

Daily Pilot

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East Coast investor sets eye on West

Baltimore-based realty group buys Costa Mesa's South Coast Collection, which includes the OC Mix, for \$110 million.

BY SARA CARDINE

Costa Mesa's South Coast Collection — a luxury retail center off the 405 Freeway that includes the food-forward complex the OC Mix — has been acquired by Continental Realty Corp., making it the Baltimore-based investor's first California asset.

Escrow on the 292,000-square-foot development closed Oct. 30 for a reported \$110 million, a figure reported by the Orange County Business Journal earlier this month.

Josh Dinstein, senior vice president of acquisitions for Continental Realty Corp., said the company was looking to expand to the West Coast and was compelled by Orange County's demographics and by the site it

See *Investor*, page A4

Police pursuit ends in suicide, truck fire

Vehicle erupts in flames, driver found dead from self-inflicted gunshot wound in Costa Mesa intersection Thursday.

BY SARA CARDINE

Costa Mesa fire crews rushed to the intersection of Placentia Avenue and Victoria Street Thursday evening, where a police pursuit that began in Garden Grove ended with an apparent suicide and the vehicle erupting in flames, officials reported.

Garden Grove Police Department's Sgt. Nick Jensen said the incident began shortly before 4:30 p.m. when officers on patrol observed a light-colored pickup truck that appeared to be operating in violation of vehicle code and attempted to initiate a traffic stop.

"The officers tried to pull the car over and the vehicle fled immediately so a pursuit ensued," Jensen said. "During that pursuit, Garden Grove officers saw the

See *Police*, page A5



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

TEAGAN NOONAN, 6, Calvin Schmidt, 4½, and Maren Lee, 5, center from left, help fill stockings during the YMCA of Orange County's "Stockings for Troops" event at Peterson Elementary School in Huntington Beach on Thursday.

YMCA, students team up to stuff stockings for the troops

BY MATT SZABO

Children love receiving stockings on Christmas.

They can also discover that making a stocking for someone else has worth.

Dozens of Huntington Beach elementary school students gathered at Peterson Elementary on Thursday night as part of YMCA of Orange County's annual "Stockings For Troops" community project.

The children, their families and YMCA volunteers stuffed hundreds of stockings with items like instant noodles, granola bars, cookies and crackers and gum, as well as personal letters, gift cards and other items. YMCA of Orange County had been collecting items for the annual donation drive for more than a month, and the stockings are being sent to U.S. troops early to ensure they get there by Christmas.

Sherry Lee said her 5-year-old daughter, Maren, a TK student at Peterson, had fun collecting items for the stockings.

"We went to Costco together and she

See *Troops*, page A2



A CROWD GATHERS at the YMCA of Orange County's "Stockings for Troops" event.

Babysitter gets life in prison for molesting boys

BY PAUL ANDERSON

A 34-year-old child care service provider from Costa Mesa was sentenced today to 707 years and eight months to life in prison for molesting 16 boys, aged 2 to 14, and showing another victim child pornography.

Matthew Antonio Zakrzewski was convicted Oct. 3 of 34 felony sex charges related to 17 victims in crimes that prosecutors said took place from 2014 through 2019.

Jurors in the trial also heard evidence relating to two other boys, including one who was al-

legedly molested, but the defendant was not charged with attacking those alleged victims, Deputy Dist. Atty. Juliet Oliver said.

Multiple parents told Orange County Superior Court Judge Kimberly Menninger how the defendant's crimes affected them. One victim offered the defendant forgiveness, while another implored him to seek redemption in religion because, "It's never too late to turn to God."

But others asked for the maximum punishment, calling the defendant a "master manipula-

tor." One grandmother of two victims said, "A death sentence is too good for him ... Please show no mercy on this animal."

The parents of another victim called him a "serial predator," who has left them "grappling with our guilt" for hiring him.

One mother said she took her son to doctors when he was 8 because he was struggling with ulcers. One of the doctors asked if the child had any cause for stress and she said at that time she couldn't think of anything.

"I didn't know, but now I know," she said. "I will be dealing with guilt for the rest of my

life for letting this animal in my life. I hired a babysitter once in my life. Just once in my life."

Another mom, whose family moved to the United States, said they have had to stay in the country much longer than they wanted to because of the legal proceedings. She said she and her husband had no clue about what was happening with their son when law enforcement paid them a visit about the defendant.

"My husband and I were completely blindsided," she said. "I

See *Prison*, page A4

Surf City author aims to evoke empathy with her latest novel



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

AWARD-WINNING Huntington Beach author Mary Camarillo recently released her second novel, "Those People Behind Us."

BY MATT SZABO

Some take up golf or gardening as they drift into their retirement years.

Huntington Beach's Mary Camarillo is most at home writing — about her home, as it turns out.

Camarillo released her second novel, "Those People Behind Us," last month. The book follows five neighbors in the fictional Wellington Beach, Calif., in the summer of 2017, trying to navigate life after Donald Trump has been elected president.

Politics, protests and rising housing prices are all in play, and it's not by accident if that sounds like Huntington Beach. Place names have been changed slightly, though, as the characters reside in Citrus County with neighboring cities like Fountain

Springs and Garden City.

The characters include Lisa the real estate agent, Vietnam veteran Ray, ex-con Keith, teenage drummer Josh and aerobics teacher Jeannette. The character in focus changes, depending on the chapter.

Camarillo, 71, calls it a pandemic book. She walked around the neighborhood with her husband Steve often during the COVID-19 lockdown, making up stories about the people they saw and the things they heard.

"I made up stories about people that I don't know, and I think we all kind of do that these days," she said. "We all listen to the same news and talk to people we agree with. Those people that we don't talk to, we make assumptions about them. What I hope that I did in this book is to show that

once these people start showing a little bit of empathy toward each other, they understand that they're wrong about some of the things they're assuming. Or maybe they're not wrong, but these people are still human beings that have problems that they can relate to."

Camarillo, originally from North Carolina, moved to Fountain Valley as a teenager and was part of the first graduating class at Fountain Valley High in 1970. She has called Surf City home for nearly 30 years.

After a lengthy career with the United States Postal Service, including time later in her career writing and editing audits with the Office of Inspector General, she retired at age 60.

See *Novel*, page A5



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

ANNA BREESE of YMCA of O.C. stacks stockings at Peterson Elementary School.

TROOPS

Continued from page A1

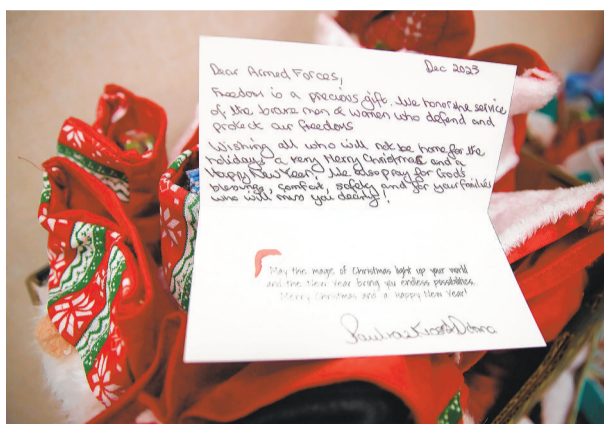
picked out a couple of things off the list, got to help participate and understand what we were actually doing," Lee said. "It's supporting the troops and doing something for others, which I'm trying to teach her early on."

The stockings — about 2,000 will be stuffed organization-wide — will be sent to troops around the world through San Clemente-based partner non-profit Words of Comfort, Hope and Promise, according to Anna Breese, YMCA of Orange County's marketing project manager. Donations too large for stockings will be delivered to Camp Pendleton.

Thursday's event drew children from Peterson, Smith and Moffett elementary schools, all in the Huntington Beach City School District.

Stacey Noonan watched her two daughters, both of whom attend Peterson, get in on the fun and stuff stockings.

"It's one thing to get the donations, but I think it's great to have the kids be



A PERSONAL LETTER is one of the items packaged to be sent to troops during the YMCA of Orange County's annual "Stockings for Troops" event at Peterson Elementary School in Huntington Beach on Thursday.

hands-on in putting it together," Noonan said. "The 'Y' is great about doing that. With kids, when they can see what someone's going to get, a tangible thing, I like the hands-on aspect."

Other activities for the kids at Thursday night's event included face painting, cookie decorating and an ornament station to help them get in the holiday spirit.

Krista Poitras, senior program director at YMCA of Orange County, said Peterson has been partici-

pating in the "Stockings for Troops" project for at least 15 years. She was director of the Peterson YMCA program for a decade.

"It's fun for [the kids], but they also get to see how lucky they are around the holidays," Poitras said. "They get to be at home, cozy with their families, and they get to see how other people don't necessarily have that luxury. [The military is overseas] fighting for our freedoms."

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THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

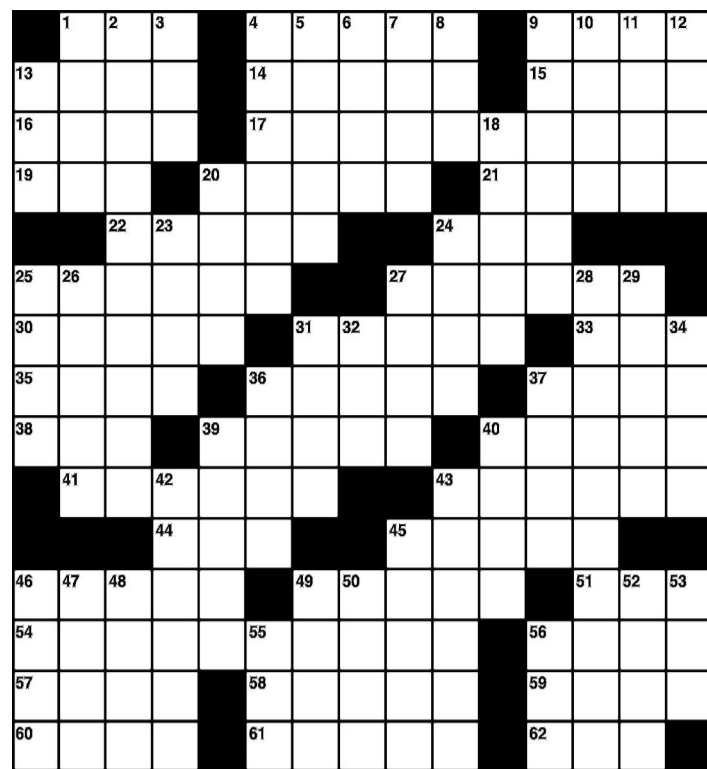
By Jacqueline E. Mathews

ACROSS

- 1 JFK's successor
- 4 One of the 5 senses
- 9 Take a _ at; try
- 13 Bottom
- 14 Mischievous fairy
- 15 The _; London's subway
- 16 Holbrook & Linden
- 17 Unavoidable
- 19 TV's "The _ Couple"
- 20 Ascended
- 21 Actor Buddy
- 22 Lawn tool
- 24 Solidify
- 25 Curie & Osmond
- 27 Extends a subscription
- 30 Did simple arithmetic
- 31 Sounds of distress
- 33 Ridicule
- 35 Thurman's namesakes
- 36 Mountain chain
- 37 Slate-colored
- 38 Fleur-de-
- 39 Shoemaker's supply
- 40 _ Lee Curtis
- 41 _ in the Hat"; book by Seuss
- 43 Large black birds
- 44 Actor Steiger
- 45 _ one's soul; revealed inner feelings
- 46 _ grease; manual labor
- 49 Eyeglasses, for short
- 51 _ budget; not overspending
- 54 Embroidery
- 56 Passionate
- 57 Small fruit
- 58 Sugar _; NY's state tree
- 59 Casino game
- 60 Refreshing pools
- 61 Rattled
- 62 "When Irish Eyes _ Smiling"

DOWN

- 1 Soft gray



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.

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

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

- element
- 2 "Hogwash!"
- 3 Last yr.'s sophs
- 4 Church toppers
- 5 Underage person
- 6 Kiss symbols
- 7 Learn's partner, in phrase
- 8 Fragrant

- accessory
- 9 Horse's home
- 10 Margarine containers
- 11 Suffix for remark or adapt
- 12 Has-; one no longer popular
- 13 Sorority letter
- 18 Prom goers

- 20 No longer a spring chicken
- 23 Passes away
- 24 Trait carrier
- 25 Handle roughly
- 26 Fess up
- 27 Car wash supplies
- 28 Reheated
- 29 European nation
- 31 Thick sweet drink
- 32 Three-thirds
- 34 Observes
- 36 Highway
- 37 _ away; donated
- 39 Angry look
- 40 Jolts
- 42 Eats away at
- 43 Con artist's activity
- 45 TV's Milton
- 46 Split _; hair problem
- 47 _ year; 2024, e.g.
- 48 _carotene; carrot pigment
- 49 Trade
- 50 Tootsie _; filled suckers
- 52 Two & three & four
- 53 Commotion
- 55 Big bird
- 56 Wanted poster letters

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THE CROWD | B.W. COOK

Harvesters serves up fashion show à la mode

As Thanksgiving approaches and we relish the celebration of brotherly love, respect and the vanishing value of one American unified family of many origins, what else brings us closer than sharing a meal together at a metaphoric single table representing the very lofty, often aspirational American concept of "one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

The ideal of Thanksgiving cuts to the chase. We all need nourishment to survive. Around the table, passing the platter, everyone is equal. There are no lines of separation dictated by color, creed, origin, wealth, intelligence, beauty or anything else.

For the past 31 years in Orange County an organization know as Harvesters has worked tirelessly and selflessly to serve the now 40-year mission of Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County providing "dignified, equitable and consistent access to nutritious food for those in need in the O.C. community."

Indeed, Harvesters members embody the meaning of Thanksgiving every day, year in and out. The volunteer organization produced its 2023 Fall Fashion Show & Luncheon recently announcing a cumulative fundraising total to date over its 31 years exceeding \$16.1 million, including an impressive \$1.9 million this year, translating into more than 48.3 million meals provided to citizens of this great county.

The spectacular day of fashion, food and connection to serving those in need is arguably the most successful and dramatic fashion show of the fall.



John Eckmier

A GOWN BY Monique Lhuillier was featured in the Harvesters Fall Fashion Show curated by South Coast Plaza.

Harvesters' members, chaired this season by the formidable **Gail Haft**, in conjunction with the generous community support and vision of the South Coast Plaza executive team led by **Debra Gunn Downing**, produced a world-class fashion show luncheon in the stunning multistory lobby of the modernist designed Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall in Costa Mesa.

Commencing with late-morning arrivals, the crowd of some 300 patrons dressed to impress, were welcomed in the Concert Hall on an upper level lobby with a champagne reception hosted by the international pearl, diamond and jewelry purveyor Mikimoto. Center staff then ushered the reception assemblage down to a

mezzanine level lobby, where designers created a curvilinear snake format of seating originating from the massive floating lobby staircase and winding through the lobby level. Chatter was infectious. Devoted patrons and donors **Jacque Casey**, **Roxanne Comrie**, **Lilly Merage** and **Michelle Merage** were among a celebrated roster of local citizens all dedicated to fostering the Thanksgiving message for everyone, every day of the year.

Let the fashion show begin! Chair Gail Haft joined **Claudia Bonilla Keller**, chair of Second Harvest Food Bank, in delivering an impassioned welcome, music filled the cavernous open lobby, and a parade of models entered in military formation. Cu-



Molly O'Keefe

KAREN JORDAN and Irene Martino were among 300 guests supporting the Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County at the recent luncheon.

rated by the talented South Coast Plaza fashionistas, the 2023 Harvesters Fashion Show featured the fall/holiday and winter lines of luxury houses Max Mara, Moncler, Lanvin, the Webster, Michael Kors Collection, Oscar de la Renta and Monique Lhuillier.

Overall, the design presentation was modern, original and in select pieces, very sexy, daring and could be labeled as "fashion art." The show at first viewing seemed to be a national traveling fashion event because many of the ensembles featured beautiful, luxurious, oversized dramatic coats with enormous collars and long lengths, coordinated with both dresses and pants. Perfect for San Francisco, Chicago and New York.

Reminded that winter nights on the coast can be chilly, the show was indeed curated for the Orange County audience. Of exceptional note were selections from the workroom of Oscar de la Renta and a magnificent wedding or ball gown from Monique Lhuillier.



JACQUELINE CASEY was a major donor to the Harvesters 2023 fall event.

Molly O'Keefe

In the crowd, taking it all in were generous supporters **Laura Vanderhook**, **Lauren Watkins**, **Kate Carlton**, **Sheral Burke**, **Cameron Davis**, **Erica Fink** and **Karen Jaffe**.

Also front and center for Harvesters were **Jill Johnson Tucker**, **Karen Jordan**, **Carrie Quintanar**, **Randa Kim**, **Mara Murray**, **Eden Murray**, **Keiko Sakamoto**, **Nancy Youngman**, **Sharon McKinnon**, **Jamie McKinnon**, **Natalie Pickup**, **Georgina Jacobson** and **Jennifer Segerstrom**.

An encore parade of all models displaying selections from all designers concluded the show as applause rang out. Luncheon followed, as guests traveled down to the main lobby to discover tables arranged and decorated in fall floral finery.

A multi-course luncheon created and served by the staff of Patina Restaurant Group began with chilled gazpacho, an entree of roasted salmon over romaine hearts, roasted beets, varied seeds, squash and drizzled with pomegranate vinaigrette. Baskets of shoestring crispy fries were passed from one end of the table to the other, then back again. Whispering Angel Cotes de Provence Rose accompanied luncheon and with dessert of fresh strawberries, dark chocolate bark and candied ginger bites came a pouring of Nicolas Feuillate Reserve Brute champagne.

The afternoon was made possible by the underwriting support of presenting sponsor City National Bank, along with a roster of dedicated corporate and foundation donors. The Harvesters proudly report that their efforts enabled Second Harvest Food Bank between July 2022 and June 2023 to distribute more than 36 million pounds of food to their Partner Network.

The Partner Network then provided food to families, seniors, children and college students in need at more than 300 distributions sites throughout Orange County. These organizations are comprised of schools, food pantries, senior living centers, transitional housing facilities, shelters for the unhoused, places of worship, after-school programs and soup kitchens.

Wishing Thanksgiving blessings for all people of Orange County with special recognition due the Harvesters and Second Harvest Food Bank for their work making certain that everyone is welcome at the table.

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

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> Dwayne P. received assistance at the Tierney Center for Veteran Services and now works as a Class A CDL Truck Driver for Western Express.

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SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Athletes' abilities on full display in Fall Games

The Special Olympics Southern California Fall Games took place Nov. 11 and 12 at Fountain Valley Sports Park.

BY ANDREW TURNER

Hundreds of athletes stood on a westside lawn last Saturday at Fountain Valley Sports Park, each awaiting their chance to shine.

The Special Olympics Southern California Fall Games came to town last weekend, the opening ceremony demonstrating the strength and unity of those involved in a celebration of abilities.

Athletes and their supporters had traveled from afar, the competitors arriving from communities between San Diego and San Luis Obispo. Their journey, though, represents so much more, a willingness to push forward in the face of adversity.

Perhaps it is recognition of that resolve that leads to the words of the athlete oath, which was said in unison by all competitors to kick off the event.

"Let me win," went the oath. "But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

For a couple decades now, Special Olympics athletes have been fulfilling their oath in Fountain Valley. Athletes competed in golf, soccer, softball, tennis and volleyball, encouraged by sideline



TIFFANY BROWN and Rajan Randhi of the OC Tigers volleyball team cheer after winning a match during the Special Olympics Southern California Fall Games in Fountain Valley on Nov. 11.

Photos by Eric Licas



KAITLIN TSUE of the OC Tigers tennis team serves during a match at the Special Olympics Southern California Fall Games on Nov. 11 at Fountain Valley Sports Park.

cheers. Heptathlon Olympian Annie Kunz had the final words to send the assembled athletes into competition.

"Who's ready?" she asked, before urging the athletes to make some noise. "Let the games be-

gin." The Studio City Coyotes finished atop the standings in soccer. The AV Tigers topped the field in softball. South Bay Community's "Can't Hit This" was the champion in volleyball.

Among individual sports,

Brooks Clarkson, 26, of the HB Crush won the Level 4 golf competition. Krystal Jeane Johnson of the Fontana Lions captured the singles title in tennis.

"We're opening hearts and minds to acceptance and inclusion, and we are celebrating

everybody's abilities," Kelly Pond, president and chief executive of Special Olympics Southern California, said in addressing the crowd. "That's what we're about this weekend. That's what we're about every day in every community."

The ceremony included a strong turnout from law enforcement. The presentation of the colors was conducted by the honor guard of the Garden Grove Police Department.

Fountain Valley Police Chief Matt Sheppard was joined by resident Garrett Thompson, a member of the Garden Grove Rebels volleyball team, for the lighting of the torch. Orange County Sheriff's Department uniformed personnel also performed push-ups at the conclusion of the morning's program.

Mayor Kim Constantine said she was happy to welcome the athletes to town, and she hoped they would enjoy the day regardless of the results.

"I know it's the Olympics and all that, and we have winners, but just have fun," Constantine said. "Just enjoy the weather, too. So nice to be together out here."



GARRETT THOMPSON, left, and Fountain Valley Police Chief Matt Sheppard light the torch of the 2023 Special Olympics Southern California Fall Games at Fountain Valley Sports Park on Nov. 11.



ATHLETES WITH special needs compete in a soccer match during the Special Olympics Southern California Fall Games last Saturday.

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