

C.M.'s Measure K at the center of debate

As campaign funds roll in, critics and supporters sound off on an initiative to ease development restrictions in the city.

BY SARA CARDINE

Less than two weeks before Election Day, talk about Costa Mesa's Measure K — which, depending on one's viewpoint, will create a pathway to more housing or open the floodgates to large-scale developments and their negative impacts — is heating up.

And the campaign contributions, particularly from those who stand to gain from easing development restrictions, have been flowing in.

The measure doesn't deliver any mandates on housing. Instead, it exempts certain commercial and industrial corridors from an existing rule requiring voter approval of projects that exceed the parameters of the city's General Plan and zoning code.

Now, those who helped craft that 2016 rule — Measure Y — are leading opposition against the new Measure K. They are squaring off against others who believe Measure Y has stymied good development and the city's ability to plan for state-mandated housing, a requirement Costa Mesa hasn't met.

YES ON K STANCE

Supporters of the new ballot initiative say it would allow officials to make the zoning amendments necessary to meet state requirements and revitalize certain areas, like Harbor and Newport boulevards.

Byron de Arakal, a real estate consultant and chair of the Costa Mesa Planning Commission, supports Measure K, which he said will steer the city away from "ballot box planning" and let elected officials and residents plan for intelligent growth.

In the last six years, no major

See *Measure*, page A2



THE HITCHHIKER ghosts made famous by the Haunted Mansion from Disneyland are part of Mike and Dawn Stanley's Halloween Haunted Mansion in Aliso Viejo. The display takes place nightly from 6 to 9 at 8 Oak Ridge Circle in Aliso Viejo through Oct. 31.

A family's spooky pastime

Each year, the Stanleys and their neighbors in Aliso Viejo create a home haunt for Halloween. This year's theme is Disney's Haunted Mansion.

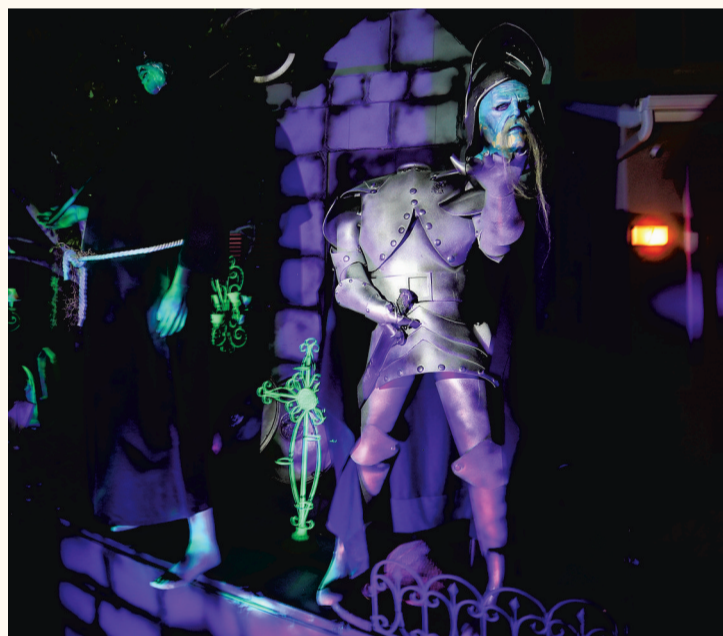
BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

The three hitchhiking ghosts of Disneyland's Haunted Mansion attraction are always looking for a ride out of the mausoleum. This year, they may have found it.

Ezra Beane, Professor Phineas Plump and Gus are part of the Haunted Mansion-themed home haunt at the Stanley family home in Aliso Viejo.

"We do Halloween yard displays. We have been doing it for many years," said homeowner and father, Mike Stanley. "We started doing Disney themes last year, and

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A HEADLESS KNIGHT stands guard at Mike and Dawn Stanley's Halloween Haunted Mansion in Aliso Viejo. The Stanley family creates a different display at their home every Halloween.

Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

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500 miles down, just 500 more to go

Kenneth Mullinix, 65, finished 500 miles of ocean swimming — a goal accumulated over the last few summers.

BY LILLY NGUYEN

It might have taken two additional summers, but Newport Beach resident Kenneth Mullinix finally hit the 500-mile goal for ocean swimming on Thursday — a far cry from his initial goal of just 100 miles back in 2020.

Mullinix, 65, is a stroke survivor.

Doctors told him in 2016 that he survived a mid- to moderate-sized stroke. Mullinix said the experience left him unable to speak, walk or form sentences for a year.

He started exercising again at the advice of his doctors, and in 2019 he set the goal of an accumulated 100 miles in the ocean after he realized he'd reached a total of 65 miles — at just under 2 miles per outing — without actively trying during his first year back in the water.



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

KENNETH MULLINIX, 65, stands on the sand after the last 2 miles of 500 miles of ocean swimming on Wednesday in Newport Beach.

In 2020, he managed to accumulate 120 miles. He swam a total of about 133 miles in 2021, and this year he completed about 183 — for a combined total of about 500 miles swimming between Newport Pier and the jetty closest to 58th Street. He said while he often informs lifeguards about where he's headed,

it's not unusual for him to see other people also supporting his efforts from the beach.

Sometimes, it's fellow survivors.

"It's just amazing to me that people will see me when I get back out of the water, and as I'm

See *Miles*, page A2



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

YUTA SANO, senior assistant general manager, second from left, works with staff at the new Sports Basement in Fountain Valley.

Sports Basement sets up shop in Fountain Valley

BY MATT SZABO

The company name may not be all that familiar in Orange County.

The location certainly is, though.

"All I have to say is, 'We're the old Fry's,'" Sports Basement

Southern California regional director Eden Slezin said. "And people are like, 'Oh, I know that.'"

Sports Basement, a sports and outdoors retailer, is set to open its first Southern Califor-

See *Shop*, page A5

GIRLS INC. ALUMNA JOINS BOARD TO GIVE BACK

Daisy Esparza says the invitation to join the board exemplifies how the program continues to support women like her.

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Daisy Esparza began working with Girls Inc. as an eighth-grader.

"I heard about Girls Inc. through the Eureka! Summer Camp," said Esparza. "From then on I was involved in many Girls Inc. programs."

Girls Inc. works in partnership with schools and at its own centers to focus on the development of the whole girl. The organization, with an Orange County office in Santa Ana, does this by providing mentorships, creating a pro-girl environment and offering evidence-based programming, like the Eureka! Summer Camp that focuses on STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) classes or the College Bound program.

"Girls Inc. helped me build a roadmap for my future," said Esparza. "It gave me an opportunity to learn more about career options I didn't even know about, or an opportunity to experience things that I wouldn't have otherwise been able to if I hadn't gone through the programming."

Esparza earned a B.S. bachelor of science in business administration from UC Berkeley and was the first in her family to graduate from college. Today, she is a Project Management Professional financial and operational risk manager at management consulting company Deloitte, where she leads the diversity, equity and inclusion initiative for new hires. And Girls Inc. is still a part of her life. She currently serves on its board of directors.

"Now as a board member, I feel even more empowered and inspired," said Esparza. "It's an honor, and I hope to see more Girls Inc. girls on the board."



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

DAISY ESPARZA has been involved in Girls Inc.'s programs since middle school in 2007. The programs helped her earn a B.S. in business administration from UC Berkeley.

Lucy Santana-Ornelas, chief executive officer at Girls Inc. of Orange County, contacted Esparza about the opening on the board.

"Lucy reached out with a phone call, and she said there was opportunity to have me on the board," said Esparza. "She said they wanted a different perspective, the Girls Inc. girl perspective."

It is a perspective Esparza thinks can be helpful. Now as a working professional, Esparza hopes she can be an example to other girls on their own journey.

As a Girls Inc. alumna, she hopes to demonstrate that she is still learning and growing.

"I want to use my platform to be able to tell my story, but to be able to say Girls Inc. is for everyone. It sounds cheesy, but if I was able to go through the program and come out strong, smart and bold," Esparza said, quoting the Girls Inc. tagline. "I am sure every girl will need this."

Esparza credits much of her path to the tools Girls Inc. provided, and not necessarily tangible ones.

"It really comes down to social

and emotional learning," said Esparza. "Girls Inc. gave me the space to be myself, to feel comfortable in my own skin, to be confident. As a young girl, it was really important to grow in an environment like that, because even though I was getting good grades or whatever it is, I still needed that support."

The programs at Girls Inc. are offered for girls ages 5 to 18 at over 50 outreach sites each year and range from academic tutoring, economic literacy, college and career planning to age-appropriate education on healthy

body image and prevention of personal violence and substance abuse.

While joining the board is a way for Esparza to give back to the organization that gave her so much, she also sees it as another way Girls Inc. is still supporting her.

"This is still them helping me, which is crazy," Esparza said. "I am giving back, but they are giving more back to me."

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MILES

Continued from page A1

walking down the beach, they'll say, 'I've seen you out there,' or talk about how they've also had strokes or cancer," Mullinix said. "You kind of feel like the community's getting behind you and that helps motivate you."

"I knew I'd still keep going [after 2020]. When you're out there in the ocean, every day is different. There's the currents, the tides, the fog — I went through probably five or six wetsuits."

He said his next goal is to reach an accumulated 1,000 miles by the time he's 70. A lofty goal, Mullinix said, but he's turning 66 in three months. He admitted it was still a pretty unlikely stretch

but said he felt it was important to have goals lying ahead of him.

"If I can walk 3 miles today, maybe I can walk 5 miles tomorrow. You've got to think in that mindset all the time," Mullinix said.

He swims throughout the summer season. He was in the water shortly after Tropical Storm Kay in September, when he got caught in a rip current that pulled him out farther to sea than he normally swims.

It took him nearly an hour to swim back to shore.

"I'm lucky that I haven't had any major life-threatening things, but every day you go out there, something can happen," Mullinix said.

Mullinix said he feels it's important to continue working

toward preventive body maintenance, adding that while he considered himself an athlete for most of his life, he still had a stroke.

"The main point is to just keep going, whatever you accomplish. Hey, this old guy almost died five years ago and it's through exercise that I'm even able to walk and talk today," he said. "Get off the couch, go exercise, start walking around the neighborhood, whatever it is. You don't have to swim 500 miles, but get out there and clean it up. Why wait until you have a health emergency? People don't take the time."

"You'd better find time or you're going to be in trouble."

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Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

KENNETH MULLINIX swims next to several surfers in Newport Beach in 2020. The stroke survivor has logged 500 miles in the water so far.

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MEASURE

Continued from page A1

building plans have been submitted in Costa Mesa, mainly because developers are reluctant to invest in the costly and uncertain process of an election. That needs to change, de Arakal said Thursday.

"[Measure K] is not repealing Measure Y," he said. "It's allowing the City Council to exercise its normal planning and land use authority, which does include public review."

Attorney Jenn Tanaka moved to Costa Mesa shortly after Measure Y was approved and was shocked to learn the city was among a handful of municipalities, including Redondo Beach and Santa Monica, with slow-growth initiatives.

A Republican and property rights advocate who's spoken in favor of Measure K at recent City Council meetings, she says she's skeptical of putting zoning matters before the public.

"There are a lot of people in the city who don't have time to be poring over maps, regulations and theories about growth," Tanaka said. "It seems unfair to ask voters to do that."

NO ON K VIEWPOINT

Leading the charge against Measure K is a group of residents organized under the political action committee "Costa Mesa First," which put Measure Y on the ballot 2016.

Cynthia McDonald said when she and others collected more than 7,000 signatures in support of the initiative, residents were displeased with what they saw as ill-planned and too-large developments being built in the wrong places.

One such project, she said, was the Baker Block apartments, a \$75-million, 240-unit complex built at the intersection of Baker and Pullman streets before Measure Y took effect.

"There are no services nearby, and it's just this big, monolithic thing that basically goes right out to the sidewalk," McDonald said Thursday. "We got some park fees out of [the developers], but we certainly never got a park. I don't know where that money went."

She said Measure Y arose from citizen concerns about the motives of then-City Council members and what seemed like a lack of transparency.

"We said, let's take a look at this and see if we can get money out of these projects and get a com-



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

COSTA MESA resident Cynthia McDonald stands near Baker Block, a luxury apartment complex in Costa Mesa she believes was poorly planned by a pro-development City Council in 2014.

munity benefit," McDonald added. "So, am I eager now to shed that right to vote? No."

Sandy Genis, a land planner and City Council member from 1988 to 1996 and from 2012 to 2020, said citizens typically have little recourse for opposing a project. They can either sue or pursue a ballot referendum, a daunting task. Measure Y, she said, gives citizens a say in the city's growth.

"If you have a good project, the voters will approve it. If you have a garbage barge of a project, voters won't approve it," Genis reasoned. "That seems fair. But Measure K pretty much guts that."

MEASURE K'S COFFERS

While Measure K does not require developers to create more housing or affordable units, it does ease restrictions in certain

areas so projects can be more easily brought forward.

That's why Beverly Hills developer Rose Equities has chipped in \$49,500 to a political action committee called "Costa Mesa 4 Everyone, Yes on Measure K."

The PAC had received \$101,100 in monetary contributions as of Oct. 22, compared to the \$6,096 collected by "Costa Mesa First," disclosure documents indicate.

Rose Equities is the developer of One Metro West, a 15.23-acre mixed use development with 1,057 apartments planned for an area north of the 405 Freeway.

Council members last year approved a 25-year development agreement that offered 1.5 acres of open space, \$6 million for the city and 106 affordable housing units. That could be scuttled, however, if the project is put to a Measure Y vote and fails.

"I support the community-based effort to modify Measure Y," Rose Equities Principal Leonard Glickman said Friday, pointing out that supporting a political campaign in one's own interest is entirely legal. "Measure Y is a chokehold. It is causing a great deal of harm to the city of Costa Mesa."

See *Measure*, page A5

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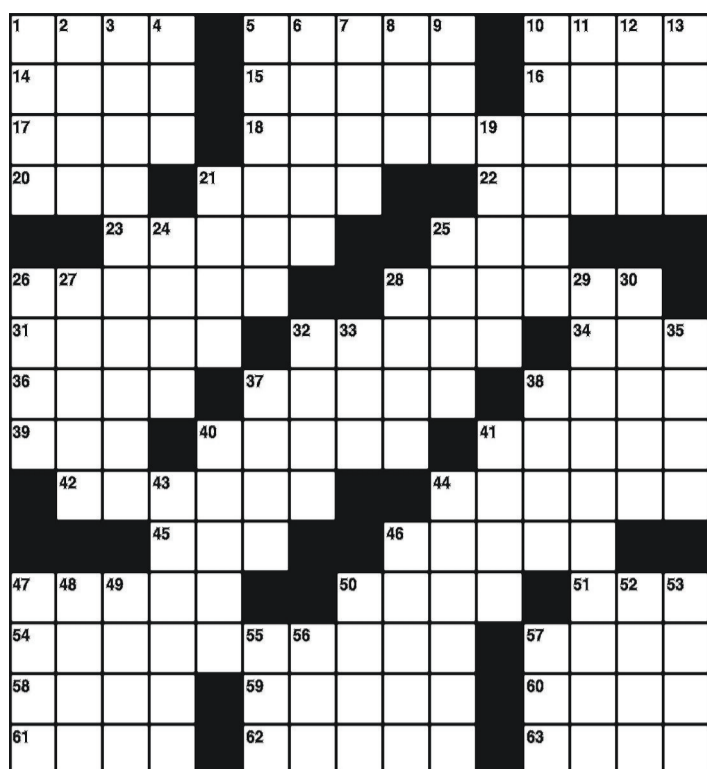
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THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Jacqueline E. Mathews

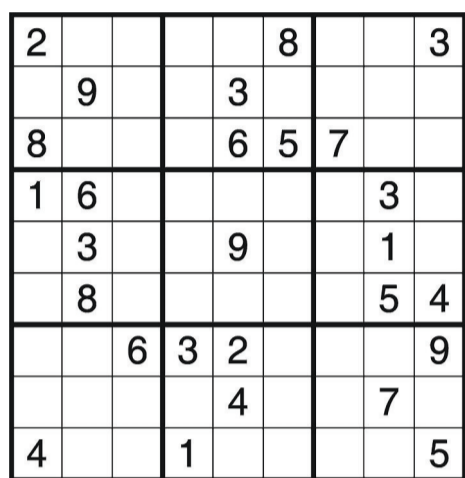


- ACROSS**
 1 Unconscious state
 5 Gladden
 10 Cut off the edges of
 14 Sneak _; approach stealthily
 15 Throw in the _; quit
 16 City in Texas
 17 Be flexible
 18 School of _; practical experience
 20 Suffix for absorb or exist
 21 Compassion
 22 Minds
 23 Dog
 25 Colorful carp
 26 Sifting devices
 28 Feisty little rooster
 31 Creek
 32 Wild kids
 34 Rotten
 36 Hideaway
 37 Group of lions
 38 Soft drink
 39 Small digit
 40 Neutral color
 41 Mark Antony or Sophia Loren
 42 Actor Borgnine
 44 Suitcase
 45 "Please Don't _ the Daisies"
 46 Refuge
 47 Poe or Bergen
 50 Roy Rogers' love
 51 As cool _ cucumber
 54 No-goodnik
 57 Still snoozing
 58 Business agreement
 59 Gallant
 60 Pleased
 61 Lively
 62 Nervous
 63 Gambles
- DOWN**

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 A6.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Rubik's invention | 8 Koppel or Turner |
| 2 _ house; realtor's event | 9 Wapiti |
| 3 U.S. state capital | 10 Petty; cheap |
| 4 Off _ on; intermittently | 11 Marathon |
| 5 Moral code | 12 Unpleasant |
| 6 Reluctant | 13 Playwright Hart |
| 7 Askew | 19 Lunchtimes |
| | 21 Frost or Kilmer |

- 24 Think _; ponder
 25 Actress Mulgrew
 26 Farm tower
 27 Ridiculous
 28 Ordered
 29 Horrendous
 30 As _ a wet hen
 32 Londoner
 33 Big _; semi
 35 Many a Scandinavian
 37 Annoying person
 38 Part of the foot
 40 Facial hair
 41 _ about; praise highly
 43 Almost
 44 Glen
 46 Monty & Arsenio
 47 Split _; hair problem
 48 Profound
 49 Toothed wheel
 50 Money owed
 52 Rump
 53 _ to; increases
 55 "Cat _ Hot Tin Roof"
 56 Took first place
 57 Bell's monogram

Tribune Media Services

MAILBAG



Raul Roa

A NUMBER of Newport Harbor High School teachers and staff express concern about claims made by a group they say wants to undermine public schools.

An open letter to the Newport-Mesa community

We are teachers and staff at Newport Harbor High School, and we are also parents of children who currently attend, who once attended or who will attend NHHS. Nine of us walked the Davidson stage as graduating Sailors, and two of us are members of multi-generational Newport-Mesa Unified School District families, dating back to the class of '44.

We write to express our outrage at the group calling themselves "Newport Mesa Uncensored." As a part of their campaign to undermine our public schools, they have baselessly equated 10 of our colleagues with being pedophiles. This brazen defamation is appalling, and we condemn the individuals behind these attacks in the strongest possible terms.

Let it be made clear: There is zero evidence of any misconduct from those who have been accused. The teachers, administrators and child psychologists who have been targeted are long-standing, well-respected, highly accomplished educators who have dedicated their professional lives to serving our community, side-by-side with us. To call them "groomers" and thus identify them as sexual predators jeopardizes their safety and the safety of their students — and tarnishes the reputation of our school.

Never in our combined 400-plus years working for Newport Mesa Unified have we seen such flagrant disregard for community standards. We recognize this stunt for exactly what it is: A hacky political hit-job designed to advance a fringe agenda.

We will not stand for it. We have kids here and we've been kids here. We trust our colleagues, period. Furthermore, we take exception to the suggestion that we would put our own children in harm's way.

Under its de facto figurehead, Bill Dunlap, "Newport Mesa Uncensored" has been complaining about our schools and attacking our teachers ever since our return from the pandemic; yet most of the group's half-dozen foot soldiers don't even have children in Newport-Mesa schools. They simply can't understand what we do.

We know how special a place Newport Harbor is. Together, as a community, for nearly a century, we have built Newport Harbor and our NMUSD schools into what they are today. This very loud minority wants to tear it all down. Do not let them succeed.

Fortunately, there's one silver lining: "Newport Mesa Uncensored" has endorsed a slate of anti-public school activists running for seats on the *nonpartisan* Newport-Mesa Unified School Board. Stay away from their candidates!

- Area 2: Reject Mills. Vote for Michelle Murphy.
 - Area 4: Reject George. Vote for Lisa Pearson.
 - Area 5: Reject Shebesta. Vote for Michelle Barto.
 - Area 7: Reject Seaburn. Vote for Ashley Anderson.
- Make it clear that the voters of Newport Beach and Costa Mesa will punish at the polls those who attack our schools.

In solidarity with all

Newport-Mesa Unified teachers, and together with all those in our community who take pride in our neighborhood schools, we thank you for reading. And for voting.

- Kelly Bourgeois**
school librarian
- John Brazelton**
science teacher
- Matt Burns**
science teacher, football coach, head surf coach, NHHS class of '94
- Amy Caulfield**
English teacher, NHHS class of '88
- Evan Chalmers**
history teacher, former football coach, former head baseball coach
- Oscar Constandse**
science teacher, football coach, NHHS class of '98
- Betsy Fisher, English teacher
- Fabiola Hemmerling**
community facilitator

- Julie Karjala**
science teacher
- Kiran Kumar**
math teacher
- Jason Lynch**
science teacher, former head water polo coach
- Megan Madden**
counselor, NHHS class of '04

- Andrew Mabry**
history teacher, head volleyball coach
- Taylor Mabry**
counselor, NHHS Class of '01
- Sarah Pilon**
culinary teacher and program director
- Gary Robinson**
history teacher, former basketball coach, NHHS class of '99

- Ross Sinclair**
history teacher, head water polo coach, head swimming coach, NHHS Class of '03
- Cathye Solliday**
special education teacher, NHHS Class of '72
- Jennifer Sonke**
workability coordinator
- Bob Torribio**
history teacher, head basketball coach, NHHS class of '95
- Tony Zeddies**
English teacher, former basketball coach

- FAITH LEADERS SUPPORT PROP. 1**
- I am the pastor at Irvine United Congregational Church and a member of Clergy for Choice, and I work with Planned Parenthood of Orange and San Bernardino Counties. Our organized group consists of faith leaders from various congregations who advocate for reproductive healthcare and education.

Despite the fact that most Californians and Americans in general support abortion rights, the United States Supreme Court earlier this year overturned a longstanding decision that protected the right to choose.

As someone who believes in religious freedom and the separation of church and state, I am particularly troubled that one religious perspective has been imposed upon others. It is more important than ever that Californians have a right to make decisions about their healthcare, the right to control their own bodies. These choices shouldn't be based on politics, nor should they be based on someone else's religious beliefs. Each person is entitled to their own

beliefs and choices.

On the current General Election ballot, California voters are asked to approve a constitutional amendment to enshrine the right to an abortion in California with Proposition 1. Proposition 1 will protect access to abortion for the most vulnerable among us, including those who have been victims of rape or incest.

We need to ensure that those who need our help the most have the opportunity to receive the care that they deserve. Please join me and Clergy for Choice and vote "yes" on Proposition 1. The deadline to vote is Tuesday, Nov. 8.

Rev. Dr. Sarah Halverson-Cano
Costa Mesa Senior Pastor Irvine United Congregational Church and 24 members of Orange County Clergy for Choice

HOPEFUL ABOUT CAFÉ
There's much to discuss in Huntington Beach. Oil slicks; wildlife preservation, homelessness and the high cost of housing are all issues that pervade Surf City and its citizenry. Might the launch of the H.B. Community Café gain cachet and lead to positive action? It's a hopeful beginning as well as a tribute to free speech and democracy.

Ben Miles
Huntington Beach

HARDY A POSITIVE FORCE FOR H.B.

While the local elections of many coastal Orange County cities have become polarized and contentious, the city of Huntington Beach takes the cake in my book pitting a four member community slate against an eight-member slate with another grab-bag slate of four others out of 18 candidates. Several, particularly first time and second time candidates with only power on their mind, have presented no solutions or policies to address their big issues of homelessness, affordable housing, crime and red tape. A City Council with four veterans departing badly needs an experienced hand at the tiller to complement the remaining three council members with only two years each of experience.

Fortunately, there is one community-oriented candidate on the ballot with more years on the council than all of the others combined and with two stints as mayor to boot. Her name is Jill Hardy. She is bright, capable, energetic and thoroughly pleasant in demeanor. She would help keep the new council grounded and moving forward in constructive directions. She has always been a positive force while on the council over the past 20 years. We need Jill Hardy on the City Council now more than ever.

Tim Geddes
Huntington Beach

HUTTON'S WORDS MADE SENSE FOR H.B.

I just want to thank Gail Hutton for her clearly laid out opinion in favor of a yes vote for Huntington Beach's Measure N ("Commentary: Measure N would clarify the role of Huntington

See *Mailbag*, page A7



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SHOP

Continued from page A1

nia location as the calendar turns to November. A ribbon-cutting ceremony is planned for Thursday.

The Bay Area fixture has 11 stores in Northern California but is now expanding into Fountain Valley, and it will indeed be taking the place of the longtime Fry's Electronics store that was situated just off the 405 Freeway.

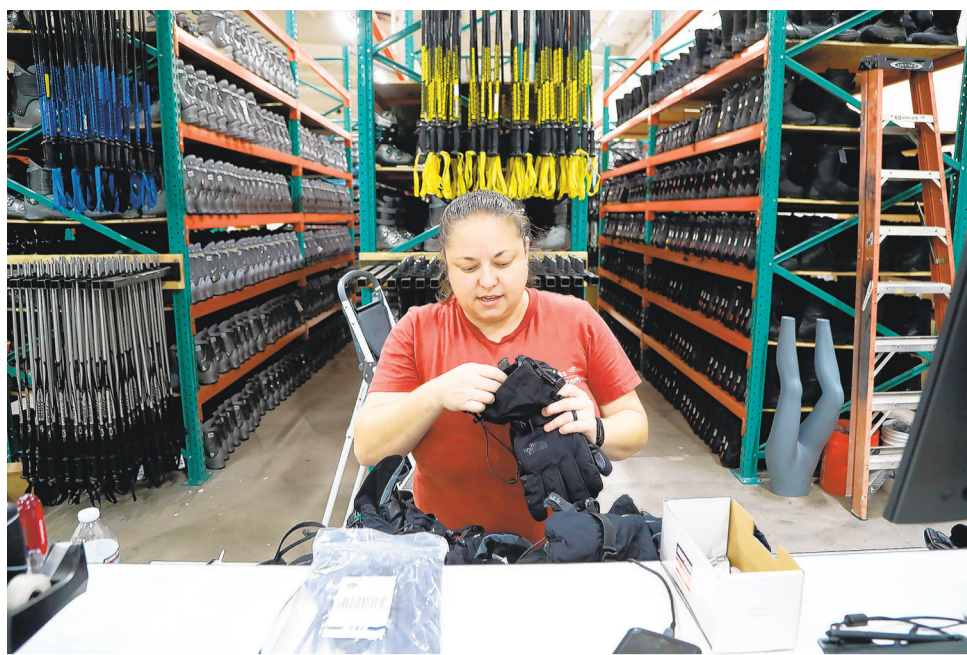
Sports Basement Orange County offers a full ski, snowboard and bike shop and rentals to match. The store owns a state-of-the-art Wintersteiger Mercury ski-tuning machine.

Also spotted along the store's walls during a tour this past week were basketballs, backpacks, gloves and myriad other sports equipment for everyone in the family. A beach section is prominently placed in the middle.

There are also couches and chairs set up for customers to just relax.

"One of our mottos is 'couches before profits,'" said Slezin, who has been with the company for 16 years. "We like to have these living room-like spaces where you can just relax. We want it to be a very pleasant shopping experience."

In the back of the 80,000



TERYN SAIN, rentals manager, unpacks and sorts out snow gloves at the Sports Basement in Fountain Valley on Wednesday. The warehouse is 80,000 square feet and fills the vacant space left by Fry's Electronics, which closed in 2021.

Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

square-foot warehouse — the only Sports Basement that's bigger is in Redwood City — is a community space with tables and chairs. It can be reserved at no charge by local businesses, schools and other groups.

A bike ride meetup could happen here, or a Boy Scout meeting, or maybe a small ski film screening.

How will Orange County consumers differ from Bay Area consumers? That's a question that piques Slezin's interest as the temperatures start to dip.

"Up north, it's very seasonal," he said. "We switch to winter and get rid of a

lot of our swimsuits. Everything just becomes more cold weather. Here, I think we're going to have to continue to highlight the summer stuff even in the winter. I can't imagine not wearing shorts and a T-shirt still every day in the middle of winter, but we'll see. It's starting to cool down a little bit, which I'm enjoying."

Fry's Electronics closed all of its stores permanently in February 2021. Slezin said that Sports Basement was interested in the large space and has talked over the years about expanding to Southern California.

Many large sporting goods stores have gone out of business in recent years, such as Sports Authority and Sport Chalet. Sports Basement seeks to be a sort of one-stop shop.

"We see that all the time," Sports Basement senior assistant general manager Yuta Sano said. "People are like, 'I came here to get my kids' soccer shin guards, but I'm here to buy a bike now.' It's a cool experience. People come back, sometimes weekly, just to see what's happening. There's a lot of things coming in and out, a lot of product always going around ... It's a fun place."

That is the vibe the company wants to portray, along with community involvement through its Basementeer Program. Through membership in the program, customers receive 10% off their purchases and 10% of the profits go back to a local non-profit of their choice.

It typically costs \$25 to join the program, but it will be free to sign up as part of the grand opening, Sports Basement Orange County senior marketer Ryan Broccolo said. Last year, the company gave more than \$1 million to local schools and charities, Slezin said. Broccolo has been estab-

lishing a company presence at community events in recent weeks, and lining up schools and beneficiaries to be added.

Sano, who has been with the company for eight years, is a member of the U.S. national triathlon team for his age group. He will be headed to Abu Dhabi for the World Triathlon Championship Finals in late November.

Before he goes, he hopes that Sports Basement can start making an impact in the area. Also in the works is a 'Grand Snow-pening' event on Dec. 3, set to feature snow company vendors, food trucks and special giveaways.

"I want to make sure that we get the right atmosphere," Sano said. "It's a special place in the North Bay for a lot of our stores and our staff. It's like a third place for a lot of people. You've got home, work and Sports Basement. Distilling down what's really important for Sports Basement and transplanting it to a new place, that's been an interesting exercise. We want to be open to what Southern California needs and what they want. We're about to find out what we need to adjust and change, and we need to be willing to do so."

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MEASURE

Continued from page A2

Rose Equities is not the only firm to support the new initiative. Campaign records show Legacy/Collier Holdings, LLC — an enterprise co-owned by the developer of a 250-unit apartment complex on Anton Boulevard — contributed \$25,000 to "Costa Mesa 4 Everyone."

Business Buyers, Inc., whose president, Manny Khoshbin, purchased the 66,652-square-foot Trinity Broadcast Network Building on Bear Street last year for \$22 million — gave \$20,000, documents show.

A RISING DEMAND FOR HOUSING

Debate over Measure K comes as Costa Mesa attempts to certify a new housing element demonstrating it can, through zoning and planning, meet state housing mandates. Officials must plan for 11,760 residential units by 2029 and have identified the zoning amendments necessary to do so.

But, like One Metro West, those amendments would trigger a Measure Y vote. And putting them before the people would create further delay when the city has already missed an Oct. 15 extended deadline for certifying its housing



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

ONE METRO WEST, a 1,057-unit residential development by Beverly Hills firm Rose Equities, pictured in a rendering, has been the only large housing project to come before the city since Measure Y was passed in 2016. Growth proponents hope to change that.

element.

That setback puts Costa Mesa at risk of punitive actions from the state, including a freezing of its ability to issue permits and by-right approval of housing projects meeting certain affordability standards that would override local control.

"We are absolutely out of compliance," said Tanaka, indicating that if Measure K does not pass, the city's non-compliance would drag on. "Measure K is doing step one of fixing a number of problems in the city."

Officials did not respond to questions about non-compliance and when a fi-

nal draft of the housing element might be certified by California's Department of Housing and Community Development. Spokesman Tony Doderro confirmed the City Council adopted the document in February and has twice submitted it for approval, although further revisions were requested.

"Measure Y has prohibited the city from making adjustments needed for the plan to be approved by the state," Doderro said Thursday, indicating the document would be submitted again "shortly."

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RIVIERA
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With its eye toward design, Rum Social is a new favorite

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Good food and good service are among the most important aspects of a successful restaurant, but award-winning designer Ken Ussenko believes ambience matters just as much.

"I think it matters really because it's always about the first few minutes, even the first few seconds, a person steps into an environment they start to judge it subliminally," said Ussenko. "They are going to react to it somehow, internally, and you will know right at the beginning how you feel, and that is the first part of your experience."

Ussenko, of Kenneth Ussenko Designs, is a partner at Rum Social in Laguna Beach, a joint venture with veteran restaurateur John Fisher.

"Even though we design about 10 restaurants a year, this is my first place, and I wanted to have the essence of my history and my trav-

A VARIETY of cocktails at Rum Social in Laguna Beach.

Photos courtesy of Rum Social



THE TREEHOUSE BAR, designed by Ken Ussenko, at Rum Social in Laguna Beach.

els around the world. There are so many California-style restaurant concepts, why don't we just take [guests] to another exotic place, another beach somewhere else?" Ussenko said. "I wanted to take [guests] on a tropical escape."

Since the island hideaway on South Coast Highway opened in March in the old Watermarc space, it has enjoyed buzz among tourists and locals alike, which Ussenko attributes to his consideration for the neighborhood diner.

"I wanted the locals of Laguna Beach to feel like this is a place that is a little different," Ussenko said. "I tried to get feedback from locals."

The dining room is full of subtle nods to the tiki culture of 1930s Hollywood in

understated ways, with pink velvet booths, for example, and tropical wallpaper that forgoes bright colors for elegant black and white.

The crown jewel of the restaurant is the treehouse bar, which overlooks the courtyard of Peppertree Lane. Rum Social's beverage program takes inspiration from the Caribbean and Pacific Islands, and Ussenko reflects those environments in the upper level.

"In the restaurant experience before ours, no one really went up upstairs to sit down to eat," Ussenko said. "I can create a different energy up there. Everyone really likes that whole journey up there."

Ussenko's attention to style earned the restaurant

a nomination for Restaurant Global Award in the International Hotel and Property Awards 2022.

"Every year I submit one or two projects that we design," said Ussenko. "Rum Social was nominated in the area of California Restaurants. That was exciting for us, after putting so much time and thought into it."

With Ussenko handling the ambience, the good

food part is left to executive chef Nick Herrera, who recently stepped into the role after being part of Rum Social's opening team.

"About three weeks ago, I was promoted to be the executive chef. But I was here since day one, when it was still all concrete," said Herrera. "I developed the very first menu with the original chef."

Herrera's new dinner menu features ginger rum-glazed plantains, hamachi tostada with avocado puree and seasonal dishes, like a pumpkin curry soup served in a roasted pumpkin.

"I am very much vegetable forward and seafood focused, and that is the energy we want to bring to Rum Social," said Herrera. "I really want to make it a tropical escape, introducing a lot louder sauces, more vibrant colors; that was my motive behind the menu we developed here."

Aside from dinner, Rum Social offers weekend brunch from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. with more island-inspired dishes like French Caribbean toast topped with guava syrup, banana anglaise and fresh berries.

Whether guests come in for brunch, dinner or a cocktail in the treehouse bar, the Rum Social team hopes they feel transported, even just for a little while.

"I would want guests to feel like they went on a different journey, not just with great vibes and visual stimulation but also with the food that they have tasted and the drinks they've had," Ussenko said. "I want them to get all of that from the sight, the sounds, the feel, the taste and the touch."

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Students get creative with painted parking spaces

Marina and Ocean View high school seniors have turned their parking spaces into colorful, personalized art pieces.

BY ANDREW TURNER

From school projects to themed dances, the creative side of a student body unveils itself in myriad ways.

With students eager to express themselves upon a return to campus, some local schools have taken to allowing seniors to do just that right outside their front doors.

Several of these pavement artworks have been spotted at Marina and Ocean View high schools, both in the Huntington Beach Union High School District, this academic year.

Marina introduced the option last school year, and the idea had such popularity that members of the Class of 2023 who showed interest in the personalized spaces had their name entered into a raffle.

Along a row in front of the main office, vibrant, painted spaces serve to brighten one's day. Beyond the rite of passage of driving oneself to school, the students enjoy a sense of ownership with a reserved parking spot.

The paintings showcase a wide array of interests and personalities — some incorporated floral patterns, while one student whimsically painted cow hide into their slot with the words, "Holy cow! It's senior year."

Kiersten Magula, an art enthusiast who said she plans to go to cosmetology school, featured Winnie the Pooh flying away with a red balloon in her parking spot.

"There was a lot of meaning behind it," Magula said. "My middle school teacher ... she was really there for me all through middle school, and she made sure that I did everything, kind of really helped me through school. Her favorite character is Winnie the Pooh, so that is why that is there."

"Then I have the little saying, 'It's only up from here,' because senior year, it's kind of a cute thing, so I just put that next to it."

Magula added that she was



Photos by Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

ART-FILLED PARKING spaces adorn the lot in front of Marina High School in Huntington Beach.



COLORFUL PARKING spaces outside Ocean View High School on Thursday.

able to select a parking spot next to a childhood friend, and she had other friends help her paint her spot so it could be completed in one day.

Remarkably, the artworks have remained intact despite being run over day after day, a thought that worried Ocean View senior Savannah Bernal.

"I was really scared for that," Bernal said. "I was like, 'No, it's going to get messed up.' We're right next to Home Depot, so we went, and we got a couple gallons of paint that were for outside, so they're really holding up. They're doing a great job, and it's just super fun to get to look at it. We got the right paint, so we were able to keep it throughout the year."

Bernal, a member of both ASB and the cheer squad, advocated with school staff to give the artful parking spaces the green light at Ocean View this year.

Students were charged a fee on top of their school parking permit to personalize their spaces. Both Marina and Ocean View have utilized the additional charge as an ASB fundraiser.

"It goes into our ASB fund, and at Ocean View High School, our ASB fund pretty much pays for everything," Sara Spilsbury, the activities director at the school, said. "It pays for kids who don't have the money to participate in athletics, but we don't say 'no' to them. We find ways to help make it open for everyone. When we do fundraisers on our campus, it really is for the benefit of all."

Interested students had to submit a mock proposal, have it approved by school staff, and then largely adhere to the original drawing when recreating it in the parking lot.

"I wanted to participate in this activity to make the most out of my senior year," Ocean View senior Mackenzie King, whose space features a tiara, said. "These past four years have been tough with COVID and all of our activities being canceled. Painting senior spots was a new activity for seniors, so essentially, we were making history. Pulling in to my spot every morning makes me feel at home here at Ocean View."

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MAILBAG

Continued from page A4

Beach's elected city attorney," Daily Pilot, Oct. 20). Having worked for another Orange County city myself for 23 years, I often interacted with the city attorney there, which is why I could not understand Huntington Beach's city attorney pursuing any litigation or objectives other than those directed by the City Council. Ms. Hutton, a former Huntington Beach city attorney herself, correctly points out that rather than being a "power grab," as shown on posters all over town, Measure N is trying to explicitly enshrine the obvious in the City Charter going forward: the City Council is, and should be, the city attorney's client as is the case for every other city in this state. I hope her opinion piece succeeds in convincing more people to vote yes on Measure N and that Mr. Gates chooses to run for City Council in the future as his actions more naturally align with being a politician than the city attorney.

Shawn Thompson
Huntington Beach

CHARACTER COUNTS

In the final days before the election, voters are being hit with volumes of mailers. Residents are tired of them, and the senders have gone too far when what they send is as hurtful, offensive and false as these mailers were towards Tom Miller and Joy Brenner. It sometimes feels like the senders are trying to "bait you" into a response. I will not be going down that rabbit hole.

I understand that politics can get ugly and that is the downside of the political season, but the senders have overlooked that these mailers are not just seen by voters but children who are exposed to this material.

It is not difficult to research who is sending these mailers, nor is it difficult to connect these senders to candidates. Dave Ellis is the owner of the Safe Neighborhoods PAC that sent one of the mailers and John Saunders contributed \$25,000 to

that PAC. Dave Ellis and John Saunders both made contributions to the campaigns of Joe Stapleton and Lauren Kleiman. This information is available to the public. Safe Neighborhoods PAC (ID#1450946) background can be found on Form 410 filed with the California Secretary of State. Campaign disclosure statements are found on form 460 filed with FPPC and can be accessed online through the Newport Beach website: <https://public.net-file.com/pub2/?AID=cnb>.

Are these the people voters want on the Newport Beach City Council?

I've heard it said that "experience matters" in this campaign. I think CHARACTER COUNTS! I'm voting for candidates that demonstrate citizenship, integrity, trust, caring and fairness.

My vote goes to Tom Miller, Jim Mosher, Robyn Grant and Joy Brenner.

Gary Cruz
Newport Beach

PORTER ADS GET OLD

Katie Porter's television ads are as frequent as those of the billionaire running for mayor of Los Angeles, which indicates major funding by others. She has, according to her ads, three main goals, the first of which is guaranteeing abortion rights. There is no chance that California, which she represents in Congress will ever restrict the right to abortions, and the Supreme Court in their recent ruling opined that it's a matter left to the voters in each state to determine the degree of restrictions if any.

The second goal is to halt price gouging by petroleum companies. California's summer blend and taxes and regulations add a substantial premium to our price compared to other states. Every time prices escalate the legislature conducts an investigation, which consistently fails to confirm gouging.

The third goal is to bring down drug prices by the government setting the price for drugs under patent. With the cost of development of the drug, the extensive and costly trials,

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and the time required for approval, price setting by the government will discourage innovation and further drug development.

Finally, please check your 401k and IRA accounts performance this year and determine which party is better to provide retirement security.

Pete Bordas
Newport Beach

A BIG SPENDER

In the Newport Beach City Council election, Tom Miller says he is not trying to buy the election. Really? He has put more than \$525,000 and counting of his own money in the race. He is on TV all over Orange County. He has clearly decided to "spend whatever it takes" to satisfy his wish to become an elected official. I'm sorry, nobody should be allowed to lead our community by simply buying a seat on the council. The fact that he is self-funding his campaign only focuses attention on his lack of broad appeal.

Tom Miller says he is "not a politician," but recently he attempted to pretend to be the Republican choice when the party unanimously endorsed his opponent and made the extraordinary step of recommending *against* voting for Miller.

I know my vote is not for sale and I will be supporting the qualified candidate, Joe Stapleton.

Andrea McElroy
Newport Beach

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PASTIME

Continued from page A1

we change it up every year. This year we did the Haunted Mansion.”

Mike and his youngest son, Wyatt, began the tradition of creating detailed Halloween displays when Wyatt, now 22, was a little boy.

“We’ve been doing this pretty much my whole life,” said Wyatt.

Wyatt attended the Orange County School of the Arts and advanced his set-design skills and background in animatronics, which has made for more elaborate displays each year. Last year’s display had a Pirates of the Caribbean theme, complete with a pirate ship.

“I put together all the characters, I sculpted the faces, I made all the frames,” said Wyatt. “It has been pretty fun.”

The front of the Stanley Haus, as the family refers to it, has the façade of stately columns and oxidized wrought-iron found at the Haunted Mansion attraction. Besides the hitchhiking ghost, spectators will also find familiar haunts like the clairvoyant Madame Leota in her crystal ball, the singing busts known as the Phantom Five and the Hatbox Ghost, who is known to lose his head.

“The fun part is now our neighbors want to be in-



DAWN AND MIKE STANLEY stand in front of their home designed and decorated for Halloween.

involved,” said Mike.

Mike and Wyatt choose a theme in January and start sketching and planning the scenes they would like their display to feature. They start building in February, and by midsummer, they share what they have planned with any neighbors in the cul-de-sac interested in participating.

“Then we will build it for them on the lawn. This year is the most we’ve ever had, eight of 10 houses participated.”

Buildout starts in September with a target opening day of Oct. 1. Neighborhood kids get in on the fun by helping in small ways, like painting.

“Everybody has a job,”

said wife and mother, Dawn Stanley. “It brings the community together, and any kid that wants a job, we will find them a job.”

This year, after the display started drawing crowds, Dawn suggested the family bring in a charity component. Each night, the family sells snacks, cof-

fee and hot chocolate, with the proceeds benefiting the Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment Support Group. The organization raises funds for materials needed by the 5th Marines, wherever they are deployed, or their families in need of assistance at Camp Pendleton and nearby housing areas. “My Dad was a 5th Mar-

ine out of Dana Point; he is Purple Heart recipient,” said Dawn. “We’ve always given to that group anyway so that is why we choose them.”

The family has the support of the city and community, with a 30-day permit paid for by the Aliso Viejo City Council, and the Home Depot and Lowe’s Home Improvement sponsoring this year’s theme.

“We get to have fun together as a family and truly provide something for the community that is fun and free,” said Mike. “Everybody comes out and they are smiling. We get a lot out of that.”

The display even received the approval of legendary Disney Imagineer Bob Gurr, who visited the home this month. Gurr is responsible for the design of many attractions at Disneyland, including the Doom Buggy cars at Disneyland’s Haunted Mansion.

“For him to come out and look at each scene,” said Mike, “it was a dream come true.”

The home haunt is on display nightly from 6 to 9 at 8 Oak Ridge Circle in Aliso Viejo until Oct. 31 — which leads to one of the top five questions the Stanley family gets each year: What do they have planned for Christmas?

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THE HATBOX GHOST is part of Mike and Dawn Stanley’s Halloween Haunted Mansion in Aliso Viejo.



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer



MADAME LEOTA in her crystal ball is one of the spooky sights at Mike and Dawn Stanley’s Halloween Haunted Mansion in Aliso Viejo.

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