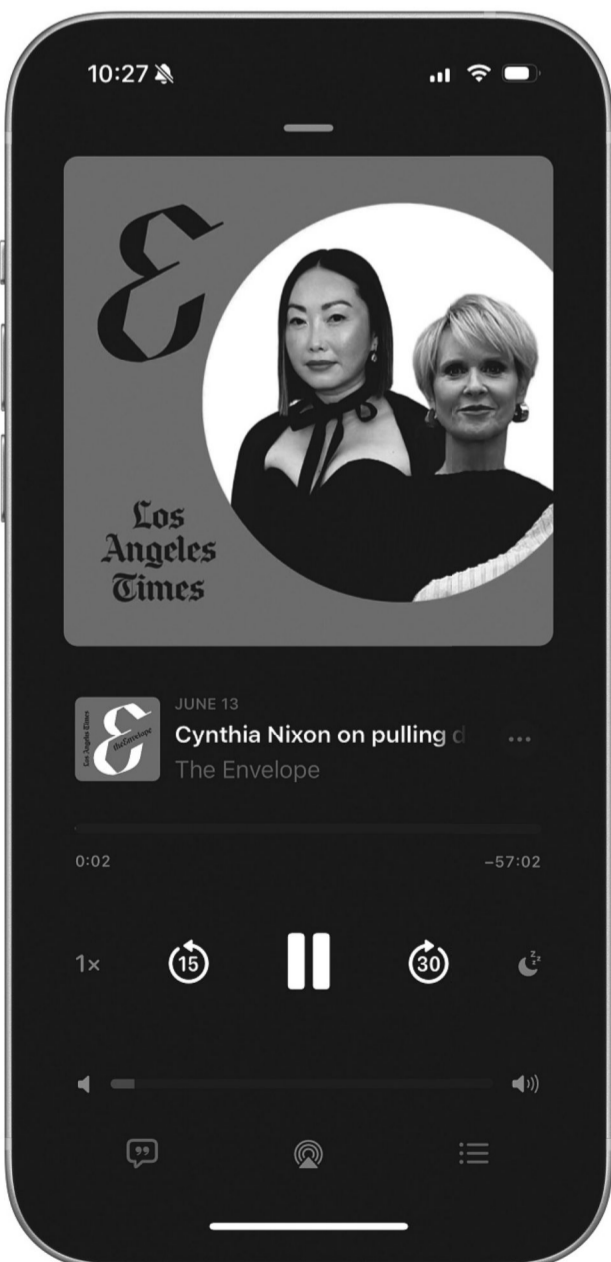
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GIRLS' WATER POLO

Huntington Beach falls to familiar foe

BY ANDREW TURNER

Huntington Beach made strides in its second look at Beckman, but the Oilers had no answer for Brooke Knisley in the opening round of the CIF Southern Section Division 1 girls' water polo playoffs.

The junior center accumulated eight goals — six in the first half — to lead the host Patriots on a rainy Thursday evening in Irvine.

"Obviously, they have a force," Huntington Beach coach Kelly Doherty said. "Their center, she's done a really good job throughout the season. It's been really exciting to watch her play and come up. She releases the ball so quickly. ... Her release, I think, is her biggest strength. She does a good job of getting separation before the ball comes in, so she has the time and space to do what she needs to do."

Beckman (21-6) jumped out to a 5-1 lead after the first quarter, but Huntington Beach largely matched

the Patriots, possession for possession in the second quarter. A Knisley penalty-shot goal on the final play of the first half put a damper in the momentum, spotting Beckman a 10-5 advantage.

The Patriots' passing was problematic, with left-handers Angelina Abshier and Leah Suh helping to pick the defense apart. Abshier had a hat-trick and four assists, while Suh added two goals and four assists.

"Lefties, they come like gold," Beckman coach Duje Grubisic said. "They're like diamonds. If you can have a lefty that can make a correct pass in a correct time, and that [can escape] when they drop off, it's a huge difference."

Hailey Goodwin also had three goals for Beckman, which received eight saves from freshman goalkeeper Allyson Lu.

Huntington Beach (13-12), which was forced to conduct much of its offen-

sive efforts from the perimeter, got a team-high four goals from Maya Tovar.

Sofia Aguirre, Lily Franzese and Leila Tovar each scored two goals. Violet Ensley added a goal, two assists and two steals. Bella Hatala also had a pair of assists for the Oilers.

The Oilers worked through a 4-7 start to the season to find a rhythm. From Dec. 14 to Jan. 10, Huntington Beach rattled off eight consecutive victories, a streak that included wins over Marina, Edison and Fountain Valley in the Sunset League.

Doherty noted the marked improvement from the first month of her initial season as the head coach of the program, when Huntington Beach suffered an 11-1 defeat at Beckman on Dec. 10.

"I think the second half of our season was a lot more successful than our first half," Doherty said. "I think we started kind of accomplishing some of the

goals that we were setting for ourselves early on in the season.

"It's great. They're a really motivated group of girls, and they set [up] the school to get to this position at the beginning of our season. I'm proud of them for getting here."

The Sunset League could only help in that regard, as the grouping offered opportunities to take on Corona del Mar and Newport Harbor, both of which qualified for the Open Division.

Beckman shared the South Coast League championship with San Clemente (20-8), and the Patriots will meet the Tritons in the quarterfinals at home on Wednesday.

Grubisic called San Clemente "a big rivalry," adding, "If you want to be a champion, you got to beat everybody."

Also in the CIF Southern Section girls' water polo playoffs:

Newport Harbor 12, Long Beach Wilson 8: The



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

SOFIA AGUIRRE of Huntington Beach pulls away from Beckman's Emma Simampo (8) for a score during the first round of the CIF Southern Section Division 1 girls' water polo playoffs on Thursday.

Sailors were victorious in their first Open Division pool-play game Thursday at Corona del Mar High.

Newport Harbor (22-5) continues pool play Wednesday against Foothill at 6 p.m. at CdM.

Mater Dei 10, Corona del Mar 4: The Sea Kings fell to the top-ranked Monarchs on Thursday in an Open Division pool-play game.

Corona del Mar (19-8) plays at Westlake Village Oaks Christian in another pool-play game Wednesday, needing a win to stay in contention to make the

final.

Laguna Beach 12, Rosary 9: Kara Carver scored a team-high five goals for the Breakers in the Division 1 first-round match Thursday at El Toro High.

Presley Jones added four goals for No. 2-seeded Laguna Beach (17-11), which plays at Studio City Harvard-Westlake in the quarterfinals on Wednesday.

Staff writer Matt Szabo contributed to this report.

andrew.turner@latimes.com
Twitter: @AndrewTurnerTCN

FAME

Continued from page A5

many more."

Steve Garvey and his daughter Olivia served as co-emcees of the Hall of Fame event, which had all seven Huntington Beach City Council members in attendance. Artist David Holbrook illustrated large portraits of each inductee.

Gonzalez, who is in New Orleans preparing to cover Super Bowl LIX, was unable to attend, but his mother Judy and former high school coach George Pascoe accepted on his behalf. In a video message, Tony Gonzalez thanked all of his coaches.

"It's nothing when you don't have the people around you that support you and that have been there since the beginning,"

he said. "It's all about that. Everybody have a great time, I wish I was I was there and that's about it. H.B.!"

Meyers Drysdale was the first woman to receive a four-year athletic scholarship from UCLA, and the first woman to sign a contract with an NBA team, which she did with the Indiana Pacers in 1979.

She had a quip for Garvey.

"I think Steve has been part of more Fourth of July parades than I have," she said. "I've got to catch up to him."

Townend, originally from Australia, said a couple of surfing memories from Surf City stood out to him. In 1984 he coached the U.S. national team, featuring fellow locals Janice Aragon and Scott Farnsworth, to a gold med-

al. And he also cherished the decade he spent coaching surfing at Dwyer Middle School, which resulted in three NSSA National Championships.

"This is really an honor," said Townend, who got a bit emotional at the start of his speech.

Huntington Beach Sports Hall of Fame executive director Dave Garofalo, a former mayor of Huntington Beach, said his team has gathered a list of at least 200 more nominees for future classes of the hall.

"We have wrestlers, boxers, skateboarders," Garofalo said. "In almost every sport known, we have somebody from Huntington Beach that is excelling in that particular area."

matthew.szabo@latimes.com
Twitter: @mjszabo

POLICE

Continued from page A1

people inside vehicles and said the data collected by them is well-guarded.

Miner, who officially became the department's chief on Wednesday after serving as its acting chief, reported it is in the beginning phases of developing a drone program.

Officials are reviewing potential contractors to supply the flying reconnaissance equipment, and police expect to present a contract to the City Council for review at their meeting on Feb. 25. If it is approved, the equipment could be deployed within 90 days.

The drones can act as robotic, highly maneuverable first responders and enter dangerous situations

without risking officer safety. They are also useful in sting operations and numerous other applications.

If the plan is approved, five drone operators could be prepositioned at strategic points in the city, Miner said.

In addition, the police chief said the department celebrated the launch of its Crime Information Center in January. It's staffed by three civilian detectives trained to use data gleaned by automated license plate readers, drones, body-worn cameras, cellphone tower records, social media and more to aid investigators and patrol officers.

Finally, Miner noted that the department has added three homeless liaison officers to its quality of life team, bringing the total to four.

In August, the City

Council voted to augment anti-camping laws as a way to compel homeless people to either relocate or try to find a spot in a shelter or supportive housing. The quality of life team conducts outreach in addition to responding to calls involving people who live on the street.

Miner credited the additions of the quality of life team with an apparent reduction in the number of homeless people recorded living in Newport Beach. A survey conducted by the nonprofit City Net in January 2024 found as many as 71 homeless people in the community while one performed in November by People Assisting the Homeless identified just 11.

eric.licas@latimes.com
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