

Daily Pilot

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Laguna won't send tax ideas to ballot

City Council members opt against asking voters to consider a transient occupancy tax increase or a business license tax.

BY ANDREW TURNER

As Laguna Beach grapples with significant visitor impacts, city officials and community stakeholders have been putting their heads together to consider ways to offset some of the associated costs.

A transient occupancy tax increase and a business license tax were presented to the City Council on Tuesday night, but the panel did not take action on either.

It would have taken a two-thirds vote of the council to submit either tax to the voters in November. City staffers identified Aug. 9 as the deadline to submit ballot text and the city attorney's impartial analysis.

The proposals included an increase from 12% to 13% for the transient occupancy tax, also known as a hotel bed tax. A staff report indicated a 1% increase could result in \$1.75 million in additional revenue in the first year, but there were concerns

See **Tax**, page A3

Costa Mesa agrees to explore OCPA

Council members make move toward potential feasibility study of joining power authority despite some skepticism.

BY SARA CARDINE

Costa Mesa has agreed to release data on the city's electricity usage to the Orange County Power Authority, so the agency can determine whether the city might join a community choice energy program designed to bolster renewability and lower costs.

But some remain skeptical about the beleaguered joint powers authority which, since its formation in 2020, has lost two major members, experienced a turnover in leadership and drawn scrutiny over its contracting practices and the transparency of its operations.

OCPA Chief Executive Joe Mosca in a July 16 meeting of the Costa Mesa City Council pitched officials on the potential benefits

See **OCPA**, page A4

ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



JP Westerbeck

HUNTINGTON BEACH PLACES SECOND IN SURF CITY PASSING TOURNAMENT PAGE A4



Photos by James Carbone

URBAN WORKSHOP member Rostam Keyoumarsi of Huntington Beach, works on his project building a satar in Costa Mesa last December. Urban Workshop is one of the largest and most successful do-it-yourself workshop and makerspaces in North America.

Urban Workshop builds on its decade of success

BY MATT SZABO

The question that greets visitors to Urban Workshop makerspace in Costa Mesa is simple. "What will you make?" quizzes a sign above the front doors, along with the logo of a light bulb going off in someone's head.

In a decade's time, the answer is quite a lot.

Urban Workshop, nestled near John Wayne Airport, celebrated its 10th anniversary with an event on July 13.

The 28,000-square-foot space is Orange County's largest do-it-yourself makerspace and workshop.

Urban Workshop founder and chief executive Steven Trindade said the business has had more than 4,300 members in the last decade, with member businesses generating about \$170 million in revenue for the local economy.

There have been nearly 12,000 adult students and more than 4,000 youth who have taken

See **Builds**, page A4



URBAN WORKSHOP members use some of the highest caliber of tools in the metal shop, left, and in the wood shop, right, last December.

Newport mayor talks local issues over cup of joe

Will O'Neill plans to hold one more casual chat with interested community members in late August.

BY SUSAN HOFFMAN

Around 30 people gathered on Wednesday morning at the outdoor dining patio of Haute Cakes Caffe in Newport Beach where Newport Beach Mayor Will O'Neill hosted his second Coffee With the Mayor event.

The casual environment afforded an air of approachability, where members of the community felt comfortable bringing questions and grievances to the mayor.

"I really appreciate his connection with people and to have these coffees," said Corona del Mar resident, Carol Nielsen.

The proliferation of speeding e-bikes was among concerns raised by the residents, along with crime, including burglaries.

"I just know as someone who lives here that in the last couple of years there has been a higher crime rate, such as Chilean [burglary rings]," said one resident who asked not to be identified.

Another resident brought up concerns about undocumented immigrants entering the New-



Susan Hoffman

NEWPORT BEACH Mayor Will O'Neill speaks with residents during Coffee With the Mayor, held Wednesday at Haute Cakes Caffe. He plans another similar event on Aug. 28.

See **Mayor**, page A3

DNA testing leads to ID of victim of '09 killing, a missing Nevada teen

BY CITY NEWS SERVICE

A teenage girl who was strangled then dumped in Irvine and set on fire nearly 15 years ago has been identified, police said Thursday.

The victim was identified as 14-year-old Marcia Shirree Thomas, who was reported missing out of Reno, Nev., police said.

"The Irvine Police Department has been committed to this case since 2009," Irvine Police Chief Michael Kent said in a statement. "Marcia's family remains in our thoughts during this difficult time. We appreciate the agencies that have assisted in providing crucial information to support the case and the family."

Authorities managed to identify the victim through DNA tests, police said. One of the defendants in the case, Gabino Baldivia-Guzman, recently went on trial for the Sept. 5, 2009, killing, but jurors deadlocked 11-1 for guilt, and he will go on trial again at a future date.

His brother, 38-year-old Zenaïdo Baldivia-Guzman, was convicted Nov. 15, 2022, and was sentenced in April of last year to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Zenaïdo Baldivia-Guzman was previously tried in 2016, but it ended in a mistrial when jurors deadlocked 11-1 in favor of guilt on the first-degree murder charge.

Zenaïdo Baldivia-Guzman killed the victim, while his brother is suspected of helping dispose of the body, according to prosecutors.

The body was found in the parking lot of a business at 1851 Kettering

Street in Irvine, where an employee heading into work spotted it, according to former Senior Deputy Dist. Atty. Robert Goodkin, who is now an Orange County Superior Court judge. The victim did not have any personal effects on her, but she appeared to be in her 20s and was about 6 feet tall and weighed 150 pounds.

According to a trial brief filed last month in Gabino Baldivia-Guzman's case, Senior Deputy Dist. Atty. Harris Siddiq said investigators suspected the victim was in her early 20s.

The case went unsolved for 14 months until genetic material collected from the victim's left hand matched the DNA of Zenaïdo Baldivia-Guzman, who had provided a genetic sample to resolve a misdemeanor domestic violence case in which he choked his girlfriend and threw her 9-year-old son against a wall when he tried to intervene, Goodkin wrote in court papers.

Irvine police placed the brothers under surveillance and arrested them following a traffic stop in November 2010, Goodkin said. Zenaïdo Baldivia-Guzman initially told police he knew nothing about a murder and then said he was too drunk at the time of the incident to remember, Goodkin said.

When confronted with evidence, he "admitted certain things," Goodkin said in his opening statement of the trial.

The two brothers picked up the victim in a high-prostitution area of Santa Ana at First Street and Harbor Boulevard the night of Sept. 4, 2009, Goodkin said.

"The evidence will

show you [the defendant] was hiding in the back of the van and she doesn't see him," Goodkin said.

When the victim noticed Zenaïdo Baldivia-Guzman in the back of the van, while the defendant's brother was driving, she, "starts screaming, 'Let me out of this van,'" Goodkin said. "She doesn't want to be in a van with two guys. That wasn't part of the deal."

The defendant pulled her into the back of the van as she shouted for help, Goodkin said. As she fought back, the defendant "hits her in the face and hits her hard," Goodkin said, adding, "he hits her till she's quiet."

The defendant admitted that he "squeezed a little bit" around her neck, but evidence shows the victim was strangled, Goodkin said.

"She didn't die from blunt force trauma to the face," the prosecutor said.

The brothers drove around for about 90 minutes before settling on a secluded place in an industrial area of Irvine to dump the body, Goodkin said.

The two brothers, who were in the auto detailing business, had gasoline in the van that Gabino Baldivia-Guzman allegedly used to help ignite the body, the prosecutor said.

"There was no soot in her lungs," indicating that the victim was already dead when she was set afire, Goodkin said.

Zenaïdo Baldivia-Guzman also wrote a letter of apology to the family, which is a common tactic by police to solicit a confession.

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THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

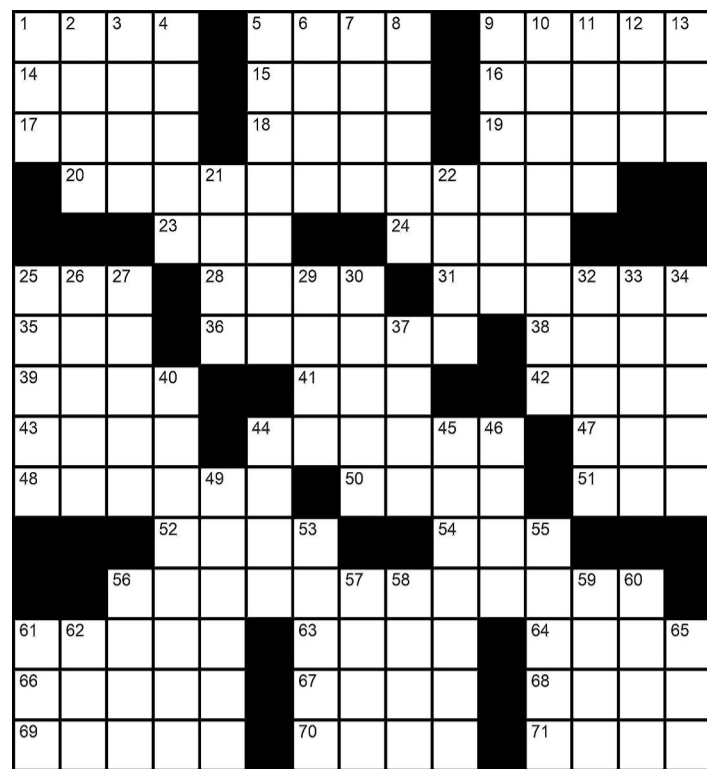
By Stella Zawistowski

ACROSS

- 1 Slender
- 5 Inclined platform
- 9 Parts to play
- 14 Lack of difficulty
- 15 Laptop brand
- 16 Occurrence
- 17 Pine or poplar
- 18 Six-__ highway
- 19 Shabby-looking
- 20 Capri pants: 2 wds.
- 23 __ Lanka
- 24 Parachute material
- 25 Sedan, e.g.
- 28 Wiggly fish
- 31 Tiny hamburger
- 35 Eggs, medically
- 36 Natives of China or Japan
- 38 People waiting
- 39 Chain __ (type of armor)
- 41 In olden days
- 42 Pulldown muscles, for short
- 43 Pint-sized
- 44 Dog varieties
- 47 Allow
- 48 Actress Milano
- 50 Minor mistake
- 51 Fourth-year students: Abbr.
- 52 "__ is the last straw!"
- 54 Was benched
- 56 Western Conference WNBA team: 2 wds.
- 61 Smell awful
- 63 Hard to find
- 64 Made a bow
- 66 Blender setting
- 67 Element in hemoglobin
- 68 Purple berry
- 69 Gives a meal to
- 70 Historian's study
- 71 Tons

DOWN

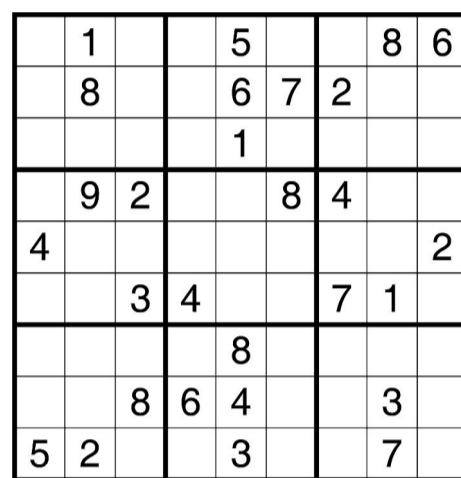
- 1 Vietnamese



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 A4.

- 22 Snake's sound
- 25 Pause punctuation
- 26 Be of use to
- 27 Wet, as weather
- 29 One who spreads falsehoods
- 30 Wise people
- 32 Clock parts
- 33 Put in
- 34 Takes five
- 37 "The First __"
- 40 Lent an ear
- 44 Fisherman's supply
- 45 Minority SCOTUS opinion
- 46 Expectorated
- 49 Milk drinks
- 53 Get naked
- 55 Sum
- 56 Title for a king
- 57 "__ Croft: Tomb Raider"
- 58 Greek love god
- 59 Puerto __
- 60 No-no for vegetarians
- 61 Banana Boat rating: Abbr.
- 62 Monday follower: Abbr.
- 65 Trash-talk

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12:59

Los Angeles Times TimesOC



California State Parks seasonal lifeguard Sierra Fockler discovered a 14-inch Pacific football fish around 2:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 13, near the lifeguard station located at Crystal Cove State Park in Orange County. It's the second such case of the fish washing ashore over the last three years. (Courtesy of California State Parks)

Good morning. It's Wednesday, Oct. 25. I'm Carol Cormaci, bringing you this week's [TimesOC newsletter](#) with a look at the latest local news and events.

Watch where you're stepping on O.C.'s famed sands, because you may encounter a rare specimen of marine life. One, in fact, that has very sharp teeth.

That's what happened on a recent afternoon to lifeguard Sierra Fockler, who found a spooky-looking black angler fish, specifically a Pacific football fish, while she was walking near the lifeguard headquarters building on Moro Beach, located within Crystal Cove State Park.

