

## Haunted Mansion revives scares of old



BY TODD MARTENS

Disneyland's Haunted Mansion has been a source of fan mystique for even longer than its nearly 52 years at the park. When it returns with upgrades and additions April 30 — the day Disneyland is set to fully reopen in Anaheim — it should prove the old adage that a good idea doesn't die so much as haunt the universe until it becomes a reality.

Recently materialized in the attraction are a smattering of new illusions and curiosities; a few will be particularly familiar to many of the Haunted Mansion's borderline-obsessive fan community.

Among the most prominent: the return of a dynamic por-

trait dreamed up by Disney master animator-designer Marc Davis of a once-beautiful woman aging less than gracefully. There's also a not-so sly nod to a demonic, eye-catching cat crafted by another of Disney's famed animators-turned-theme park architects, Xavier Atencio. This fiendish feline would have followed guests throughout the ride, a creature said to despise living humans and with predatory, possessive instincts.

In Atencio's concept art, the cat featured elongated, vampire-like fangs and a piercing red eye. In a nod to Edgar Allan Poe's story "The Black Cat," it had just one eyeball, which sat

See *Mansion*, page R3

## Critics take jabs at idea of 'vaccine passport'

While officials say digital record program would be voluntary, some say it would violate their constitutional rights.

BY BEN BRAZIL

When Orange County announced last week it would be starting a "vaccine passport" pilot program this month, it caused uproar among some residents who believe it would encroach on their "freedom."

The announcement came amid a national conversation over potential government-issued vaccine passports, which the state and federal government aren't requiring.

About 200 residents showed up to speak at an Orange County Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday to voice their opposition to the county's program. Orange County Health Care Agency Director Clayton Chau and the supervisors sought to allay their concerns before the public comment period.

Chau said the county isn't requiring any "vaccine passport," rather, the agency is planning to offer a digital vaccination record for residents who request it. The record will likely be in the form of a scannable QR code in the Othena app, which the county has used for scheduling COVID-19 testing and vaccinations.

Chau said the digital record can be useful for residents because private businesses may require customers to be vaccinated. He said that the county is not requiring anyone to be vaccinated.

As more people become vaccinated and the economy reopens, certain businesses and venues may only admit people who have been vaccinated for COVID-19. That would require a digital or physical vaccination record.

See *Passport*, page R5



**TOP:** The Haunted Mansion in Disneyland Park in Anaheim, has been updated with some elements old and new. One of the Haunted Mansion's original portraits, "April to December," is returning.

**LEFT:** A look inside the updated hallway of Disneyland's Haunted Mansion.

Photos by  
Christian Thompson  
Disneyland Resort

## Think inside the box: Your springtime picnics may never be the same

BY EDWIN GOEI

Right now all over Japan, the sakura (cherry blossom) trees are blooming, signaling spring's arrival. This is the time for "hanami," the tradition of taking a trip to view the trees and picnic under their cotton candy-colored branches with a good bento. Throughout Japanese history, bentos — lunch boxes packed with a variety of foods — have been inextricably linked to venturing outdoors, but especially for hanami.

There are 19th-century woodblock prints from the Edo period depicting bucolic scenes of families eating bentos beneath sakura trees. Bentos are still strongly associated with pic-

nicking to this day, but they've also permeated daily life. In Japan, bentos are enjoyed by all people all the time. Kids eat them at school. Salarymen scarf them down at the office. There exists countless YouTube channels and Instagram feeds dedicated to the art of filling bento boxes not just with different dishes but elaborate designs that verge on the meticulous.

But the *raison d'être* of a bento box has been and always will be portability — a well-balanced meal packed in a ready-to-travel container. At Japan's convenience stores and food halls, bentos are so popular it is estimated that their sale accounts for over \$50 billion a year.

So, what is a bento? It's anything and everything. And though there are no rulebooks that govern what a bento box must contain, the foods within it should ideally exhibit the five colors of red, green, yellow, black and white. In almost a literal way, an empty bento box is akin to a blank canvas. A good bento box takes into account compositional balance in both appearance and taste.

What follows is a compilation of the best bentos you can find in the county. Designed to be eaten anywhere but a stuffy restaurant, a bento box is arguably the ultimate takeout food during these pandemic times,

See *Box*, page R4



Edwin Goei

**A BENTO BOX** featuring an assortment of Japanese comfort foods at Neighborhood Bento, which is located in Buena Park.

**The raison d'être of a bento box has been and always will be portability — a well-balanced meal packed in a ready-to-travel container.**

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# O.C. judge softens his stance on trial delays

U.S. District Judge Cormac J. Carney is allowing a delay to a drug case as jury trials are set to resume May 10.

BY MEGHANN M. CUNIFF

With jury trials set to resume May 10, an Orange County federal judge has softened his stance and is allowing a delay he previously rejected as unconstitutional.

U.S. District Judge Cormac Carney said the “dramatically changed” circumstances in the Central District of California quash any Constitutional concerns about a request from

prosecutors to delay a trial for a month.

Carney previously refused delays and instead dismissed five criminal cases because he believes the Central District’s indefinite suspension of trials violated the defendants’ right to a speedy trial.

The judge acknowledged his previous stance in an April 9 order granting a trial continuance in a drug case, saying he “vehemently opposed” the in-



Cormac J. Carney

to accommodate the May 10 reconvening of juries is reasonable.

“The most important statutory factor is therefore whether failing to grant a one-month continuance would likely make a continuation of the proceeding impossible or re-

sult in a miscarriage of justice. The Court concludes that it would,” Carney wrote in his seven-page order.

Carney in February declined to delay the scheduled April trial for the defendant, Darren McGhee, as part of his stance against the Central District’s indefinite delay.

When prosecutors again asked to delay the trial March 31, McGhee’s lawyer, opposed and cited the same issues Carney cited in his previous dismissals: Jury trials are not impossible, and indefinitely suspending them is uncon-

tutional.

“Mr. McGhee does not suggest that trying cases during a pandemic is an entirely risk-free proposition. But then, neither is working at a grocery store or stocking shelves at Amazon or policing the streets. The risks of trying cases are real but are also manageable and worth taking. Infection rates are low, mitigation measures are possible and vaccines are being administered apace,” according to the brief by Deputy Federal Public Defender Elena Sadowsky.

Sadowsky in February

secured the dismissal of drug, gun and immigration charges against another client, Jose Reyes, after Carney refused to delay the trial.

That’s one of the five cases dismissed by Carney that prosecutors are appealing to the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

In McGhee’s case, he’s accused of trying to smuggle six kilograms of cocaine in his luggage during a flight from Los Angeles to Newark, N.J., in November 2019.

MEGHANN M. CUNIFF is a contributor to TimesOC.

# Anaheim votes to increase city manager authority

BY BEN BRAZIL

Anaheim City Manager James Vanderpool can now approve more contracts without the City Council’s consent.

The council voted 5-2 on Tuesday night to increase Vanderpool’s signing authority from \$50,000 to \$200,000. Council members Avelino Valencia and Jose Moreno opposed giving the increased power to Vanderpool, who has been the city manager since September.

Valencia cited a lack of public transparency and Moreno an increase in “pay-to-play politics” as concerns.

“This item strikes the right balance between the efficient operation of our city, and accountability and transparency to the public and taxpayers,” said Mayor Harry Sidhu, who requested the item. “I am strongly in support of this item, and I hope the whole council joins me in this.”

The city manager’s signature authority has been a subject of controversy for years in Anaheim.

In 2010, former City Manager Thomas Wood’s



Allen J. Schaben | Los Angeles Times

ANAHEIM Councilman Jose Moreno is concerned with increasing the signing authority of the city manager.

signing authority was increased to \$250,000, then decreased to \$100,000 a year later after investigative reporting from Voice of OC led to worries about conflicts of interest. In 2017, the council further cut the signing authority down to \$50,000.

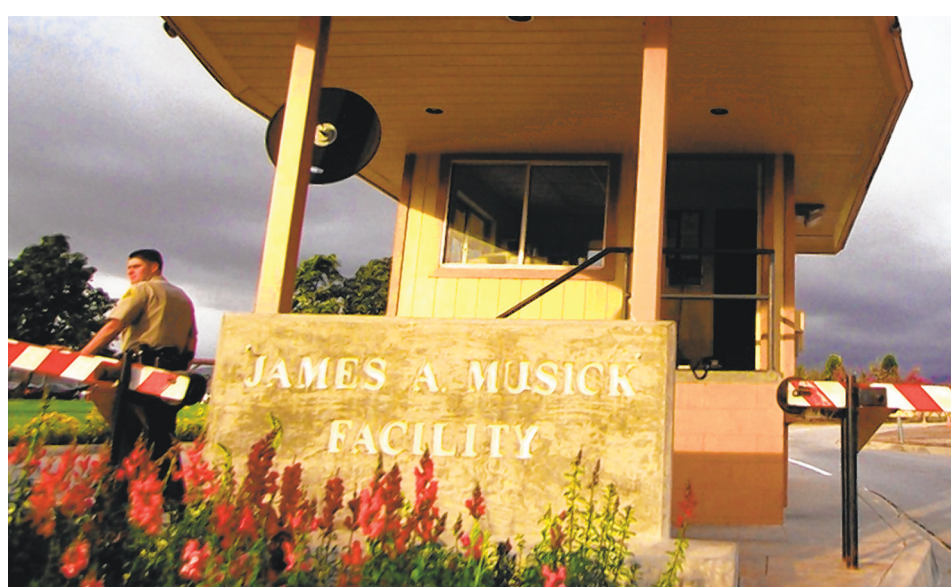
Santa Ana City Manager Kristine Ridge has a signature authority of \$50,000, although she currently has broader authority due to

COVID-19, said city spokesman Paul Eakins.

“I have full faith in our city manager’s ability, however I don’t believe it’s in the best interest of our residents to increase flexibility on spending, not necessarily increased spending, but flexibility on spending during one of the most difficult economic struggles in our city’s history,” Valencia said. “Furthermore, it’s concerning that our residents will not be able to comment on or review potential agreements and contracts within this new proposed range prior to approval, like they can now when they’re agendized several days before the City Council meeting. We may not get many comments on these types of contracts, however, residents should still have the ability to do so if the need arises.”

At one point, Valencia asked whether there has been a case when there was an emergency situation when a contract between \$50,000 and \$200,000 needed to be ap-

See *Votes*, page R4



File Photo

ORANGE COUNTY plans to add nearly 900 beds at the minimum-security James A. Musick jail in Irvine, a plan Stop the Musick Coalition believes is unnecessary.

# Coalition fights the expansion of a controversial county jail

BY BEN BRAZIL

A coalition of social justice organizations in Orange County is working to halt the expansion of the James A. Musick jail near Irvine.

Members of the Stop the Musick Coalition believe the \$289 million — not including operating costs — devoted to the addition of nearly 900 new beds to the facility are unnecessary because the county’s jail population has decreased.

The coalition also believes that incarceration is not an effective treatment for social ills, and the money could be better spent on social programs that address the root causes of crime.

“I think the most important thing to know about the Musick coalition is that we believe that incarceration is not a solution to social problems, and the Stop the Musick Coalition is part of a growing movement of

people and groups in Orange County that are really going to fight for that principle,” said Jacob Reisberg, a member of the coalition and a jails conditions advocate with the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California.

The nonprofit Transforming Justice Orange County started the coalition about a year ago with several other organizations when the county Board of Supervisors awarded a more than \$261-million construction contract for the expansion.

Other involved groups include the ACLU of Southern California and the People’s Budget Orange County, which advocates for Orange County’s budget to devote less funding to law enforcement and more to social programs.

In addition to its advocacy, the coalition has started holding online workshops to educate the community.

“We feel like Orange

County disproportionately invests in law enforcement and in carceral systems,” said Sarah Kahn, a UC Irvine law student and member of Transforming Justice OC.

Public protection makes up \$490.6 million of the county’s \$890-million discretionary budget, while community services make up \$154.2 million.

Reisberg said it makes more sense to devote money toward solving the actual social issues that may lead to crime.

“A very substantial portion of the people who are incarcerated in Orange County jails are homeless,” he said. “One option is to spend money on new jail beds. A better option, in my view, is to spend that money on housing in the community.”

Karen Hernandez, chair of the People’s Budget, said that the increase in jail beds

See *Jail*, page R5

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# Goodwill of Orange County joins forces with Donate Life California

BY TIMESOC STAFF

Goodwill of Orange County has teamed up with nonprofit Donate Life California to give shoppers an opportunity to register as organ, eye and tissue donors throughout April for National Organ Donation Month.

There are more than 100,000 people currently waiting for a lifesaving transplant, and more than 22,000 of them live in California.

“California still lags behind the national average of organ donors, and our goal is to close that gap,” Jim Martin, CEO, Donate Life California said in a statement. “We are grateful to partner with Goodwill of Orange County, a respected



CNG

GOODWILL visitors can pick up a flyer or scan a QR code to access the Donate Life organ donation registration online.

organization that has given us access to a whole new way to register donors.”

According to Martin, transplants were halted

during the beginning months of the coronavirus pandemic with hospitals

See *Goodwill*, page R4

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# 'Red Riding Hood' to open SCR's spring lineup

BY TIMESOC STAFF

South Coast Repertory opens its spring lineup with a film-to-stream production of "Red Riding Hood," written by Allison Gregory and directed by Shannon Flynn.

The play aligns with the classic folktale plot in which the main character Red travels through the woods to her grandmother's house while the Wolf has devious dinner plans.

In Gregory's version, the twist comes in the form of Red's brave and strong demeanor and the tricks she comes up with to avoid becoming a meal. Actors Larry Bates and Nell Geisslinger each play two characters.

The production, running from April 21 through June 13, is recommended for ages 4 and older as a part of the SCR's family-friendly Theatre for Young Audiences.

"Serving our youngest audience members and the educators who teach them has been a priority at South Coast Repertory for decades," said SRC Managing Director Paula Tomei in a statement.

"Theatre for Young Audiences and Families productions unlock imaginations, spark creativity and spread joy. The feedback and encouragement we received from teachers throughout this pandemic has made it clear that theater experiences in the classroom are needed now more than ever."

As the theater's traditional free school-time matinee, the play is available at no charge to Orange County public schools.

SCR will also stream its Pacific Playwrights Festival online, with readings of new plays "Covenant" by York Walker on April 26 to May 2, "Coleman '72"

## IF YOU WATCH

**What:** "Red Riding Hood"  
**Where:** Online  
**When:** April 21 through June 13  
**Cost:** \$30  
**Info:** (714) 708-5555; [scr.org](http://scr.org)

by Charlie Oh on May 10 to 16, "Park-e Laleh" by Shayan Lotfi on May 24 to 30, "Clean" by Christine Quintana on May 31 to June 6 and "Harold & Lillian" by Dan Collins and music by Julianne Wick Davis on June 21 to 27.

The theater company also plans to present its first in-person performances starting on July 15 with "American Mariachi," written by José Cruz González and directed by Christopher Acebo and on July 16 with "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" by Charles M. Schulz at a Mission San Juan Capistrano outdoor stage as part of a series called "Outside SCR."

"The past year has been challenging and, at the same time, has presented opportunities for creative growth," said SCR Artistic Director David Ivers in a statement.

"So, we're excited to announce a season brimming with innovation, built on the cornerstone programs of South Coast Repertory — world-class productions, Theatre for Young Audiences and Their Families, new play development and community engagement. We're overjoyed about Outside SCR and our new partnership with Mission San Juan Capistrano, which enables us to expand our reach in Orange County."

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## MANSION

Continued from page R1

in its socket with all the subtlety of a fire alarm. Sometimes we'd see the cat as simply an eye in the darkness; other times, there would be allusions that this phantom was on the prowl for a spirit to possess. Discarded eventually — a raven essentially fills a similar role — the cat, which will now be represented as an elegant statue, stands as a reminder that the Haunted Mansion was once envisioned more as a walk between the hair-raising and the humorous.

Beyond the cat figurine, there are many other additions for guests to spot, from floating chairs to puzzling dollhouses. Both inside and outside the Mansion, Disney creatives aim to gently deepen the mystery of the ride. Walt Disney Imagineering — the secretive arm of the company responsible for theme park experiences — has also found a way to squeeze in an extra scene, in a nook just before guests board the ride's "doombuggies."

In the last year, Disney has announced multiple changes and upgrades to its rides, many designed to bring the attractions in line with modern cultural sensibilities. Splash Mountain, for instance, will be rethemed to "The Princess and the Frog" in an effort to remove its connection to the controversial film "Song of the South," which some consider racist. The Jungle Cruise is receiving multiple enhancements to alter its portrayal of Indigenous people. Recently, there have been calls for removal of a hanging scene in the Haunted Mansion, due to its association with suicide and lynchings.

Disney has heard those complaints, but for now, the scene will remain unchanged. "It's been discussed for sure," says Disney's Michele Hobbs, who managed the Haunted Mansion refurbishment.

For the Haunted Mansion, expect lighter touches throughout, rather than a sweeping show scene or a



Christian Thompson | Disneyland Resort

**THE HAUNTED MANSION** in Disneyland has been updated in and around the estate. Outside, freshly landscaped details, including lily pads and society garlic, now adorn the site for dearly departed pets, representing their stories from beyond the grave.

removal of any set pieces.

Here, resurrected, is a portrait from Davis, the Disney legend who designed such characters as Snow White, Tinker Bell and Maleficent, as well as the creative force behind the look of many of the animation-inspired vignettes of the park's foundational rides. Davis' "April to December" painting, in which a gorgeous woman slowly transforms into jagged bones and aged flesh, was removed from the Haunted Mansion's portrait hallway at Disneyland in the mid-2000s.

Hobbs says that at the time, the painting's gradual four-scene change didn't work with a technological update to the ride that created crisper, more instantaneous two-slide transformations. Imagineering has now extended the portrait hallway, placing a remade version of Davis' art around a bend — past the illusion of the busts watching guests.

In the past, once guests rounded the corner, they were fixated on boarding the ride. Now, they will see a mysterious door, the reimaged artwork and the devil cat. The changes were partly inspired by the black-lighted colors and characters that populate the space during the Mansion's "Nightmare Before Christmas" holiday make-

over.

"That's what Kim and I were saying — the only time this area comes alive is during the holidays," says Imagineering's Hobbs, who is stationed in Anaheim and works closely with Kim Irvine, Disneyland's longtime art director and the daughter of Leota Toombs, one of the first women to work for Imagineering and the portrayer of Madame Leota, whose disembodied head floats in a crystal ball in the séance room.

"So let's see what can we do during these other months to try to reinvigorate this area," Hobbs adds. "Bringing back 'April to December' was an awesome way to do it." Although the painting is newly created and uses more current technology, Hobbs stressed that "it is the original image, and it is the one our guests will recognize."

Anything that harks back to Davis is sure to attract fans' attention, and "April to December" is one of the Mansion's most striking portraits. The work stands apart from the other images — a woman changing into a big cat, a knight shifting to a skeleton — because rather than play into horror mythology, it references our own mortality. The woman in Davis' original final scene is

ghostly but still of this world.

"In April, she's a hot-looking item!," Davis says, as quoted in the Disney-published book "Marc Davis in His Own Words: Imagineering the Disney Theme Parks." "June — it's sexy! In September, she's past her prime — kind of a not-attractive lady; but in December, she's had it! Just like it happens to all of us."

And yet that also gets to the heart of the Haunted Mansion's enduring appeal and why Disney could sell out multiple \$300 events to celebrate the ride's 50th birthday in 2019. The Haunted Mansion is an equalizer, an attraction that laughs at our limited time on Earth and then gives us a swinging wake that pokes fun at our sinful ways. Key to its allure is Davis' colorfully exaggerated characters, figures whose wide-eyed facial expressions convey a multitude of emotions.

Without a clear, linear story, the Haunted Mansion is a place for guests to fill in the blanks, and its closest character to a princess is its black widow bride. Her name is Constance, and she stalks the attic. Depending on your point of view, she's either an ax murderer or a reminder that a happily ever

See *Mansion*, page R4

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**BOX**

Continued from page R1

especially if you can find a cherry blossom tree to eat it under.

**BEST SUPERMARKET BENTOS**

**Tokyo Central**  
2975 Harbor Blvd., Costa Mesa, CA 92626. (714) 751-8433

18171 Imperial Highway, Yorba Linda, CA 92886. (714) 386-5110

All of Orange County's Japanese supermarkets offer bentos. Seiwa puts out a good selection on weekdays and Mitsuwa always has a dependable array at the back of the store. But the one that beats them all is Tokyo Central.

At its Costa Mesa location, the massive bento inventory is the first thing you encounter as you enter the store. The variety is dizzying and the crowd that descends upon it ravenous. First to be snapped up is usually any bento with karaage — morsels of Japanese fried chicken. Next will be the makunouchi salmon, which is so named because bentos like this were historically served during theater intermissions in Japan. The term "makunouchi" translates to "between-acts." These days when a bento is referred to as "makunouchi," it suggests that it will contain the most variety of dishes.

For its version, Tokyo Central's chefs marinate salmon steaks in soy sauce and sake before gently cooking and laying them atop rice. Surrounding the fish are satellites of simmered vegetables, steamed Japanese sweet potato, assorted fish cakes, Japanese pickles and the lusciously sweet Japanese rolled omelet called tamagoyaki. It's a veritable feast of different tastes and textures. And at \$7.49, the meal is cheaper than most tuna subs.

But if it's a bargain you're after, the store marks down all remaining bentos and sushi boxes with a 20% discount after 7 p.m. By then there won't be much to choose from, but if you're lucky, you might see the grilled saba box — possibly the most underrated and underappreciated bento at Tokyo



Photos by Edwin Goei

**HEARTFUL MADE** in Fullerton offers Korean dosirak.

Central. Those who aren't put off that the fish still wears its mottled skin will be rewarded with a flaky flesh that has a slight tang. Of course, it goes extremely well with rice.

**BEST BENTOS FROM A BUFFET**

**Makino**  
1818 Main St. Irvine, CA 92614. (949) 744-5461

Like other buffets, Makino's operating model was blown to bits during the lockdown. But rather than shuttering, this Japanese seafood and sushi buffet refocused its efforts on upgrading its bentos for takeout, which was already something you could order pre-COVID-19.

The changes began



**THE SALMON** bento box at Makino in Irvine.

modestly, but as the months dragged on, the improvements got better and better. The miso soup and gyoza remain. But they jettisoned the green salad that used to take up a large part of the bento box real estate, replacing it with a creamy mac salad, two kinds of pickles, simmered gobo, fish cakes, and kabocha squash that's as sweet as Thanksgiving yam.

Still, the biggest change is something only regulars would notice: The rice now comes in its own separate container instead of occupying space in the bento box itself.

Some of the proteins,

like the teriyaki salmon, got bigger and tastier. The filet is now thicker and grilled so perfectly — with the flesh moist and the skin slightly crispy — that you never need to apply any of the sauce that comes on the side.

**BEST KOREAN BENTOS**

**Heartful Made**  
2009 W. Commonwealth Ave. Unit C, Fullerton, CA 92833. (714) 732-3084.

Technically, what Heartful Made sells aren't bentos; they're called dosirak, the Korean analog. But a dosirak is to a bento as an elevator is to a lift. Both are partitioned boxes of food designed for takeout and picnics.

But since there is a big difference between Japanese and Korean cuisine, what you get in those compartments will be spicier and more perfumed with sesame seed oil than a typical Japanese bento. The bulgogi here is at least twice as sweet as its closest Japanese cousin, gyudon. And the stir-fried squid is shellacked with a red pepper spice blend that triggers your sweat glands just by looking at it.

Perhaps the best bento is the spicy pork, where thinly sliced meat is stir-fried and coated in a crimson sauce so radioactive that it requires the entire tray of rice to counteract its hotness.

But as with all proper Korean meals, there are banchan — traditional Korean side dishes that seem predestined to being stuffed inside a bento. Kimchi is, of course, in attendance, but if you're lucky, there will also be the delectable savory Korean pancakes called panjeon, spicy fish cakes stir-fried with onion, an herb-studded rolled omelet and an obscure side dish of soy-braised Spanish peanuts called ddangkong jorim that you aren't likely to find anywhere else.



**THE DOSIRAK**, a Korean equivalent of the bento box, at Heartful Made.

It should be noted that even before the pandemic, Heartful Made sold its dosirak like it does now: strictly as takeout. The store was never meant for dine-in. What has changed since then is that the kitchen is now busier than ever fulfilling orders for all the online delivery apps. As such, you need to call ahead if you have a particular dosirak in mind.

**BEST JAPANESE FRIED CHICKEN BENTOS**

**Tenkatori**  
3001 Bristol St. Ste D Costa Mesa, CA 92626. (714) 641-7004

Karaage is arguably the most coveted item to have in a bento box. And Tenkatori, the county's preeminent Japanese fried chicken specialist, happens to produce one of the best karaages outside Japan. So naturally, you want the karaage bentos here, even if the Styrofoam containers make them look more like a typical combo meal from a run-of-the-mill teriyaki joint.

The Costa Mesa store is part of a company that began in Oita, Japan in the '60s. And as simple as the recipe for karaage is — just chicken thigh marinated in sake, ginger juice and soy sauce — the dish's success lives and dies by how it's fried.

There's the first fry, at low temperature, which cooks the meat. Then the



**TENKATORI** in Costa Mesa makes a karaage bento well worth a try.

second fry, at a high temperature, creates the crispy outer crust. Tenkatori's fry cooks always seem to hit that elusive sweet spot of crunchy-on-the-outside and juicy-on-the-inside — a state that lies tenuously between salmonella and burlap.

So ignore the teriyaki chicken. Shun the stir-fried strips of beef called "BBQ." Always get the karaage for your bento.

Included in the meal is rice, miso soup and a choice of either two more karaage, two mashed-potato croquettes or a serving of tempura. To offset all that fried food, there are California rolls and your choice of either a brisk salad or a selection of colorful steamed vegetables that make the whole thing pop in your Instagram feed. Choose the latter, if only to prove that sometimes great bentos come in Styrofoam.

**BEST BENTO SPECIALIST**

**Neighborhood Bento**  
10488 Valley View St. Ste 5 Buena Park, CA 90620. (714) 333-6453

As its name suggests, Neighborhood Bento is a restaurant that specializes in bentos. What that really means is that it revels in Japanese comfort foods, most of which happens to fit perfectly within the confines of a bento box.

Here you'll find bentos filled with crisp karaage, grilled salmon, succulent shrimp and fried fish cake. And if you opt for the "assorted" bento, you get all the above, along with all the sides they make. This includes two kinds of pickles, a simmered dish with various ingredients that could count as a main course itself, hijiki seaweed, gobo, tamagoyaki and Japanese potato salad, which is always the best kind of potato salad.

Other popular bento choices include katsu chicken, ginger pork, hamburger steak and yakiniku. There's something for everyone, even a fried tofu bento for vegetarians. About the only thing you can't get is ramen, which, as you might have guessed, is antithetical to the idea of bento and portability in general.



**NEIGHBORHOOD BENTO** in Buena Park.

**BEST BENTOS FROM A BAKERY**

**Cream Pan**  
602 El Camino Real Tustin, CA 92780. (714) 665-8239

15945 Harbor Blvd., Fountain Valley, CA 92708. (714) 760-4854

Most people who are aware that Cream Pan exists know that the bakery is famous for their strawberry croissants. The custard and strawberry-filled pastries have always been Cream Pan's gateway drug — introduced to the unacquainted when a tray of it inevitably shows up at a potluck or party.

But regulars know that Cream Pan is more than its croissants. They know that everything else Cream Pan makes is just as habit-forming. This includes the items in the refrigerated display case next to the door which features Japanese-style sandwiches and a bento box that contains two nori-covered rice balls paired with a few pieces of karaage.

This basic bento is a nod to history. It was rice



**BENTO BOXES** at Cream Pan, which has locations in Tustin and Fountain Valley.

balls like these, called onigiri, that were the first portable food of Japan — the thing from which bentos eventually evolved. Inside each of these handheld rice sandwiches is a hidden pocket of filling. One has seasoned kelp; the other has an umeboshi plum. Eat them in concert with the karaage and you'll momentarily forget that McNuggets and fries exist.

**EDWIN GOEI** is a contributor to TimesOC.



**THE SABA** bento at Tokyo Central with locations in Yorba Linda and Costa Mesa.



CNG

**GOODWILL** of O.C. teamed up with Donate Life CA throughout April for National Organ Donation Month.

**GOODWILL**

Continued from page R2

anticipating an increased demand for their ICU and emergency beds. There was also concern over the spread of the virus between donor and recipient. However, organ procurement organizations immediately began testing every potential donor to ensure no transmission, and the state was able to increase the number of transplants from 4,412 in 2019 to 4,531 in 2020.

Visitors to any of the 25 retail locations throughout the county can scan a QR code to be directed to the registration website or pick up a flier with instructions.

O.C. Goodwill shops opened at reduced capacity with safety precautions like required face masks, social distancing and san-

itizing fitting rooms during summer of last year and are now back at 100% capacity since the county moved to the less restrictive orange tier.

Typically during April, Goodwill, which helps people facing barriers find and keep jobs, sees about 90,000 donors, and staff hope the nonprofit will be able to drive registrations for Donate Life.

"Goodwill started with the mission that there is no waste in people, no waste in products," said COO Corrine Allen. "When we talked about this [collaboration], we thought it gets back to our roots of reminding people, there's no waste, whether that means that everyone should hold a job or that we should be sustainable with our body parts."

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**VOTES**

Continued from page R2

proved quickly but was impeded by the signing authority limit.

Assistant City Manager Greg Garcia said he didn't have a specific example.

"Could there be instances where projects were delayed or we just passed on something because we couldn't get it done in time?" Garcia said. "Potentially, but I don't have a specific example of that offhand."

Moreno said in a phone interview on Thursday that the approval of the signature authority is a concern for a number of reasons, some stemming from the removal of former City Manager Chris Zapata last year.

Moreno said Sidhu was behind the removal of Za-

pata after he raised concerns about Sidhu's \$6.5-million bailout of Visit Anaheim, a nonprofit marketing organization for the city.

"The mayor unilaterally and unexpectedly agendized removing previous City Manager Chris Zapata, who was I believe, the first Latino city manager the city's ever had," Moreno said. "By all accounts, he was doing a great job, including about six months prior to that action, the council had evaluated him formally, and his evaluation came out so well that he actually received a salary increase."

The council approved the removal of Zapata with a 5-2 vote. Moreno and former Councilwoman Denise Barnes opposed.

Moreno said Sidhu then orchestrated Vanderpool's hiring, which occurred in-

stead of a nationwide search. Vanderpool had been serving as the city manager for Buena Park.

"There was one name that the mayor wanted," Moreno said. "The staff then reached out to each of the council members if we wanted to schedule an interview with Mr. Vanderpool, then the mayor said his name will be on the agenda for approval."

City spokesman Mike Lyster said that Vanderpool was a finalist for the city manager position in 2014, though it went to someone else.

Moreno said the approval of the signature authority increase confirms his worst suspicions that "if you don't do what the mayor and council majority wants you to do without question, you could lose your job."

Moreno also said the signature authority increase

could lead to "pay-to-play politics" in the city. He said his concerns have nothing to do with trusting Vanderpool.

"I just think it puts Jim Vanderpool and the department heads into a really difficult space," Moreno said. "If the mayor makes a phone call and says, 'I'd really like you to give a call to this vendor,' then magically that vendor ends up being the most competitive bid."

"...It's pretty clear that there's a symbiotic relationship between, you get access to the mayor and therefore to staff more directly if you pay-to-play by becoming a member of the [Chamber of Commerce], and also by contributing to the campaign treasury of the mayor and council."

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**MANSION**

Continued from page R3

after is but a dream.

And with Atencio's furry spirit at long last finding its way into the Haunted Mansion, visitors will have another character to imagine story lines around. Today, the cat is in statuette form. But just because it's out of its nine lives doesn't mean it has fully passed on.

Just before guests board the doombuggies is where our kiddy demon awaits. "You'll see this beautiful statue of this cat. Maybe

you'll see red coming out of its eye. Maybe not," says Hobbs.

Madame Leota's séance room has also been updated.

Now among the floating musical instruments is a wicker chair. Although that may sound random, long-time fans will likely connect a chair in such a room to Disney designer Rolly Crump, one of the first Imagineers to work on the mansion in the late 1950s, a full decade before it would open. In Crump's version of the séance room, the centerpiece was a chair that would come alive.

Elsewhere, the spiderweb flooring in the Mansion's entryway has been remade, the exterior has been repainted — multiple shades of white meant to evoke shadows on outdoor walls — and the small pet cemetery has been outfitted with flowers and plants that add more elegance to the departed animal companions. Mostly. A tomb for an expired skunk is now accompanied by an ever-so-slight garlic odor courtesy of society garlic.

"We all love our beloved pets. What would you do if it was your pig named Rosie? You would decorate.

We treated this as we would our own pets," says Hobbs. Rosie, of course, is surrounded by roses, but be on the lookout for catnip, large toad lilies and other new flora to match the animals and put them on a larger pedestal.

Consider such a landscaping touch a further heightening of the Haunted Mansion's themes — a love for what we've lost and who we are, follies and all. And an embrace of our pets, even when it's a cat that's raising hell.

**TODD MARTENS** writes for the Los Angeles Times.



## JAIL

Continued from page R2

isn't necessary.

"The jail population specifically in Orange County has just been at a historic low probably in the last 10 to 15 years," Hernandez said, referencing a recent study by Million Dollar Hoods, a research team based at UC Los Angeles.

Sheriff's spokeswoman Carrie Braun said the average daily jail population is down to 3,300. It was 2,500 before the pandemic.

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

Hernandez is also a member of Abolition Now Orange County, which advocates for an end to mass incarceration. She was heavily influenced by the experiences of her uncle, who was housed in Theo Lacy jail.

"He had a lot of altercations with deputies, and I don't believe he ever reported them out of fear of retaliation," she said. "It became this all-encompassing fear that affected his mental health, and he was just a completely different person when he came out of jail."

The O.C. Sheriff's Department previously had a controversial contract with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to house ICE detainees at the Musick jail. In 2019, Barnes ended that agreement, and the Musick jail facility was emptied.

The department held at the time that the agreement was terminated to make space for the increasing need for mental health beds in the county's jails.

The jail has been empty in the meantime.

The expansion includes adding two new housing structures and 896 new beds, which will bring the total beds at the Musick facility to about 2,200. The expansion will bring the total beds in Orange County jails to almost 7,500, according to stats provided by Braun.

Braun said that jails have seen a nationwide increase in the number of inmates with mental illnesses. In 2015, Orange County had

an average of 1,220 daily open mental health cases, she said. In 2019, that number had increased by 54% to 1,886 cases, meaning about two in five inmates required mental health treatment.

"Musick is not a mental health jail," Braun said in an email. "It is the responsibility of the Sheriff's Department to provide for the care and custody of incarcerated individuals who have broken criminal law. The beds at Musick are designed to be capable of accommodating inmates with minor mental health issues if needed. Those with more serious mental health issues are housed at other O.C. jail facilities."

"While inmates are in our care, the sheriff has committed to ensure they are kept safe, provided opportunities to reach mental health stability and/or sobriety if needed and have access to programs that will reduce the likelihood of recidivism upon release."

Braun said construction began on the Musick facility in August and is expected to be completed by the end of 2022. Inmates are estimated to be moved in by February 2023, she said.

The Musick expansion has been controversial for some time. The city of Irvine has fought it for decades, filing four unsuccessful lawsuits.

City leaders have been concerned with the jail's proximity to residential neighborhoods, the Great Park and Portola High School.

The problem for the city is that the jail sits on county property surrounded by Irvine and Lake Forest, so the city doesn't have authority over it.

The Irvine City Council discussed the Musick jail facility on Tuesday night after the coalition requested it. The sheriff's department also gave a presentation on the expansion at the meeting.

More than a dozen people spoke at public comments, including members of the coalition. They urged the council to do whatever they could to stop the expansion.

After City Atty. Jeffrey

Melching told the council that the city doesn't have land-use authority over the jail, Vice Mayor Tammy Kim said it sounded like the city had exhausted all legal exercises.

"So we've just hit a roadblock as it relates to any legal remedies that the city can have," Kim said. "So it looks like there's probably not much else that we can do at this point."

Councilman Anthony Kuo echoed that view.

"We neither have authority over the fiscal portions, nor do we have land-use authority," he said. "So we're not really making a decision tonight and one that would carry any weight."

Both Kim and Councilman Larry Agran spoke out against the expansion project.

"While I appreciate the intersection of public health and public safety, at the end of the day, we're really looking at a public health issue that is trying to be solved through public-safety measures," Kim said. "The concern that I have is that I don't believe that we can jail our way out of solving, what is in essence, a public health crisis."

Agran said that the city should be engaging with county Supervisor Don Wagner, who represents Irvine, about the expansion. Mayor Farrah Khan agreed with him.

"This has been a 25-year journey," said Agran, who has served on the council periodically since the late 1970s. "Although I appreciate the presentation that was made today by representatives from the Sheriff's Department, the fact of the matter is, this is a massive incarceration institution."

"...Our entire country has been on a path of mass incarceration as a solution to unlawful immigration problems, as a solution to social problems of all kinds. In this case, with mental illness. I think there's substantial data that putting nonviolent people in situations of jails of this sort really causes people to go crazy."

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## PASSPORT

Continued from page R1

"So as you know, President Biden said while there is no national passport requirement, we have to produce something for Americans when they encounter a situation where there is a required proof of vaccination," Chau said. "The question has always been, can the government do that? The answer now is no. But can the private side do that? The answer's yes. I am not an attorney, but that's what I was told, that a business has every right to do whatever they want to do to make their environment safe."

Chau also pointed out that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Federal Bureau of Investigation warned the public about fake vaccination cards. A digital vaccination record could be more reliable.

"I want to stress that the only purpose of that is to give people a record that they've been vaccinated," Chau said of the digital record.

Board Chairman Andrew Do said the county's use of the word "passport" was "probably inartful."

Do and Supervisor Don Wagner voiced their opposition to government-issued vaccine passports in a press release on Monday night.

"This is America," Do said in the press release. "Under no circumstances would or should we ever need a passport to live and get services within our community."

Wagner, who has opposed the state's efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19, echoed those thoughts in the press release.

"The science has not justified the indiscriminate lockdowns from the state," Wagner said. "I also see no justification for a vaccine passport. It is no business of the government telling free citizens where they may travel, and government



Photo by BBP West

**A WOMAN RECEIVES** a first-round COVID-19 vaccine in January at an Orange County distribution center on the Disneyland lot in Anaheim.

must never discriminate against its citizens because of their vaccine status."

At the meeting, supervisors tried to communicate to the concerned public that the county's pilot program is not a government-regulated passport.

"We've got 200 people who want to speak about this, and they are concerned that at some point we are going to say, without the digital equivalent of this card or something else, you're not going to be able to travel in Orange County, you're not going to be able to come in to Orange County and leave Orange County, you're not going to be able to go to a grocery store," Wagner said at the meeting. "That is not what we're doing, that is not what you're intending, and you will resist that if ever somebody proposes it to you, right?" Wagner asked Chau.

"That's correct," Chau said.

New Supervisor Katrina Foley, who replaced Michelle Steel, pointed to the misunderstanding of some of the public.

"I am concerned that we are allowing a small minority of individuals who have been calling our offices all day yesterday and that still started ringing this morning ... to dictate how we serve the community's health," Foley said.

Following the supervisors' comments, residents took turns castigating the board and the proposed program for hours. Many claimed there was no pandemic and vaccines lack efficacy. A Bible verse was read aloud and the power of God was referenced more than once. Terms like "communism" and "fascism" were used.

"Let me be nothing if not clear, you can call this any damn thing you want ... we all know it when we see it, it is a digital vaccine passport," said resident Leigh Dundas. "... It is the beginning and the end of Nazi Germany. It is show me your papers please before you pass. It is an electronic dog collar. And since when did Orange County become the People's Republic of China?"

"Orange County residents, as Americans, should not be forced to receive an experimental vaccine and then be required to share that private health information just to live a normal life," said resident Steve Rivera. "We all have the right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, as stated in the Declaration of Independence. The freedom of movement and travel cannot be infringed because it is a fundamental right."

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**For an application or more information, call (714) 974-9699 or visit [octa.net/toc](http://octa.net/toc). Applications are due May 2, 2021. Please note that this is a volunteer position and no monetary compensation will be paid to committee members.**

**The First District** consists of the cities of Garden Grove, Santa Ana, Westminster, portions of Fountain Valley, and the unincorporated community of Midway City.

**The Second District** consists of the cities of Costa Mesa, Cypress, Huntington Beach, La Palma, Los Alamitos, Newport Beach, Seal Beach, Stanton, and portions of Buena Park and Fountain Valley. It also includes the unincorporated areas of Rossmore, Sunset Beach, and Surfside.

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**The Fifth District** consists of the cities of Aliso Viejo, Dana Point, Laguna Beach, Laguna Hills, Laguna Niguel, Laguna Woods, Lake Forest, Mission Viejo, Rancho Santa Margarita, San Clemente, San Juan Capistrano, portions of Irvine, and the unincorporated communities of Coto de Caza, Ladera Ranch, Las Flores, and Wagon Wheel.

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