

Project hangs sexual violence out to dry

Hosted at local colleges by Waymakers, the Clothesline Project aims to empower survivors of sexual assault.

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Colorful T-shirts hanging on a clothesline in the main quad at Fullerton College looked festive from afar, but as students got closer, they were met with a somber message.

"You made me afraid to go to school at age 13," one blue T-shirt read.

"You were my teacher. That did not give you the right," a black T-shirt stated.

The T-shirts are part of an impactful installation hosted by the nonprofit Waymakers for sexual assault awareness month, recognized in April.

"The Clothesline Project is a display made by survivors," said Vanessa Reyna, program coordinator at Waymakers.


Defined as "sexual activity when consent is not obtained or freely given," sexual violence is common, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. More than half of women and almost one in three men have experienced sexual violence in their lifetimes, and one in four women and roughly one in 26 men have experienced completed



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

STUDENTS Emmy Gomez, left, and Cristine Phillips observe T-shirts on display as part of the Waymakers' Clothesline Project at Fullerton College on April 18. The T-shirts are part of an installation hosted by the nonprofit Waymakers spreading a powerful message against sexual assault.

See **Project**, page A2



UCI Health

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Models used for illustrative purposes.

UCI Health gives sneak peek at all-electric hospital

Groundbreaking for the campus took place in 2021. Construction is ongoing, and the medical center is expected to be in full operation in 2025.

BY LILLY NGUYEN

Before plans were developed for an acute medical center at UC Irvine in 2019, the team behind it already knew they wanted to make the new hospital all-electric, according to Joe Brothman, facilities and general services director for UCI Health.

"We have robust sustainability and energy conservation goals that both UCI Health and the University of California system has established. We're trying to meet our own established goals and be a progressive organization," Brothman said. "As a whole, hospitals and health-care is a very large contributor as an aggregate to greenhouse gas emissions as our operations are very energy intensive."

"Operating rooms and medical facilities themselves, due to their regulatory requirements, are usually operating 24 hours a day, 365 days a year," he continued. "They use a lot of energy and resources and, as an industry, we need to recognize that and find ways to reduce that, as we are an industry in the business of healing people."

"If our operations are contributing to negative health externalities, especially disproportionately in underserved populations that have historically had negative health effects because of energy, we're not fulfilling our mission."

The 144-bed hospital, which broke ground in November

See **Hospital**, page A10



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

CONSTRUCTION OF the acute medical center on the UCI Medical Center Irvine-Newport campus continued on Friday.



CAST MEMBER Liv Mabilog rehearses a scene Tuesday as Regina George for the upcoming production of Estancia High's "Mean Girls."

Photos by Don Leach Staff Photographer

Estancia High's 'Mean Girls' is set to play on a surrogate stage

BY SARA CARDINE

Estancia High School's Drama Department will bring the music next week, when it opens a production of "Mean Girls"—the first spring musical to be staged since 2019 — in Costa Mesa High School's performing arts complex.

The show debuts Thursday at 7 p.m. with repeat evening performances on Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m., followed by a 2 p.m. matinee on Sunday.

For many of the players, rehearsals for the show marked their first time performing in a much larger venue than the one at their home school, which has been promised a commensurate theater for the last two decades.

But for a handful of underclassmen, it won't be the last. Newport-Mesa Unified School District officials are nearly ready to break ground on a \$42-million complex at Estancia anticipated to be completed by the end of next year. Construction staging at the site began earlier this month.

Once finished, the complex will include a 350-seat main theater,



MEMBERS of Estancia High's Drama Department rehearse a scene Tuesday for the upcoming production of "Mean Girls."

about 100 more seats than the current theater, a black box theater along with classrooms, a dressing room and staging areas.

"We're really excited, especially seeing it being closed off now, like it's coming, it's actually happening," said Estancia instructor and drama director Amber Marroquin.

"It will be a big transition whenever it comes, but it's something I think we'll be ready for."

In the 2021-22 school year, as the COVID-19 pandemic raged on, enrollment in the Drama Department dwindled to about seven

See **Stage**, page A10

Compassion above and beyond the call of duty

BY ERIC LICAS

When dispatchers summoned Costa Mesa Police Officer Orlando Lopez to investigate a death one evening in July, he found a woman in her 30s grieving the sudden, unexpected death of her father. The man who died was in his 60s. He had been under doctor's order to avoid strenuous activity but had agreed to help a friend tidy up when he collapsed in her garage, according to Kristen Nemes, a volunteer with the Trauma Intervention Program of Orange County who was with them that day.

The man's daughter "lost it, understandably, given the circumstances," Lopez said during an interview Thursday.

By the time Nemes and fellow TIP of O.C. volunteer Bonnie Brewster arrived, the woman was weeping in a heap on the garage floor. At times she would reach out to touch her father's body and tighten her grip, clinging to any part of him she still could in that moment. She was, by all rational observation, inconsolable.

Brewster and Nemes said in situations like these, officers typically leave to handle other matters after completing their investigation, and people specifically tasked to help others manage grief like TIP volunteers stay behind. But Lopez decided he needed to be there.

"I know at the end of the day, me saying words isn't enough," Lopez said. "I have to show it."

He knelt down, placed a hand on the woman's shoulder and occasionally whispered comforting words to her, Brewster and Nemes said. While the volunteers found a sheet to hold up and shield the scene from prying eyes, Lopez gave her a bottle of water from her car that she used to wash off a small amount of blood from her hands.

Tension existed between her

and the woman who lived at the home, so Lopez made sure the two gave each other space. When mortuary officials arrived, he helped walk the grieving daughter's husband through paperwork that had to be sorted out.

"At one point he looked up at me and the other volunteer with me and just said, 'Step forward,'" Nemes said Wednesday. "So we do as we're told and he walks up to us, then swats this huge spider that had been coming down on a web from the ceiling that was about to land on us."

The amount of care Lopez provided to every person involved in one of the worst days a family can experience stood out to the TIP of O.C. volunteers. It's the reason the organization decided to include him among 20 honorees at its Heroes with Heart awards ceremony taking place Thursday evening at the Irvine Marriott. The first responders from throughout the county are being recognized for works of compassion amid crisis.

The nonprofit will be highlighting Newport Beach Det. Cynthia Carter's efforts through 2022 as the department's former homeless liaison officer. She worked that detail for three years, and during that time she has seen about 50 people she formed lasting bonds with transition from life on the street to some form of permanent housing. She has also helped guide many others to drug or mental health counseling, shelter and other avenues of support.

None of that would have been possible without the backing of her department and collaboration with TIP of O.C., the Orange County Health Care Agency, outreach groups like City Net and Be Well OC as well as many other organizations, Carter told the Daily Pilot. She believes her main contribution was coordinating all of those groups.

"Because we were all kind of



Eric Licas

BIOMOLECULAR ENGINEER and volunteer with the Trauma Intervention Program of Orange County, Kristen Nemes, smiles in Santa Ana. She will be honored at TIP of O.C.'s Heroes with Heart awards Thursday.

on the same page, we were able to look at each homeless person as an individual instead of: 'This is how the process goes so check this box and this box.'" she said. "Everybody navigates homelessness differently and at different paces."

She has kept in touch with many of those she's led to housing and said plans to continue doing so even after getting promoted from homeless liaison officer to detective two weeks ago. When TIP of O.C. asked her if she could think of anyone who might be able to benefit from charitable donations last winter, 32 people almost immediately came to mind.

"I think they look at us like family," Carter said. "That might sound weird, but they still reach out to say: 'Hey, I'm doing OK.

Hey, I'm paying my rent. Hey, I'm struggling right now...' so I had a good gauge of where people were."

Carter said delivering bundles of desperately needed clothing, food or gift cards for supplies over the holidays were two of the best days of her time as an officer. Some wrote back to let her and the others responsible for the unexpected generosity know how much of a difference they made.

"The last time I saw you I was wearing a sleeping bag," wrote Thomas Labrey, one of the people surprised over the holidays wrote. "I'm so grateful to all the people that helped me. I don't know where I would be today."


Community Resource Officer Jessica Lee was there for the family of a woman in her 90s

when she suffered a seizure one afternoon last October and wound up barely breathing when she was taken to the hospital later that day. The officer had been on patrol duty when she was called to their home, and it became clear the woman's husband, a man in his 80s, was especially struggling to come to terms with the situation.

"He felt hopeless that he couldn't do anything for her," Lee said. "It was sudden. They weren't expecting any of this."

She parted ways with them hoping for the best but learned when she followed up that evening that the woman had died. Lee decided to get TIP involved and came back to the longtime Fountain Valley couple's home

See *Duty*, page A4



UCI Health

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Models used for illustrative purposes.

PROJECT

Continued from page A1

or attempted rape, the agency says.

Waymakers is an Orange County-based organization that offers individuals, families and communities programs, services and resources to provide "paths to promising outcomes." That involves sheltering children, supporting victims, resolving conflicts and educating communities. Waymakers has victim advocates at every courthouse in Orange County and also runs the Orange County's rape crisis center, with a 24-hour hotline.

"Our main mission is to be able to build safer communities," said Reyna. "We do offer a variety of high-quality counseling and supportive services to people that are experiencing crisis in Orange County."

The Orange County Clothesline Project, which began in 2001, is one example of Waymakers' community outreach.

The colors of each shirt signify a different crime. Red, pink and orange shirts signify rape, while green and blue signify child sexual abuse. Gray signifies human trafficking, purple signifies rape due to sexual orientation and black signifies sexual harassment. White stands for homicide and yellow signifies domestic violence. Survivors pen handwritten messages on shirts colored to match the crime they experienced. The stories are written on the shirts anonymously.

"What is so powerful about this display is that it does give a voice to survivors in a safe way," said Reyna. "Year after year, we see survivors make a T-shirt and we display it that day and then put it away and it



Photos by Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

KASSANDRA DOMINGUEZ reads T-shirts hung in the quad at Fullerton College on April 18. The T-shirts are part of an impactful installation promoting sexual assault awareness.

gets added to the display. So it is a work in progress."

The Clothesline Project began with just eight T-shirts. Now in its 22nd year, the project has over 1,200 multicolored T-shirts. The project is touring Orange County universities where students can view the display and write on a T-shirt of their own. Its first stop was at Cal State Fullerton on April 13 before coming to Fullerton College on April 18, where student Daniela Salgado solemnly read each T-shirt.

"I believe this exhibit is super important ... it is important to shine light on the different types of sexual assault," said Salgado. "Children, human trafficking, the deaths. This is important for us to learn because I think we are shielded all our lives and we just hear, 'Oh this was a bad case,' but we have the resources to learn how to deal with it, prevent it and bring awareness."

Student Johnathan Pena was surprised to see so

many stories of abuse began when the victims were young, at the hands of a family member.

"The ages between 15 and 16 seem to be the most common ages," said Pena. "What shocks me the most is sometimes it was coming from their own family. It's eye-opening."

According to the CDC, more than four out of five female rape survivors reported that they were first raped before age 25 and almost half were first raped at a minor.

Accompanying the clothesline installation at each campus is a Waymakers booth with information about the services the organization offers, prevention and what to do if someone is a victim of sexual assault. The Clothesline Project aims to open the conversation.

"I think there is a lot more education and awareness, and we are slowly starting to shift the culture to make it acceptable to have these conversation in

general," said Reyna. "So that the conversation around sexual violence is no longer taboo."

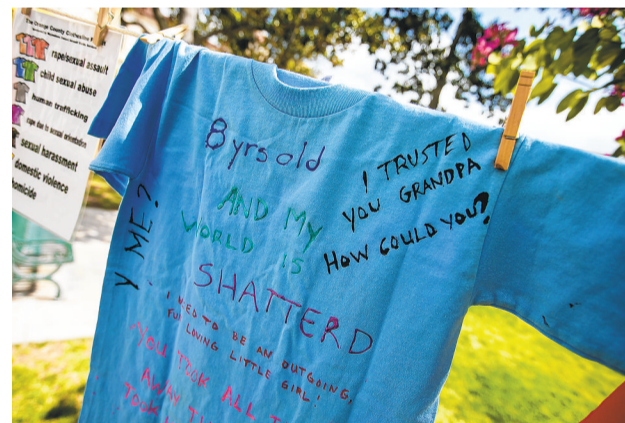
Reyna said that doesn't mean every survivor is ready to talk about their experience.

"One of the things that is important to be mindful of is that no matter how safe the environment we create and how open we are to dialogue, that doesn't mean the survivor is ready and willing to talk about their story," Reyna said. "But it is a best practice to have these ongoing conversations so that those who are debating about sharing their story feel comfortable and supported."

The conversations sparked by the Clothesline Project can also contribute to prevention, especially on a college campus, organizers said.

"It is a great opportunity to continue to educate those who are just entering adulthood," said Reyna.

The conversations surrounding prevention are



T-SHIRTS TELL a story of child sexual abuse at the Waymakers' Clothesline Project at Fullerton College.

also shifting, with safety guidelines not only being directed at young women but young men too.

"It is important to educate youth at this age level to not commit sexual assault," said Reyna. "Before, we had a lot of conversations about watching your drink, the buddy system and watching what you wear."

Reyna said all those tips can reduce risk of assault, but at some capacity that line of thinking shifts blame to the victim.

"That is not the responsibility of a victim, ever. So now we trying to create opportunities to provide education about not committing sexual assault, being mindful of what consent is and understanding if you are not honoring that, you are committing an act of violence."

Salgado said she appreciated seeing prevention materials directed at young

women in addition to young women.

"They are handing out fliers on what men can do, especially, to prevent all of this," said Salgado.

The Clothesline Project will make its way to Irvine Valley College on April 25 followed by Cypress College on April 26.

Having been with Waymakers for 15 years, Reyna has experienced the impact the Clothesline Project can have firsthand.

"I have witnessed survivors make their shirts, and then they have come and joined us at different events years later and look for their shirt to see if it is still there," said Reyna. "And they have this moment of remembering when they made it and where they were at, and being so proud of where they are now."

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Models used for illustrative purposes.



Photos courtesy of Costa Mesa and Fountain Valley police departments

COSTA MESA Police Officer Orlando Lopez and Fountain Valley Community Resource Officer Jessica Lee will be among honorees at the Trauma Intervention Program of Orange County's Heroes with Heart awards Thursday in Irvine.

DUTY

Continued from page A2

along with two volunteers, a card and flowers. The officer spent time listening to the elderly woman's relatives reminisce and made sure they knew the department was available if they needed anything before leaving them to be with each other and trained volunteers.

"It's pretty amazing the things they do for people," Seal Beach Capt. Nick Nicholas said of TIP. "These people do it for free, entirely out of the kindness of their hearts. They go into horribly sad, tragic situations solely because they want to help people."

"Vicarious trauma is a real thing," Nicholas added. "These volunteers are exposed to tragedies all the time, and the fact of the matter is, I know it can be as impactful on them as it is on some of these people experiencing this trauma."

He said he has seen their team manage to make the family of a child who has died laugh shortly in the wake of that loss. Nemes said she has consoled relatives of people torn apart in traffic collisions and held a dying baby for a mother who "just needed a break" during her time as a volunteer.

"I don't really exist when this stuff is going on," she said. "I'm there as an extension of the client's grief, sadness, apathy or, even for that matter, hate. It's whatever they're going through. If they're sad, I'm sad. If they're mad, I'm mad. If they believe in God then I believe in God, and if they don't then I don't either."

Comforting those in need takes many

forms. And those who deliver it come in many forms.

This year is the first time TIP of O.C. is recognizing a canine emergency responder at its gala. Nicholas, along with his partner, Seal Beach Police Service Dog Yosa, are among the 2022 honorees. She is a Labrador/golden retriever mix who joined the department about two years ago and was specifically trained by Canine Companions to provide emotional support.

When a dispatcher learned that a child who was alone with two younger siblings in Cypress had called to report the death of her mother one morning, she notified Nicholas and suggested bringing Yosa to their home. The captain and K-9 found a hectic scene when they arrived, with emergency personnel focused on various tasks crisscrossing the area. It took a moment to find the woman's three children seated with a few relatives in front of their home.

"One of them was a boy, maybe something like 3 or 4 years old," Nicholas said. "I remember he just looked so small with all of these people and things going on around him. And here I come, I'm 6 foot 2, another big person lumbering up to him, but Yosa makes a beeline right to him."

Yosa nuzzled up against the children, inviting them to pet him. Some smiled while she sat in her lap, demonstrated commands with Nicholas or just played.

More information about the April 27 Heroes with Heart dinner and fundraiser can be found at tiporangecounty.org.

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THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

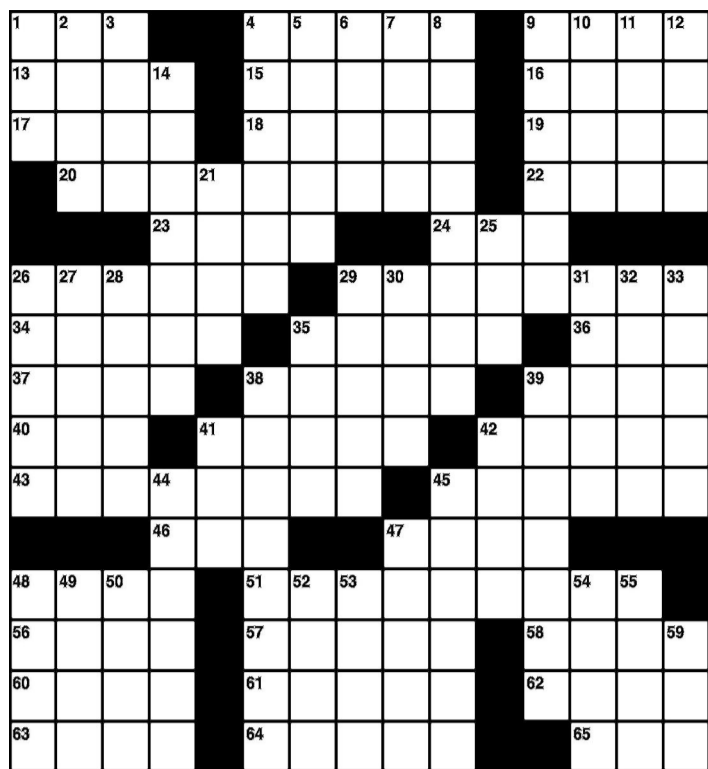
By Jacqueline E. Mathews

ACROSS

- 1 Parking area
- 4 Scumbags
- 9 Asterisk
- 13 Rams' mates
- 15 Stadium
- 16 Vagabond
- 17 Pesky insect
- 18 Town ; announcer of old
- 19 Eliminates a squeak
- 20 _ one's pace; slowed down
- 22 _ club; singing group
- 23 _ off; irritated
- 24 Written promise to pay
- 26 Hurtful remark
- 29 Liking; affection
- 34 Palm with chewable nuts
- 35 Curtsied
- 36 Tall tale
- 37 " _ a Lady"; Tom Jones song
- 38 Intertwines
- 39 Facts & figures
- 40 Period of time
- 41 Coleslaw, e.g.
- 42 Uranium or titanium
- 43 Dolt
- 45 Solitaries
- 46 El _; Spanish hero
- 47 "The King and I" setting
- 48 Greek salad topper
- 51 Upper hand
- 56 Actor Holliman
- 57 Construct
- 58 Word of disgust
- 60 Previously owned
- 61 Go away
- 62 Punt
- 63 Recolors
- 64 Actress
- 65 " _ kingdom come"

DOWN

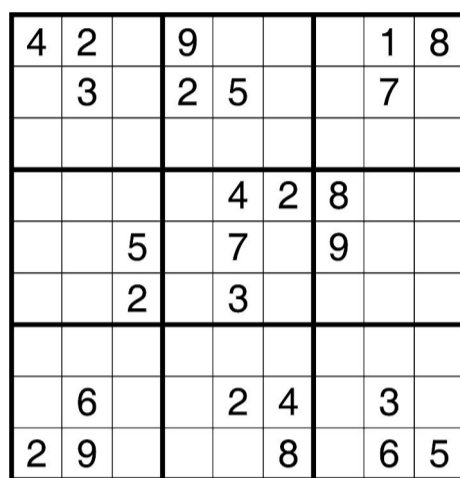
- 1 Calf's place
- 2 _ up; admits guilt
- 3 Short-necked duck
- 4 Outer garment
- 5 Blundered
- 6 _ in; bring under control
- 7 Joint with a cap
- 8 Tiny fishes
- 9 Old Japanese
- 10 Work hard
- 11 Fit for the job
- 12 Kennedy matriarch
- 14 Museum pieces
- 21 Jailbird's home
- 25 Bizarre
- 26 "Peer Gynt"



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 A9.

- 27 India's first prime minister
- 28 Teakettle emission
- 29 _ point; center of attention
- 30 Was indebted to
- 31 Make jubilant
- 32 Stringed instrument
- 33 Some SeaWorld performers
- 35 Poorly thrown pitch
- 38 Praiseworthy
- 39 Aalborg's nation
- 41 Enjoy a winter sport
- 42 Protective trench
- 44 Burns with liquid
- 45 Actor Hal
- 47 Healing balm
- 48 Long-standing quarrel
- 49 Simple
- 50 Genealogist's drawing
- 52 Sword fight
- 53 Test tube
- 54 Horse's pace
- 55 Carve initials
- 59 Wild blue yonder

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- Heirloom Tomato Salad
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- Classic Caesar Salad
Chopped hearts of romaine, herb croutons, tomato, shaved Manchego
- Bungalow Salad
Greens, hearts of palm, olives, feta, red onion, bay shrimp, tarragon vinaigrette
- Fresh Fruit Cup
Locally grown strawberries, blueberries and raspberries
- Bungalow Prawns (Five Dollar Supplement)
Spicy Cocktail Sauce

ENTREE SELECTIONS

- Classic Eggs Benedict
Poached farm fresh eggs, toasted English muffin, Canadianbacon, hollandaise sauce. Served with breakfast potatoes 39
- Crème Brûlée French Toast
Fresh berries, cinnamon whipped cream, pure maple syrup. Served with Applewood smoked bacon 39
- Grilled Lime Chicken Salad Grilled
Mixed greens, lime marinated grilled chicken, avocado, chopped wilted vegetables, cherry tomatoes, citrus dressing 39
- King Salmon
Yukon Gold mashed potatoes, avocado relish, honey jalapeno beurre blanc 40
- California Chicken Breast
Pan-seared chicken breast, oven roasted tomatoes, avocado, Yukon Gold mashed potatoes, pan au jus 40
- Pasta Primavera
Linguine pasta, roasted fennel, yellow squash, celery, carrots, marinara sauce 39
- Beef Dip Sandwich
Sliced thin, au jus, Swiss cheese, caramelized onions on a French roll. Served with creamy horseradish & French fries 39
- Miso-Marinated Chilean Sea Bass
Soy glaze, Yukon Gold mashed potatoes, stir fried vegetables, mushrooms, lemongrass ginger beurre blanc 44
- Filet Mignon
Six ounce prime filet mignon, Yukon Gold mashed potatoes, fried shallots 48
- Roasted Prime Rib of Beef
6 oz prime rib of beef, Yukon Gold mashed potatoes, creamy horseradish, au jus 47
- New York Strip & Eggs
Sliced 8 oz New York strip, breakfast potatoes, two farm fresh eggs any style 47

DESSERT SELECTIONS
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- New York Cheesecake
Fresh whipped cream, raspberry coulis
- Vanilla Bean Crème Brûlée
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- Scrambled Eggs
Applewood smoked bacon, breakfast potatoes
- Spaghetti Pasta
Butter sauce
- Crème Brûlée French Toast
Fresh berries, cinnamon whipped cream, pure maple syrup, Applewood smoked bacon

20 Per Guest Under 12



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COLUMN | PATRICE APODACA

What's behind the downward trend in higher education?

When I read in the Los Angeles Times last month about the dire condition of Whittier College, I dropped the spoon in my cereal bowl and nearly spilled my tea. I grew up in Whittier and am well-acquainted with the leafy 136-year-old campus that looks like it was dropped in from a quaint New England town. I even took a few classes there when I was a senior in high school.

But in recent years, Whittier's enrollment and revenues have been plunging. The article painted a depressing picture of a school in decay, replete with dank dormitories and broken toilets.

I wish I could say that such problems are limited to one school, but alas, that's far from the case. Indeed, you may have sensed that something about the whole college deal is different lately. Different in a worrisome way.

The nation's colleges and universities are wrestling with societal,



cultural, economic and demographic forces that are impacting everything from admissions to academic offerings to financial viability. Where the struggle to adapt to a changing landscape leads higher education over the long run remains to be seen. Nonetheless, it's important to pay attention to these trends mid-flux, as some of them are already having a profound effect, as we see in the sad condition of Whittier College.

One of the most pressing issues facing higher ed today is that overall college enrollment is declining. There are more than one million fewer undergraduates now than there were less than four years ago.

There are many reasons behind the decreasing numbers.

Enrollment had been steadily declining for about a decade before the pandemic. Rising tuition and associated costs of attending college, frightening levels of student loan debt, and other fi-



Mel Melcon | Los Angeles Times

STUDENTS WALK on the largely empty campus of Whittier College in March. Enrollment at the school has plummeted.

Financial pressures are thought to be key reasons why many college-age kids have been choosing the

workforce over chasing a pricey degree. Squeezed state budgets and a shrinking popula-

tion of high school graduates are also exerting pressure on many colleges and universities.

Then when COVID-19 hit, enrollment plum-

See **Apodaca**, page A9



George Hamilton Jones

February 22, 1923 - April 7, 2023

On April 7, 2023 - Good Friday - George Hamilton Jones set off on his journey to reunite with his wife of 73 years, Sug O'Neil Jones. She had just left him on her own journey less than three months before.

The youngest of four, George was born in the citrus-growing community of Pomona, California, on February 22, 1923. In his more than 100 years, George filled his life with countless adventures, an abundance of cherished friends, a respected professional career, and, above all else, a family that loved him and looked up to him as a steadfast patriarch of immeasurable qualities.

George's family, led by his parents, Victor March Jones and Elizabeth Brettell Jones, had moved to Pomona from Audubon, Iowa, with George's two older sisters, Margaret and Ruth, in 1920. Big brother Tom was born shortly thereafter.

George loved his childhood and held nothing but the fondest of memories of his close-knit, always-supportive family. It was the height of the Depression, but as George used to say, "Everybody was in the same boat." Boyhood friends were plentiful, and fun was to be had in all sorts of inventive ways. George said they lacked for nothing that mattered.

George's lifetime love of sports started at Gary Elementary School and picked up pace at Emerson Junior High. When George entered Pomona High School, he was infamously skinny. Known as "bird legs," George didn't begin to fill out until he matriculated to Stanford University, where he excelled in basketball and track and field as a high jumper. In college, he was able to "jump his height" (6'4") at a time when the world record was 6'10".

George enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1943 and was transferred to University of California Berkeley in the V-12 Battalion. Tragically, George lost many of those close childhood friends in World War II. Later in life, when George talked about how lucky he was - which he did often - you could tell he meant it. It was hard-earned gratitude.

After the war, George was working for Douglas Aircraft when he was recruited by Bank of America to play basketball on their national AAU team. Little did he know that it would be the launch pad for a highly successful career in real estate appraisal. Known for his ability to handle complex assignments and eminent domain work, George was highly sought after as an expert witness in court. Over his nearly 70-year career, George made significant contributions to the profession he loved and received numerous awards at both local and national levels.

George was an avid sailor from an early age. At 13, he and brother Tom, unbeknownst to their parents, took their maiden voyage to Catalina in a 21-foot sloop they had built in their backyard from a kit that they paid for with money they made on a newspaper route. Powered by sails their mother sewed together, it was the start of a love affair with the sea that the brothers shared for the rest of their lives. Forty-three years later, George, Tom and their families sailed to the South Pacific for a five-month cruise, what George called "the trip of a lifetime."

George and Sug joined the Newport Harbor Yacht Club in 1966 and shared many wonderful adventures with the close friends they made there. From Moonstone Cove on Catalina to Rhode Island, Hawaii and Alaska - and many ports in between - these were fast friendships that George and Sug treasured.

In his long, varied and fortunate life, George's greatest adventure of all was the Love Story he shared with his beloved wife, Sug. From courtship to his passing, George spent 75 of his 100 years in her warm embrace. George was absolutely devoted to Sug. No doubt about it - they were true soulmates.

George and Sug were sadly predeceased by their daughter, Patricia. They leave behind their son, Casey, his wife, Cheryl, nine grandchildren, seventeen great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild. Theirs was indeed the life abundant.

A Celebration of Life will be held at St. Andrew's Church on May 5, 2023, at 11:00 a.m. followed by a reception. In lieu of flowers or contributions, the family wishes simply that those who knew George Jones simply take a moment to reflect on his zest for life, his integrity to the values he cherished, and his love and gratitude for his family and all those who walked the walk with him.

MAILBAG

Pay raise for D.A. is too high

Tim Geddes
Huntington Beach

I am paying my very high taxes today! I will be helping to pay Dist. Atty. Todd Spitzer's \$48,000-dollar pay raise for a total compensation of \$531,477. To supervisors Foley, Do, Wagner, and Chaffee who voted for this raise, attorneys are not going to run to another job when they are already making \$310,298.35 plus a huge compensation package. That kind of pay raise is totally UNACCEPTABLE! Supervisors, you have lost my vote, and I will remind people of this issue when you are up for reelection.

Martha Omeara
Costa Mesa

Letter of support prompts recollection

I found Joe Kunder's letter in the April 14 Daily Pilot Mailbag endorsing Max Ukropina to be highly ironic and coincidental when one drills down to what it says to Republican voters in the 47th Congressional District. The Daily Pilot reported on Ukropina's entrance into the race on April 12. Kunder extols Ukropina for being a fine upstanding community-oriented citizen in marked contrast to dishonest, disgraced and now indicted former president, Donald Trump. Kunder also takes shots at "career politicians" who lack the ethics and

inclination to effectively represent their constituents.

Intended or not, Kunder calls to mind the leading Republican candidate for the congressional seat in question, Scott Baugh. It is no secret that Baugh was indicted back in 1996 on four felony counts of lying on campaign finance reports and 18 misdemeanor counts of violating state election law and could have been sentenced to seven years in prison for his complicity in the Laurie Campbell decoy Democrat scandal in the special election for recalled state Assemblywoman Doris Allen's seat. Many felt that Baugh should have gone to jail instead of Sacramento after winning the special election. Baugh practically defines the term "career politician" after becoming a GOP stalwart in Sacramento and then Orange County over the last quarter century. His resurfacing as a shadow candidate and safety valve Republican alternative to his mentor Dana Rohrabacher in 2018 and his continued interest in seeking office is further evidence of this label. Kunder is advocating for a "clean" choice for this congressional seat and may be uncomfortable to see a tarnished candidate like Scott Baugh get beaten again by a transparently honest and well-qualified Democrat.

Huntington Beach is in better hands already

As a resident of Huntington Beach for more than 50 years, a return to the "bad ol' days" is a welcome relief from the liberal loons on the left. We conservatives certainly do not want H.B. to look like Los Angeles or Long Beach, which are a mess. We have gotten the "deserve better" Tim Geddes wrote about in a recent letter, with the majority conservative council and especially City Atty. Michael Gates.

Peter Anderson
Huntington Beach

Unpleasant odor detected in Surf City

The Huntington Beach City Council carnival has now turned into a full-fledged circus. P.T. Barnum would be proud. As with most circuses, there is a certain smell that permeates. One might confuse it for the pier or the power plant. No, the smell is farther up Main Street at City Hall in the offices of the city attorney and mayor; it's the

See **Mailbag**, page A7

A WORD, PLEASE | JUNE CASAGRANDE

The surprising importance of getting the spacing right

Nothing says "This was written by an amateur" like ... nothing. White space. Blank space. The number of times you hit that long button at the bottom of a keyboard.

Knowing when to insert a space can give your writing top-tier professional polish. Sound like a goal? Here are five pro tips for using the space bar.

1. Single space between sentences.

The question of whether to put one space or two after a period or other terminal punctuation mark is hotly debated and highly controversial. That's ridiculous. There's no controversy here.

For decades, the professional publishing world has followed the standard of using just one space between sentences. That's true for both book publishing and news media. Even longtime holdout the Modern Language Assn., which guides students on how to write papers, now agrees, saying the only time you would put two spaces between sentences is when your teacher or professor prefers it.

2. Put a space before an ellipsis.



An ellipsis, a series of three dots that indicate that words were cut out or someone trailed off mid-thought, is always preceded by a space ...

like this. But if you've ever looked closely, you might have noticed that sometimes it sure looks like the first dot touches the word in front of it. Sometimes it even looks like there are four dots, not three, and the first one touches the word before it. I can explain.

When the text before an ellipsis is a complete sentence, the rules say you end that sentence with a period. Then you insert a space and then the three-dot ellipsis. ... Computers often reformat this series to make it look like four dots in a row, with no spaces between them. But in fact, what you're seeing is period, space, period, period. So technically there's still a space in front of the ellipsis. When the stuff before the ellipsis is not a complete sentence, don't add the extra period. Just space, dot, dot, dot.

3. Know when to space around dashes.

An em dash — the long mark that separates parts of a sentence —

should have a space before and after it in news writing. But books and magazines follow a different style, which calls for no spaces. In those instances, the em dash should touch the word on either side. If you don't need to follow either style, you can pick your preference. Just make sure you're consistent. And never attach a dash to the word before it but not to the word after. Use two spaces or no spaces.

4. Know when to space between initials.

If you're like me, you're used to seeing no spaces between initials: U.S. Army, M.E.K. Fisher. But if you look closely, you'll notice that books don't always do it this way, at least not for initials representing people's names.

"Initials standing in for given names are followed by a period and a space," advises the Chicago Manual of Style, which applies to most book publishing. So if you're following Chicago style, you'd write D. B. Cooper or M. E. K. Fisher with spaces after each period. But you would use no space in abbreviations for non-

See **Word**, page A7

MAILBAG

Continued from page A6

foul smell of money and power. While everyone is focused on affordable housing and flags, Mayor Tony Strickland and City Atty. Michael Gates have quietly padded their pockets. One of the first items the council passed was to give Gates a massive pay raise, the compensation package nearly doubling his current salary. Who gets such a raise as a public official? Mayor Strickland then had the council pass an item raising the personal campaign contribution for candidates. Mayor Strickland knows the game as he was a state legislator before carpetbagging it to H.B. One might ask, are these the things that most benefit the city and its residents?

The city recently lost its longtime sponsor of the U.S. Open of Surfing, Vans. It will no doubt lose its bid for the Olympics. But wait, there's still the air show. Hold on, though. Its sponsor, Kevin Elliott, is suing the city and its former mayor (for rightfully canceling the last day of the show due to the oil spill in 2021). You would think the city would be done with Mr. Elliott. You would be wrong. It's awfully quiet — crickets. Has a deal already been made? The alleged closed door and private meetings between the new council, city attorney and certain other players reek of potential malfeasance. As the song goes, "Ooh, that smell."

There is supposed to be

a bond between public officials and their constituents; it's called trust. That bond has been shattered in just a few months. Possible corruption, graft and the Brown Act should be investigated. Where are you D.A. Spitzer?

Amicus Payne
Huntington Beach

Legislation would hurt the state

I am opposed to a bill currently in front of the California State Assembly, AB 1000.

Along with my associate, Bill Golterman, I own and operate a diversified investment company based in Newport Beach, Real Estate Development Associates, LLC (REDA), which acquires and develops industrial and office properties throughout Southern California. Our company has invested over \$800 million in real estate and we have over three decades of experience in the real estate field, spanning over 15 million square feet of completed projects.

REDA opposes AB 1000, a bill proposed by Assemblywoman Eloise Gómez Reyes, instituting a de facto statewide ban on most new warehouse projects. The bill goes too far and operates as a moratorium on building warehouses. The bill imposes stringent and unattainable standards for new warehouses, including a 1,000-foot warehouse/logistics center construction buffer around "sensitive receptors" and a 2-mile project notification

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Send an email to erik.haugli@latimes.com and include your full name, hometown and phone number (for verification purposes) with your submission. All letters should be kept to 350 words or less and address local issues and events. The Daily Pilot reserves the right to edit all accepted submissions for clarity, accuracy and length.

requirement. AB 1000 will kill the job and housing markets statewide, as its draconian measures will prevent crucial master-planned projects from ever coming to fruition. The bill displaces local land use authority from city and county governments to the state and includes a private right of action that will encourage burdensome litigation that will delay growth and economic development.

These issues, and many others measures in the bill, will significantly impair the local economy, kill jobs and increase negative environmental effects.

We hope that state Sen. Dave Min and Assembly members Phillip Chen and Cottie Petrie-Norris will join us in opposing AB 1000 and seek an alternative for ensuring both the safety of the local community and the prosperity of the economy.

Jason Krotts
Washington D.C.

WORD

Continued from page A6

personal names, like U.S. If you're not following Chicago style, do as the news outlets do and dispense with the spaces.

5. Check a dictionary for spacing between words.

Health care or healthcare? Cell phone or cellphone? First-hand or firsthand? Check-up or checkup? There's no set rule. Some

terms are two words, some are closed compounds, some are hyphenated, some offer multiple correct options. To find out if a space belongs in a compound, check the dictionary for the one-word form first, then the hyphenated form. If neither is in there, make it two words.

JUNE CASAGRANDE is the author of "The Joy of Syntax: A Simple Guide to All the Grammar You Know You Should Know." She can be reached at JuneTCN@aol.com.



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Walk for cancer to return to Tanaka Farms

BY MATT SZABO

Reyes and Joanna Valdivia of Orange witnessed a remarkable transformation in their daughter, Sarah, when she participated at last year's inaugural MaxLove Project farm walk for childhood cancer.

Sarah was diagnosed with an aggressive Stage 4 brain tumor, diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG), by Children's Hospital of Orange County doctors in January 2022.

Her speech started getting thrown off, and her right side wasn't able to move. She was in a wheelchair for much of the duration of her life, which lasted about 10 months more until she died on Dec. 6, 2022, at age 8.

But there were moments at the MaxLove walk at Irvine's Tanaka Farms last May that seemed magical.

"It was a great experience," Joanna Valdivia said. "We brought Sarah in her wheelchair. It was right between radiations, so she could walk, but she would get really tired. She ended up walking almost the whole thing. She was relaxed. Something changed, that she was able to walk, she was eating berries. It was a lot of energy, positive vibes. It was nice. We hadn't seen that from her."

Though Sarah is now gone, the Valdivia family plans to walk in the second annual Fork Childhood Cancer Walk for Kids, which returns to Tanaka Farms on Sunday, April 30. Their son Ryan, 10, will join in.

The decision to return was easy. The Valdivias want to continue raising awareness about DIPG, a rare type of cancer that



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

JOANNA VALDIVIA picks blackberries with husband Reyes and son Ryan, from left, at Tanaka Farms in Irvine. The MaxLove Project's annual Fork Childhood Cancer Walk for Kids takes place there on Sunday, April 30.

affects about 200 to 400 children each year. They made sure that was put as the cause of death on Sarah's death certificate.

Plus, the Fork Childhood Cancer Walk is somewhere they can be with people who have become their tribe.

"It's a safe place," Joanna Valdivia said. "We don't judge by the way they look, if they don't have hair, they don't have movements. They're just kids."

People are invited to create teams for the walk,

which is open to the public and benefits MaxLove Project, or individual tickets can be purchased for \$45 for adults and \$10 for children. A new format is being introduced this year, including chef-led culinary tastings in addition to the 1.3-mile interactive walk.

Entry to the self-paced walk path takes place from 3 to 7 p.m., with timed tickets.

Teams raise money that earns them tickets to redeem. Teams that raise at least \$250 will be invited

to plant and dedicate a sunflower seedling in honor of a child or sibling.

MaxLove Project founder and Chief Hope Officer Audra DiPadova Wilford said the walk is "kind of like a taste of MaxLove, really."

"We're really wanting to make this event open and accessible to anyone who wants to be involved," DiPadova Wilford said. "I guess the message that I would love everyone to know about this event is that there's something in it for everyone. It's such a

beautiful, fun, joyful, engaging way to show up for families facing childhood cancers and rare diseases. I guarantee it will be an absolutely beautiful afternoon for anyone who participates in it; it's so worth it."

DiPadova Wilford and her husband, Justin, founded the MaxLove Project in 2011 after their son Max, then 4, was diagnosed with brain cancer. The nonprofit's mission is to increase quality of life and reduce health risks for families surviving child-

hood cancer and other rare diseases.

These are often things that aren't covered in the traditional healthcare system, she said, things like supporting people with diet and sleep hygiene, and modalities like acupuncture.

"We really serve the families in the system that they have access to today, as we work to advocate and change the system of tomorrow," DiPadova Wilford said. "We're seeing both of those things happen. It's really incredible."

MaxLove Project, which has offices in Orange as well as Savannah, Ga., also holds a Farm to Fork dinner at Tanaka Farms each September.

After Sarah's diagnosis, the Valdivias started taking her to a MaxLove Project "Ohana" session each Wednesday. It featured acupuncture and massage sessions, as well as therapy dogs.

The organization helped facilitate setting the family up with cancer clinical trials and even hosted Sarah's funeral reception, Joanna Valdivia said.

"MaxLove was our light in our dark tunnel that we went through," she said.

Even without Sarah, the family continues to want to share the love of MaxLove. Reyes Valdivia recently returned to work as a manager at Union Pacific railroad, after taking more than a year off to support Sarah.

"Awareness is our big thing — and to help other families that we see that are here," he said. "This just comes at you, and you're not expecting it."

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High fidelity: Vinyl fans celebrate the joy of music

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

For audiophiles, Record Store Day is better than Christmas. In fact, in the 15 years since its inaugural celebration, many cities like Los Angeles, New York City and Las Vegas have made it an official holiday.

Record Store Day began in 2008 as a way for independent record stores and their communities to celebrate vinyl music. Special vinyl and CD releases drop on the third Saturday in April, and pledged shops get exclusive releases in store. It isn't uncommon for music fans to line up early to

snag copies of the latest album from their favorite artist. Along with records, special promotional merchandise and in-store performances and sales happen too.

"There are hundreds of exclusives that come out that day, people are lining up for all kinds of stuff," said Alex Forsythe, owner and founder of Analog Records in Tustin.

This year, new music dropped yesterday from the likes of Beach House, Billy Joel, Carole King, Madonna, Mars Volta, Nas, Norah Jones, the Cure, the Rolling Stones, Wilco and many more. The most

anticipated offering comes from Taylor Swift with the vinyl release of "Folklore: the Long Pond Studio Sessions."

Orange County has been home to many independent record stores over the years, and shops like Analog still spin and keep the love of vinyl music alive (R.I.P. Licorice Pizza in Huntington Beach).

"When we started, we were only about 900 square feet. Now we've got about 3,000," said Bill Michelle, owner and operator of Left of the Dial Records, which moved from its small space on French Street in Santa Ana to 508 N. Tustin St. in Orange in late 2021 and sells new and used LPs, as well as equipment.

"We do everything from repairs to new and used gear to live bands playing," said Michelle. "It's just a wonderful space."

While Left of the Dial offers records from a variety of genres, other shops have a more specialized focus.

Mr. C's Rare Records on 148 N. Glassell in Orange, for example, deals exclusively with used records with many rare pressings that attract serious collectors. Mr. C's also has a large selection of 45s, which were more popular in the 1950s.

Bionic Records on 6012 Ball Road in Buena Park, on the other hand, is a favorite for hardcore music fans and is known for carrying underground, metal and punk records, although the shop also stocks rock and hip-hop.

Analog Records has been open for 11 years and, besides records, carries vintage equipment like speakers, turntables and receivers.

"We kind of started as a smaller, used record shop and we have morphed into carrying a lot of newer stuff too," said Forsythe. "Our specialty that sets us apart is our vintage equipment."

Resident Vinyl is a newer shop that began as pop-up but opened a store earlier this month on 222 N. Bush St. in downtown Santa Ana's live/work lofts. "It is a tiny space. It is



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

JOSH HERTEL, an employee at Analog Record Shop, puts a vinyl record on a player ahead of Record Store Day, a yearly recognition of traditional, "physical" recordings of music.

really only about 200 square feet. So therefore our stock is hyper-curated," said Resident Vinyl owner, Owen Ela. "Resident Vinyl is about the resident, the person that lives here curating the music of the shop. It is really about quality, not quantity."

That means a lot of indie, punk and hip-hop albums and a focus on new music. Ela has a background in the music industry and isn't so much a collector as he is a music lover.

"I am always looking for new music, local artists," he said. "I still go to a lot of shows, and I like discovering new bands."

He also stocks the store with local bands and music, like Ali Coyle's latest album, "Songs for My Therapist."

Resident Vinyl also boasts a large online shop. "The mail order stuff separates us from some of the records stores out there," said Ela. "So there are two ways to shop. You can come in or you can browse our shop while you are sitting at home."

"The pandemic led to whatever resurgence was going on to triple," Michelle said. "People were like, 'Fix my turntable or give me a new one. I can't have a stay at home with my records.' That was when prices took off, demand took off, it went nutso."

The analog storage medium of vinyl music is still relevant in this world of streaming and Spotify.

"I think a lot of people find value in a physical collection. With streaming, it is obviously incredibly convenient and really easy to discover new music," said Forsythe. "But there is no tangible collection. No way to physically feel like you are part of the listening experience."

Ela said streaming has contributed to making records even more special.

"A lot of young people, kids these days grew up on Spotify and iPods and iPhones and think some of them have actually never thought they can have a physical copy of the music they have been listening to," said Ela. "They find that instead of streaming the music, they can actually own a physical copy of the band they love. It's incredible."

Album artwork is also something that can't be replicated on a phone and Ela said he also has a spe-

cial appreciation for the liner notes.

"Back in the day, the way I used to discover bands was by reading the thank you list in the liner notes," said Ela.

Then, of course, there is the superior listening experience.

"I tell people records are comfort food for your ears," said Michelle.

Forsythe agrees. "It is still truly a better listening experience as far as fidelity," said Forsythe. "Records do sound for the better for the most part than when you hear it on streaming platforms."

As for Record Store Day, each shop celebrated in its own unique way.

"For Record Store Day, we wanted to give back to our local community," said Ela. "We are donating a dollar for every record we sell to the Frida Cinema, since they handle the Downtown Santa Ana Artwalk."

Michelle advised enthusiasts not to take the day too seriously because ultimately music is about joy.

"We are selling nostalgia here and a happier time," Michelle said. "In a world like this, whatever brings you joy go and get it. How can put a price on joy?"

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APODACA

Continued from page A6

meted after the viral outbreak led to the temporary closure of campuses as colleges and universities switched to online classes, prompting many students and would-be students to opt out. Many schools have yet to recover from those losses.

Although name-brand universities and elite private institutions, for the most part, are still attracting record numbers of applications, the outlook is more uncertain for smaller, lesser-known schools. At least 23 public or nonprofit colleges have closed, merged or announced they will close in the past three years, and more than half of their students didn't re-enroll elsewhere.

And that's not even counting the failures of for-profit schools, which typically close at a much higher rate.

But even big universities are far from immune to the troubles plaguing their smaller rivals. The Cal State University system, for instance — the largest public university system in the nation — lost 27,000 students over the past two years. Earlier this year, it was put on notice by the state that its campuses must boost enrollment or lose some funding.

The declining

enrollment outlook, the money troubles, the pandemic losses — these are all serious problems, to be sure. But there's something else going on. Underlying those existential issues is another stark reality — that the bedrock rationale for a college education itself is under attack.

For decades, a college degree has been viewed as the surest path to middle-class prosperity. It has also been considered a source of pride, a vital component to the stories we tell ourselves about upward mobility and meritocracy, an ideal for families to pursue and hold up as evidence that each generation was surpassing the last.

But now reports of people questioning the value of college are saturating the media. It's elitist, we hear, not worth the high cost, and certainly not worth going into debt. Wages are rising and more quality jobs are available for those without a degree, we're told.

Humanities majors are particularly under fire. Editorials routinely opine about the worthlessness of such majors as English, philosophy and art history, because these degrees are thought by many to be dead ends in the job market. What's more, their relevance in our modern, tech-driven society is increasingly questioned.

Students are obviously paying attention to such arguments — enrollment in many liberal arts mainstays has nosedived.

The much-discussed headline of a recent New Yorker magazine article put it bluntly: "The End of The English Major."

But I believe such thinking is misguided. Tech and science grads do tend to get good jobs, but there are plenty of people with liberal arts degrees who are also doing well, thank you very much. It's a mistake to discount the value of a well-rounded education that produces critical thinkers who know how to research, study, analyze and communicate well. Our nation would be poorer without them.

Yes, the population of school-age kids is falling, and that's a reality that will impact higher-education for the foreseeable future. But when considering the question of costs versus benefits, the solution doesn't lie in the second part of the equation.

The problem isn't the subject or the intrinsic worth of education. It's the ever-rising cost of college that needs to be addressed.

PATRICE APODACA is a former Los Angeles Times staff writer and is coauthor of "A Boy Named Courage: A Surgeon's Memoir of Apartheid." She lives in Newport Beach.

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PICTURES

HOSPITAL

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2021, will be part of a \$1.3-billion medical complex for the university. The university said it is likely the first all-electric center of its kind in the country.

The UCI Medical Center Irvine-Newport is expected to also include an outpatient center for advanced care, a center for children's health and the Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center and Ambulatory Care building with the advanced care center expected to be the first of the buildings to come online as early as next spring. This will be the second major medical campus in the UC Irvine system, the first having been established in Orange.

In a statement released on the groundbreaking for the medical complex, UCI Health chief executive officer Chad Lefteris described the UCI Medical Center Irvine-Newport as "building the next chapter of healthcare in Orange County."

"The new UCI Medical Center — Irvine will be a full-service academic medical complex, bringing a broad range of the most ad-



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

THE STATE-OF-THE ART "chillers" on the CUP, Central Utility Plant, will cool the acute care hospital at the UCI Medical Center Irvine-Newport.

vanced healthcare services to coastal and southern Orange County, including access to the hundreds of clinical trials underway at UCI Health," stated Lefteris.

Members of the media Friday were given the opportunity to see inside the 350,000-square-foot center, which is expected to begin operations in 2025.

With regard to its internal infrastructure, Brothman said the hospital is very different than the one in Orange, which is built more traditionally. The hospital and the ambulatory care center will be powered by an Essential Utilities plant that does not rely on carbon combustion or natural gas.

Brothman noted that the hos-

pital will have diesel generators as back-ups in the event of a power failure, but the goal is for day-to-day operations to be completely electric.

"Since our health system is able to purchase electricity on the open market, we procure 100% sustainably produced electricity. The operations at our Irvine campus will be some of the greenest energy portfolio-wise that we are aware of, especially for an academic medical center of this size and complexity," Brothman said.

He added the central utilities will be utilizing a "smattering" of different technology that will simultaneously produce chilled water and hot water to provide heating and cooling for the building, while also producing steam for humidification and cleaning. That is typically done with a large, central boiler, but Brothman said the hospital will utilize multiple small steam boilers at the point of use.

"It won't be one piped steam line running around our campus; so that means that during an earthquake or construction, there isn't a risk of rupturing a steam line and rendering our heating, cooling or cleaning unable to do

that critical function," he said, describing the system as having built-in resilience. "When every other building isn't standing, it's typically during a major disaster."

What's more, from a purely financial perspective, changing to electric will allow the hospital to be unaffected by any potential change in cost for natural gas.

"It's a way for us to hedge our bets ... we're not beholden to those energy prices that are totally out of our control. Overall, for our patients and people we care for, we're going to try and reduce that cost as much as possible," Brothman said. "We see in the future that we can't control those factors out of our control like natural gas prices, but we can choose to use electricity and purchase power on the open market."

While full electrification of their other carbon-using facilities is still far away, Brothman said there is a team with UCI Health that is actively seeking out opportunities for the switch at existing buildings, including their Orange campus.

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STAGE

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students. But now, with 28 enrolled, productions can move forward with students working both on stage and behind the scenes.

During a rehearsal Tuesday, the 25-member cast ran through lines, practicing songs and choreography from the 2017 Broadway hit that recently became available for reproduction.

"It's a cult classic for this generation," said Marroquin, explaining "Mean Girls" offers a lot of solid roles for women. "The rights came out in October, and I felt like it was a sign. We're one of the first schools in Orange County to do the show."

With music by Jeff Richmond and lyrics by Nell Benjamin, the Broadway version of "Mean Girls" is based on the 2004 film from comedian Tina Fey about Cady Heron, a girl raised in Africa by scientists who finds herself forced to choose between friend groups in a cut-throat high school environment not unlike the African Serengeti.

In Estancia's version, Helena

Solomonian plays Cady, while the girls' clique called "the Plastics" is rounded out by Liv Mabilog as uber mean girl Regina George and Aleyda Casillas and Keila Mendez in the roles of Karen Smith and Gretchen Wieners, respectively.

Jayden Emmitt plays Janis Sarkisian, who befriends Cady before her acquisition by the Plastics. In the male leads, popular guy Aaron Samuels will be portrayed by Morgen Montagna, while student Asher Dennee will play the role of relative outcast Damian Hubbard.

Performing alongside the high school cast are three students from TeWinkle Middle School's nascent program, which Marroquin developed to inspire interest in the theater in young students slated to promote to Estancia High.

During Tuesday's rehearsal, Casillas tested her vocal chords on the brief solo song "My Name is Karen!" The 17-year-old senior said she and her classmates were startled by the difference between their home theater and the one at Costa Mesa High.

"When we first came to Costa Mesa and saw their wings, everyone gasped and said, now *this* is a theater. It felt really professional,"

Casillas said, recalling having to do costume changes out in the hallway of the school behind a makeshift screen.

Although she plans to attend UC Berkeley next year, she hopes to continue to attend local shows.

"I feel like during high school I learned to love the theater and how important it is, how you make the show and all the hard work that goes into it," she said.

Montagna, who's been rehearsing the role of Aaron Samuels since February, joined the drama department as a freshman new to Costa Mesa and has since become part of a tight-knit group.

"I've never had this many close connections in a class. Most times, I don't even bother learning the names of my classmates," he said. "But you just feel a lot more connected here. You feel you're not being treated as a student but as an equal."

On track to graduate from Estancia in 2025, Montagna is among the lucky few currently in the Drama Department who will have a chance to perform in the new theater once it opens.

"In Estancia, everyone is so close to the stage you feel like you can hear them breathing," he said.



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

ESTANCIA STUDENTS Asher Dennee, from left, Helena Solomonian and Jayden Emmitt, rehearse a scene from "Mean Girls" Tuesday.

"It will be kind of melancholy to think we're never going to have that charming theater again. But [the new theater] will be a great improvement. It will help us do bigger shows that, I think, will be appreciated by more people."

Estancia High School's "Mean Girls" opens Thursday at 7 p.m. with additional shows at 7 p.m.

Friday and Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday, at Costa Mesa High School's performing arts complex, 2650 Fairview Road, Costa Mesa. General admission is \$15, student admission is \$10. To purchase tickets, visit estanciadrama.com.

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