

Daily Pilot

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Photos by Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

GLORIA CROCKETT, right, chief executive and president of Make-A-Wish Orange County & the Inland Empire, shows the visiting athletes around on Friday.

High school players step up to bat for Make-A-Wish

BY MATT SZABO

The Make-A-Wish mission is personal for Edison High incoming senior baseball player Brandon Winokur.

Winokur had a personal connection with family friend Brooke Powers. He was best friends with her older brother, Gavin, and spent a lot of time at their family's home.

Brooke had cancer, and had a Make-A-Wish unicorn party several years ago on the waterfront in Newport Beach.

"That was really special for her," Winokur said. "She had a really neat personality and invited a lot of people. I got to give her a hug at the party, and I got to have face-painting unicorns painted on me. It was a really, really special moment for me, so it's a big deal for

See **Bat**, page A3



HIGH SCHOOL

2022 All-American Classic baseball players, right to left, Gavin Grahovac, Ralph Velazquez, Trent Caraway, Eric Bitonti and Brandon Winokur go through their gift bags after a celebratory tour of the Make-A-Wish Orange County & the Inland Empire headquarters on Friday in Irvine.

COVID funds to clear college debts

\$4.5 million will go to 3 Coast Community College District schools, wiping away debt from nearly 15,000 students.

BY SARA CARDINE

Coast Community College District students who incurred outstanding debt at Orange Coast, Golden West and Coastline colleges between spring 2020 and spring 2022 were given a boost this month when they learned all debts have been forgiven.

District officials allocated nearly \$4.5 million in federal COVID-19 assistance, through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund, to pay off and forgive the debt of approximately 15,000 students across the three campuses.

The move will allow students to reenroll in classes by effectively removing "registration holds" placed on their accounts due to nonpayment of funds greater than \$25. Resident fees for California community colleges are \$46 per unit, and the fall semester begins Aug. 26.

While the average debt amount being erased by the one-time funding allocation is \$284, Coast District officials report more than 9,000 of students had outstanding debts of just \$150 or less.

"During the pandemic many students were affected financially and weren't able to make these payments," Marlene Drinkwine, vice chancellor of finance and administrative services, said Friday. "This funding removes that obstacle by forgiving the outstanding debt, so they can reenroll."

The forgiveness also applies to students who may have secured some form of financial aid,

See **Debts**, page A2

At least 3 ducks with severed bills found at Mile Square Park

BY SARA CARDINE

Wildlife officials are seeking the public's help in locating information or a possible suspect, after three ducks were discovered at Fountain Valley's Mile Square Regional Park without their bills and either died or had to be euthanized.

Debbie McGuire, executive director of the Wetlands and Wildlife Care Center in Huntington Beach reported Thursday two mallards had been brought into the facility with severed bills and in an emaciated state, one on July 31 and the other on Aug. 13.

Found near a pond area at the north end of the 600-acre park, near its border with Edinger Avenue, both waterfowl appeared to be starving, according to McGuire, who shared photos of the ducks with the public.

"The first duck came in on a Sunday. It was so weak it couldn't fly," she said. "We had to put it down due to the sever-

ity of the wound. Then I got a call last Saturday about a second duck."

While speaking with TV news crews outside the Huntington Beach rescue center, McGuire said she was approached by a volunteer who said she'd found a duck with a similar injury at Mile Square Park about a month earlier.

She took the bird home and tried to feed it, with the intention of bringing it to the Wetlands and Wildlife Care Center the next morning, but it died overnight.

"It's very unsettling and upsetting for people to see these injuries," McGuire said, explaining a duck's bill is composed of keratin, bone and living skin tissue and is a blood source. A severed bill is essentially an amputation. "I've tried to rationalize what it could be [that's removing the bills] — but it keeps coming back that it was hu-

See **Ducks**, page A2



SCHOOL RESOURCE Officer Cornelius Ashton directs a couple of students to his class as staff and elementary students return for in-person learning at Top of the World elementary as part of the Laguna Beach Unified School District's hybrid learning model.

Don Leach | Staff Photographer

Officials urge caution from drivers as Laguna Beach students return to class

BY ANDREW TURNER

Laguna Beach residents are used to traffic — of both the walking and vehicular variety — but city officials are calling on drivers to exercise caution around town with students set to return to the classroom next week.

Monday marks the first day of classes for the Laguna Beach Unified School District, and Laguna Beach Police Department personnel will be stationed at schools in the morning to monitor traffic and ensure the safety of school children and the community, Laguna Beach Police Lt. Cornelius

Ashton said.

"The Laguna Beach Police Department asks drivers to slow down and use caution around school zones," Ashton said in a statement. "Please use the designated drop-off/pick-up areas and

See **School**, page A2

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DEBTS

Continued from page A1

grants, scholarships or work study assistance but, for whatever reason, withdrew from classes and were consequently required to pay that money back.

Drinkwine said the \$4.5 million allocation was distributed so that Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa received \$1.8 million while Golden West College in Huntington Beach was given \$1.5 million and \$1.1 million went to Fountain Valley's Coastline College.

The debt forgiveness was automatic, and students did not have to sign up or take any action to trigger the repayment.

"There was a very broad announcement made and students were informed directly," Drinkwine said. "The goal was to be able to reengage with these former students. It was im-



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

A SIGN AT Golden West College welcomes students back to campus in 2021. Earlier this month, Coast Community College District officials announced all outstanding student debt incurred between spring 2020 and spring 2022 would be forgiven using federal COVID-19 funds.

portant to us to inform them they no longer had this debt as an obstacle to reenrollment."

Trustees reviewed the details of the debt-relief rollout in a meeting Wednesday. Drinkwine

said staff plans to provide an update on the impact of the program on reenrollment at a Sept. 21 meeting.

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SCHOOL

Continued from page A1

be patient, as some students may be new to the school."

Most classes begin at 7:55 a.m. at El Morro and Top of the World elementary schools.

At Thurston Middle School, first period begins at 8:40 a.m. Monday through Thursday and at 9:10 a.m. on Friday.

Regular class schedules start at 8:30 a.m. at Laguna

Beach High School. Some students may arrive early at the middle school and high school for zero period courses.

A fatal vehicle strike occurred in an intersection at South Coast Highway and Pearl Street just last week.

For families who do not want their children to walk to and from school and are unable to drive them there, LBUSD Supt. Jason Vioria said the district offers busing for students who are in kindergarten

up to eighth grade. He said the district also has a partnership with the city to provide transportation services for high school students.

The district busing route has 135 designated bus stops. Although not all bus stops will be in use at all times, the transportation system services Laguna Beach as well as some neighborhoods in Aliso Viejo and Crystal Cove.

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DUCKS

Continued from page A1

mans."

It is unknown whether the bird's bills were cut off or broken. McGuire indicated in one case the mallard's sinus cavities had been exposed by the severance.

"If they tried to eat or drink, they could inadvertently get water up in there and aspirate," she said. "They have a lot of feeling

[in their bills]. It would have been very, very painful. There would have been some blood."

Mile Square Park is operated by Orange County Parks. Sheriff's spokesman Sgt. Todd Hylton said Friday the investigation is being overseen by officers with the county's Animal Control Services.

McGuire said she's communicated with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services, the California Department of Fish & Wildlife, since mallards

are a protected migratory bird. She advises anyone who actively witnesses an incident of animal abuse in progress to call 911.

Anyone who discovers an injured duck is encouraged to contact O.C. Animal Care at (714) 935-6848. Witnesses may also call CDFW's CalTIP line at (888) 334-2258 to report an instance of suspected abuse or poaching.

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THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

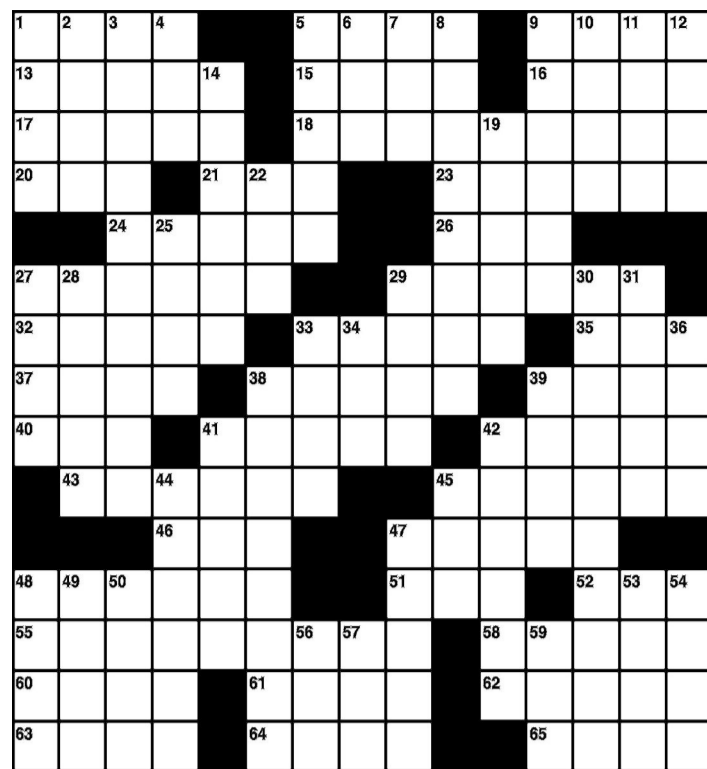
By Jacqueline E. Mathews

ACROSS

- 1 Bric-a-__
- 5 Preschool recitation
- 9 Experts
- 13 Comes to shore
- 15 Bona fide
- 16 Family tree member
- 17 Mexican Indian
- 18 Rock from outer space
- 20 Arthur, for one
- 21 Have debts
- 23 Prior to today
- 24 Punctured
- 26 "Peter _"
- 27 Kitchen appliances
- 29 Strength of spirit
- 32 Freeway divisions
- 33 Terrify
- 35 Pausing syllables
- 37 Neat as _
- 38 Emotional reaction
- 39 Sensible
- 40 TV's "_ , Dear"
- 41 Reddish horses
- 42 Bulgaria's capital
- 43 Mosey along
- 45 One of Santa's reindeer
- 46 Pasture mama
- 47 Verboten
- 48 Black eye
- 51 "Much _ About Nothing"
- 52 _ Beta Kappa
- 55 Tall terriers
- 58 _ off; diminish
- 60 Crop pest
- 61 Tidy
- 62 Command to Fido
- 63 Griffey Sr. & Griffey Jr.
- 64 _ off; left suddenly
- 65 Slips up

DOWN

- 27 Massacre
- 28 Records
- 29 Defaces
- 30 Destructive insect
- 31 Pyle or Els
- 33 Marine mammal
- 34 Cheap container
- 36 Burn
- 38 Long-suffering
- 39 Average
- 41 Manned the oars
- 42 Wooden shoes
- 44 Extends a subscription
- 45 Barack, to Sasha
- 47 One of the five senses
- 48 Quarterback's woe
- 49 Put on the payroll
- 50 Common metal
- 53 Listen
- 54 Vexes
- 56 Zodiac sign
- 57 Where to find the stapes
- 59 Hairy as an _



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.

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

For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A4.

- 1 Spill the beans
- 2 Knock down a building
- 3 Opponent
- 4 B's followers
- 5 Carrying a gun
- 6 Quilting party
- 7 Popular pet
- 8 Baby's pajamas
- 9 Ma or pa
- 10 Destroy
- 11 Climb _; mount
- 12 One-dish meal
- 14 Makes points
- 19 Give a speech
- 22 Guitarist
- Montgomery
- 25 Kiln

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THE CROWD | B.W. COOK

The great outdoors serves as backdrop for 3 local charitable events

The second annual Festival of OC Chefs, an evening of fabulous food under balmy summer skies, welcomed some 400 charitable souls supporting the educational and spiritual programs of KidWorks Santa Ana.

The tony Newport Beach Country Club on Coast Highway welcomed 34 local "kings of the kitchen" to share their culinary talents with the excited crowd mingling and tasting.

Top-shelf wineries including Duckhorn, Crown Point, Schramsberg, Three Sticks and Chateau Montelena poured generously, complementing the extravagant food fare.

Co-chaired by Lisa and Cory Adler, Tracy and Kevin Murphy, and Kyle and David Team, the evening raised an impressive \$820,000.

A few of the many local chefs making this possible were event host chef Graeme Blair from Newport Beach Country Club joining Pascal Olhats, Baja Shellfish; Jacob Davis, Balboa Bay Resort and Club; Victor Soto, Cannery Seafood of the Pacific; Bert Agor Jr., Crestavilla and Andy Huynh, Nobu Newport Beach. Returning this year from Loews Vanderbilt Nashville, was chef Charly Houegban.

Special guests spotted in the crowd supporting KidWorks were Linda Maggard, Joey Booth, Karin and Jeff Garell, Chase Watson, Sue and Nick Willett, Leticia and Pat Merrell and Camille and Tim Strader Jr.

KidWorks CEO David Benevides was on hand to thank the generous patrons. Flashback Heart Attack had everyone dancing into the dark of night.

A HOLE IN ONE FOR KIDS IN NEED

A whopping sum of half a million dollars was raised at the 40th annual Childhelp Rich Saul Memorial Golf Classic held at the Monarch Beach Golf Links, Dana Point.

The 10th anniversary tournament was co-chaired by Childhelp am-



CORY AND LISA ADLER, from left, Tracy and Kevin Murphy, Kyle and David Team raise \$820,000 for KidWorks Santa Ana during the second annual Festival of OC Chefs held at the Newport Beach Country Club.

Reza Allabakhshi



Ann Chatillon

THE RICH SAUL Memorial Golf Classic tournament in support of Childhelp welcomes participant golfers Ben McGloin, John Stone, Gape Pate and John Van Rossem.

bassadors Debra Violette and Cathie Caporaso, who worked with Eileen Saul to coordinate the golf outing in memory of her late husband.

Over the past 15 years, during which the golf

event has teed off 10 times, \$6 million has been raised to assist Childhelp programs supporting children who found themselves at the final rung on the child welfare ladder.

Making the largest pos-

sible were platinum title sponsors Jacquie and Michael Casey, in addition to grand support from donors including Justin Wheeler and the Wheeler Family Trust, Matt Fletcher of Conner,

Fletcher & Hedenkamp LLP, and Jim Violette of Fidelity National Financial.

Also front and center for Childhelp were the Cleo A. Bluth Charitable Foundation, O'Connell Family Foundation and Frank Suryan from Lyon Living, among many others.

Taking home the winning golf trophies were Sam Perricone Jr., Chris Justine Boster, Tyler Smith and Kolin Ozonian. A gala dinner followed the day of golf. Among the dinner crowd were Childhelp donors and committee members Susan Hill, Patti and Jim Edwards, Patricia Ford, Christine Johnson, Joyce Simon and Diana and Chris Miner.

'PROTECT OUR PLANNED PARENTHOOD' EVENT HELD

Sherman Library & Gardens in Corona del Mar hosted a recent Sunday evening gathering of about 250 local supporters of the Community Action Fund of Planned Parenthood of Orange & San Bernardino Counties.

The Community Action Fund serves as the politi-

cal arm of local Planned Parenthood chapters. In response to the recent Supreme Court ruling overturning Roe vs. Wade, members of the committee and guests came together to raise funds in support of political action with the purpose of defeating anti-abortion initiatives across the country. Monies raised will go to assist campaign costs of pro-choice candidates running for political office in the region.

The dinner event was co-chaired by Cyd Swerdlow, Keiko Sakamoto-Witte, Sophie Mashayedi and Teddie Ray. Organizers billed the summer event as "Protect Our Planned Parenthood."

Attendees were requested to wear all white clothing, a nod to the women suffragette movement of the early 20th century. By the evening's end, \$255,000 was raised for the Action Fund, according to organizers.

B.W. COOK is editor of the Bay Window, the official publication of the Balboa Bay Club in Newport Beach.



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

MELISSA GALLAGHER, vice president of Mission Delivery, shares stories of the Make-A-Wish children on Friday.

seeing different ways that people can engage with Make-A-Wish. To help increase awareness, I think it's huge. These young men have learned a lot more about us, and we get to learn about what they're doing and follow their journey to a certain degree."

Velazquez has raised more than \$4,000 already, which ranks him near the top of the leaderboard.

"It's great to raise money for kids in need and kids that want to have a wish," he said. "It makes your day a lot better when you know you're helping out some-

one. "I'm not like Gavin [Grahovac, who has raised nearly \$7,000], but I'm at \$4,000," he added with a smile. "Grandparents help you out."

Velazquez, who hit the eventual game-winning home run that launched Huntington Beach to a 2-0 CIF SoCal Regional Division I title game victory over JSerra last spring, said he will be playing catcher, first base and third base for the Oilers this season.

Winokur plays shortstop in high school, and center field in travel ball.

The opportunity to play at a Major League ballpark is not lost on them, but raising money for children with critical wishes makes it even better.

"I'm glad I have a chance to be a part of Perfect Game," Winokur said. "It's something, moving forward, that I want to be a part of for the rest of my life."

As for the game itself? "It's going to be the biggest event of the year, on TV

with all of the best players in the country," Velazquez said. "It will be sweet. Hopefully I get a knock or two in there."

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BAT

Continued from page A1

me to be a part of this."

Brooke passed away, but her memory and the cause have stayed close to Winokur's heart.

On Friday morning, Winokur and Huntington Beach High incoming senior Ralph Velazquez were two of five baseball players invited to tour the Make-A-Wish Orange County & the Inland Empire headquarters in Irvine.

Make-A-Wish executives gave Winokur, Velazquez, Eric Bitonti of Aquinas High, Trent Caraway of JSerra and Gavin Grahovac of Villa Park a tour around the facility. The quintet are among 60 of the top high school baseball players in the country selected to play in the 2022 All-American Baseball Classic game, to be held Aug. 28 at Chase Field

in Phoenix.

The game will air live on ESPN at 5 p.m. Pacific time. Proceeds from the game and related events will benefit Make-A-Wish and PG Cares Grow the Game Fund.

Additionally, the high school players have been encouraged to start their own peer-to-peer fundraising pages to help grant even more wishes for children in Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

Make-A-Wish Orange County & the Inland Empire president and chief executive Gloria Crockett said the organization is expected to close its fiscal year on Aug. 31 with 249 wishes granted.

"It's amazing to have this opportunity to have youth give back to youth," Crockett said. "Having them here for the tour also provides us as a staff team the energy of

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GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

Estancia tops Los Amigos in home opener

BY ANDREW TURNER

Estancia girls' volleyball coach Alejandro de Mendoza mentioned Thursday that he believes one of the great things about high school sports is the building of relationships.

The Newport-Mesa Unified School District will not have students return for classes until Monday, but already, the Eagles have been forming a bond on the court.

They are enjoying some success, too.

Senior outside hitter Joanna Santasuosso had a match-high six kills, as the Eagles defeated the visiting Lobos 25-10, 25-14, 25-14 in nonleague play.

Santasuosso said she has known senior setter Makena Ray, the Estancia captain, her whole life and has been playing volleyball with her since they were seventh-graders at TeWinkle Middle School. It showed when Ray looked to set Santasuosso at the left pin early and often in the opening set.

"It definitely helps to be friends with the setter," de Mendoza said with a chuckle. "I think any volleyball player can agree with that. They have a really strong trust, and Jo-

anna is going to definitely carry a lot of the load for us this year."

The Eagles also excelled in starting the point, racking up 19 service aces. Senior libero Souheeilah Vargas had a team-leading six aces.

A wall separating one athletic court from another in the Estancia gym left a few feet in the middle for people to get from one to the other. Vargas began her service motion in the opening, some 20 feet behind the service line.

"I serve pretty deep," said Vargas. She added that she would regularly send serves long when she was told to serve with her feet near the line as a beginner.

"I feel like I have a powerful swing, that I need to go really deep in order to get that full potential of getting an ace," Vargas said.

Mailee Blanchard contributed four aces for Estancia (2-0), which began its season with a straight-sets victory over Segerstrom on Tuesday. Kayden Vazquez and Leah Perez each had three aces. Leila Sanchez had five kills, and Ray handed out 11 assists.

"I think we're just being really successful because a good portion of our team is



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

ESTANCIA'S JOANNA SANTASUOSSO hits at the net during a game against Los Amigos on Thursday. The senior had six kills to help the Eagles sweep the Lobos, 25-10, 25-14, 25-14.

seniors, so they really want to finish with a really good last year," Santasuosso said. "Everyone on the team is super hardworking, and everyone gets along well with each other. We just click."

Valeria Olague had three kills and an ace for Los Amigos, which was playing its first match of the sea-

son. The Lobos will have their home opener on Tuesday against Santa Ana.

Faith Montano also had two kills for the Lobos, while Sophia Sotelo and Laisha Hernandez had two aces and a kill apiece. Mimososa Nguyen chipped in with five assists.

Much like de Mendoza, Los Amigos coach Valerie Herndon said she believes high school athletics has a huge part to play in the development of students, especially after pandemic-induced distance learning.

"The team bonding that they've been doing, I think, is a huge benefit that they haven't had for the last couple years," Herndon said. "I think athletics itself is building confidence and building personality inside of you, character. For these guys, that's key, and I try to instill in them volleyball is important, but it's also just as important to develop as a good person and a good, strong, independent woman."

More girls' volleyball matches from Thursday:

Pacifica Christian Orange County 3, Calvary Chapel 0: Senior middle blocker Rebecca Penjoyan had six kills and five aces to lead the Tritons over the Eagles 25-19, 25-21, 25-20 in a nonleague match on the road.

Sophomore outside hitter Colleen O'Callaghan had six kills, sophomore opposite Chara Wondercheck added five kills, and freshman setter Addie Roberson chipped in with four kills and four aces.

Pacifica Christian (2-0) will travel to take on Cerritos Valley Christian in a nonleague match on Tuesday.

Huntington Beach 3, Lakewood 1: Kylie Leopard and Haylee LaFontaine had 14 kills apiece to help send the visiting Oilers over the Lancers 25-20, 25-19, 16-25, 25-20 in a nonleague match on Thursday.

Huntington Beach (3-0)

will face Torrance in the semifinals of the Lakewood Molten Classic on Saturday at 3 p.m. at Lakewood Artesia High. The other semi-finalists are Cypress and Lakewood.

The Oilers defeated Rancho Cucamonga Los Osos and Los Angeles Notre Dame Academy in pool play last weekend to reach the semifinals.

San Clemente 3, Laguna Beach 2: The Tritons rallied past the Breakers 22-25, 23-25, 25-18, 27-25, 15-11 on Thursday in a nonleague match at San Clemente High.

Senior outside hitter Eva Travis had 27 kills to lead Laguna Beach (1-1), which earned a five-set win over Dana Hills in its season opener. Travis transferred from Aliso Niguel, which won the CIF Southern Section Division 2 title over Huntington Beach last season.

Sophomore outside hitter Kyra Zaengle had 20 kills for the Breakers, and senior libero Brooklyn Yeland produced 20 digs.

Irvine 3, Costa Mesa 0: The visiting Mustangs were swept 25-19, 25-16, 25-11 on Thursday in a nonleague match.

Costa Mesa (1-1) plays at Segerstrom on Tuesday.

Newport Harbor 3, Woodbridge 0: The host Sailors picked up a 25-11, 25-12, 25-7 sweep of the Warriors Thursday in nonleague play.

Anabel Kotzakov had 11 kills for Newport Harbor (2-0). Laine Briggs produced seven kills and six aces, and Malia Thorne added seven kills and two blocks. Tegan Glenn chipped in with eight assists, three kills and two aces.

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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS

B	R	A	C		A	B	C	S		P	R	O	S		
L	A	N	D	S		R	E	A	L		A	U	N	T	
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9	6	2	4	5	3	1	8	7
4	3	1	8	6	7	5	2	9
7	5	8	2	1	9	6	3	4
8	1	7	6	9	4	3	5	2
2	9	3	5	7	8	4	6	1
6	4	5	1	3	2	7	9	8
3	8	9	7	4	6	2	1	5
5	7	6	9	2	1	8	4	3
1	2	4	3	8	5	9	7	6

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