

Daily Pilot

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Murals replace broken church window

Christ Church by the Sea in Newport Beach is in the process of being restored after it was vandalized in April.

BY LILLY NGUYEN

Where there were stained glass windows before, new murals of coastal scenery now temporarily decorate a part of Christ Church by the Sea.

The paintings were rendered in June by Diana Hensley, her grandson, Aiden, and a group of other volunteers looking to help beautify the church that made headlines in April after a vandal caused an estimated \$100,000 in damages by smashing all the stained glass windows that faced the street. Many had been donated by residents and former congregation members that had since died.

After the damages were reported and the suspect was caught, the church successfully raised \$18,745 in its online GoFundMe effort and Rev. Paul Capetz, a senior pastor at the church, said the windows are now on their way to being restored. The work is expected to be finished this fall.

Hensley joked that when the church initially asked her to do the paintings she hadn't backed away fast enough.

"They didn't really like to have just the raw wooden boards there because it looks like the church is boarded up," Hensley said in an interview on Friday. "I'm a retired school psychologist, but I also do watercolors a lot. But, I thought, 'Oh my God, how am I going to reach [the height of these boards]?"

As luck would have it, her 6'3" grandson was in town.

So, after consulting with muralist Michael Howard, Hensley and her grandson rounded up a few other helpers to paint the murals directly onto the boards. The murals took inspiration from Hensley's own artwork and were done in acrylics. She said with a laugh

See *Murals*, page A5

Life of Newport Beach 'Skipper' honored

BY ERIC LICAS

Fear seized Jennifer Bopp her first time aboard the Fairwind in rough waters. She struggled to stay on two feet as the 40-foot ketch pitched violently from side to side, occasionally tipping over far enough to take on small amounts of water.

Anything that wasn't tied down was either tossed about the wooden boat's cabin, sent skidding across its deck or chucked overboard into the sea. And, for a moment, she panicked. That's when she heard Fairwind's owner, Tim "Skipper" Bercovitz, shouting at her over the squall.

"He said 'I don't know why you're scared. I'm the one who can't swim,'" Bopp recalled.

They made it back to Fairwind's berth just outside of American Legion Post 291 in Newport Beach in one piece, and went on to sail up and down California's coast together over the years. Bopp was just one of hundreds of people Bercovitz welcomed onto his boat

See *Life*, page A6



Photos by Susan Hoffman

LIFEGUARDS, FRIENDS and residents gather around the 17th Street beach lifeguard tower to remember the late Ben Carlson in Newport Beach on Thursday. The 15-year veteran died July 6, 2014 while attempting to rescue a swimmer. Honoring the late lifeguard has become a city tradition.

Celebrating legacy, heroics of late N.B. lifeguard continues

BY SUSAN HOFFMAN

The city of Newport Beach again this year proclaimed July 6 as Ben Carlson Day, giving the community an opportunity to celebrate his legacy.

"With the 100 year centennial coming up [in August] since lifeguard service started, Ben Carlson is the most significant incident that happened in the history of 100 years," Newport Beach Lifeguard Chief Brian O'Rourke said.

It was nine years ago July 6, 2014, when Carlson, a 15-year veteran lifeguard, performed his last call of duty. He tried to rescue a swimmer in distress but did not make it out of the rough surf conditions himself. The waves were estimated at 6- to 8-foot high that late afternoon. Carlson reached the man who needed assistance, but a large wave swept over both of them.

"The other lifeguard personnel at the scene attempted to rescue and assist Ben, but were unable to find him because of the turbulent water," then Newport Beach Fire Department Chief Scott Poster explained at a news con-

See *Lifeguard*, page A5



RESCUE BOAT Seawatch II and their crew gather near the surfline to take part in a brief ceremony honoring Ben Carlson at 17th Street beach in Newport Beach on Thursday.

H.B. resident racks up miles biked, weight lost

BY MATT SZABO

On most mornings, Chris Hill will send his wife Teresa a picture of himself.

Once Chris reaches Warner Avenue in Huntington Beach on his bike ride, he sends the photo. Then, he rides south back down the beach path to the Santa Ana River trail, before veering east to their home near Magnolia Street and Indianapolis Avenue to complete his 22-mile journey.

Teresa, who works as an executive assistant at Hoag Hospital, has visual evidence that her husband is continuing to take care of himself.

The proof is in the pudding — or lack thereof — for Chris, who has transformed his life with the help of his wife's place of employment.

"I feel better than I have in 40 years," said Chris Hill, now 64. "I feel fantastic. To not think about food, it's really strange."

He has nearly cut his weight

in half since having a gastric sleeve surgery at Hoag in December 2021, through the hospital's Bariatric Surgery Weight Loss Program.

After Dr. Adrian Dobrowolsky performed the surgery, Hill said he had the majority of his stomach removed. He no longer has the hunger pangs that are associated with the hormone ghrelin. In fact, now he has to remind himself to eat, and he sticks with a high-protein diet.

Hill said his weight went up

drastically over the years following the birth of his two children, Joshua, 38, and Elizabeth, 33. When he went to the doctor earlier in 2021, Chris Hill said he had developed Type 2 diabetes and hypertension.

His peak weight, in September 2021, was 428 pounds. He was down to 224 before a recent bike ride last week, not far from his goal of 215 pounds.

"For 20 years, I kept saying, I

See *Miles*, page A3

DAILY PILOT WRESTLING DREAM TEAM

TJ McDonnell first to top them all at Fountain Valley

BY ANDREW TURNER

Fortune favors the brave, never far removed from fear.

TJ McDonnell, a decorated senior wrestler at Fountain Valley High, had accomplished nearly everything one can in high school, but in his mind, he had plenty to lose.

For as long as he could remember, the dream had been to win a state championship. If successful, he would be the first in school history to do so.

"I was just so scared of not winning," McDonnell said. "So scared of losing, I knew that I had done too much in my life with that one goal in mind to waste a second preparing to accomplish it. A couple months

before the [state] tournament, I was having trouble sleeping at night, just felt like I was about to wrestle the match in my head.

"I was nervous, getting cold sweats, getting shaky. I was just a mess because ever since I was 6 years old, the goal had been to be a state champion."

McDonnell had hoped to check that box as a junior, when he finished third in the 182-pound bracket. Down to his last chance, he felt like he could not do enough.

With the determination of a fighter, McDonnell battled his nerves and his opponents until he was back on the main stage. Then, he said, a calm came over



James Carbone

FOUNTAIN VALLEY'S TJ McDonnell, holding the 2023 CIF State wrestling winner's bracket, was the 182-pound state champion.

See *Team*, page A4

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TEAM

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him. "Once I got there, all those nerves that I had been feeling months prior had just disappeared," McDonnell said. "I started looking around and seeing everything from a different perspective, honestly, like I never have before at any competition. I just started to really take everything in and tell myself that I wanted to remember every part of it."

It would be a weekend to remember, as McDonnell navigated through six matches to win the 182-pound title in the CIF State individual wrestling championships in Bakersfield. McDonnell pulled out a 5-4 decision over Moreno Valley Canyon Springs' Sonny Kling to win it.

A late reversal gave McDonnell the match, and it reversed his fortunes at the state finals.

McDonnell is the Daily Pilot Wrestler of the Year for the second year in a row. The Oregon State signee won his third Sunset Conference and Southern Section individual wrestling championships, as well as his second Masters Meet title.

"In the last four years, TJ has been a team leader from the start and a role model for the entire team," Fountain Valley coach Brad Woodbury said. "TJ has raised the bar in the Fountain Valley wrestling room. Now, Fountain Valley wrestling asks who is going to be the next state champ, and that is a huge impact on this program. He has had a great career at Fountain Valley, and we are excited to see what he does at the college level."

As a senior, McDonnell went 39-1 overall, claiming titles at the Cossarek Classic, the Mann Classic and Fountain Valley's host Five Counties tournament in



James Carbone

MARINA'S ADRIAN JIMENEZ, left, and Fountain Valley's Anthony Lucio, wrestle at 113 pounds in a CIF Southern Section Inland Division match on Feb. 11.

the regular season. He did not suffer defeat in 2023.

"I definitely knew this year that I was setting an example for the rest of the guys on the team," McDonnell added. "I could see them looking over at me during practice. ... I know that they all knew how badly I wanted it, and I am glad that I was able to show them exactly what it takes. When you want it that bad, all you can do is just give it everything you got, and hopefully it will work out for you."

COACH OF THE YEAR

Brad Woodbury
Fountain Valley
Fountain Valley has enjoyed quite a decade, having won four CIF individual wrestling championships titles and a CIF dual meet wrestling title since 2015. Woodbury have seen them all, including a return to glory in beating Hesperia 282-221 for the Inland Division team title this year.

FIRST TEAM

Anthony Lucio
113 | Fountain Valley | Jr.
As Fountain Valley added another section individual wrestling championships title to its coffers, Lucio provided key lowerweight points in claiming the crown at 113 pounds. Lucio (28-8) also topped the gold bracket at Masters, before placing

sixth at the state meet.

Haden Hernandez
126 | Marina | Sr.
Hernandez kept one of the busiest schedules in the area, accruing 54 wins in 63 matches. His consistency and endurance earned him four tournament titles in the regular season. The Missouri Valley College signee capped his senior season with titles in the Sunset League and Inland Division finals, before a 4-3 showing in the state meet saw him place eighth.

Carissa Qureshi
126 | Marina | Sr.
A trio of bracket winners propelled Marina to its second state championship as a team in as many years, as Marina bested Walnut 114-88. Qureshi (37-0) was merciless, holding her opponents scoreless in five victories by fall to fulfill her destiny as the top seed in the state tournament.

Hercules Windrath
138 | Fountain Valley | Jr.
Windrath started the season on fire with titles in the Cossarek Classic and Mann Classic at 152 pounds. The Cal Poly commit dropped down two weight classes for the postseason, and it culmi-

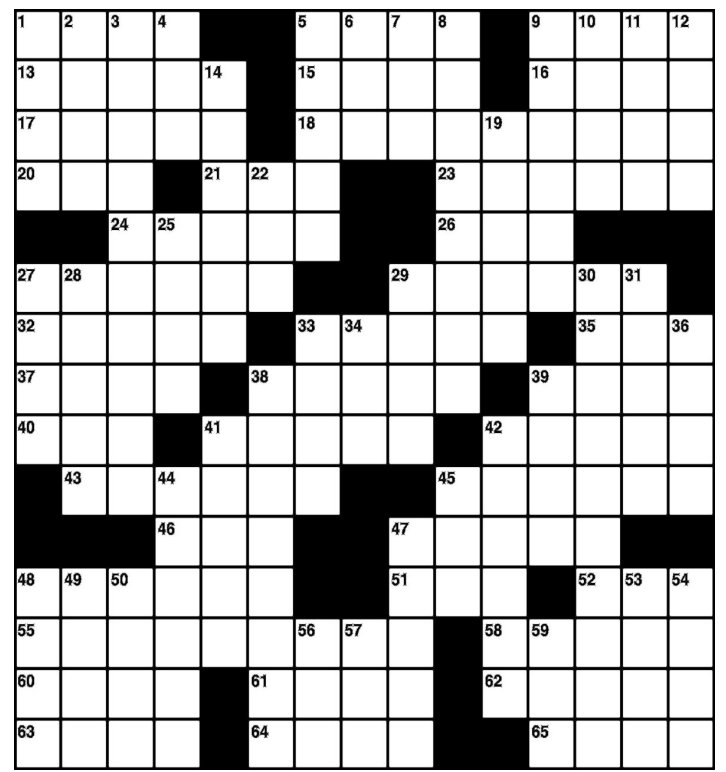
See **Team**, page A6

THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Jacqueline E. Mathews

ACROSS

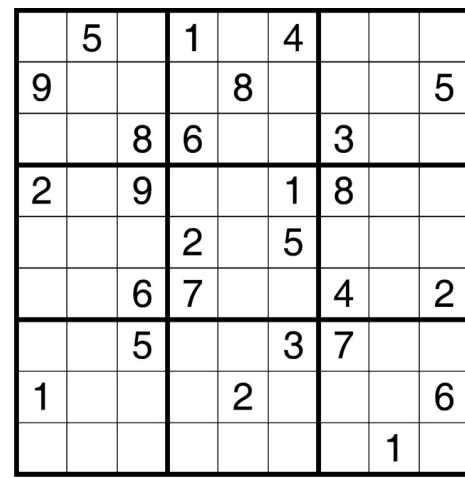
- 1 Serb or Croat
- 5 _ tears; weep
- 9 Glasgow native
- 13 Part of the leg
- 15 _ off; leave suddenly
- 16 Daddy
- 17 Campfire remnant
- 18 Like crude ore
- 20 Spoil
- 21 _ Rather
- 23 Blaring devices
- 24 VCR button
- 26 Mermaid's home
- 27 Season before Christmas
- 29 Shout
- 32 Wander about
- 33 Fragment of glass
- 35 Soft drink
- 37 Turn a _ ear to; ignore
- 38 Planet orbiters
- 39 Roll call response
- 40 Part of every wk.
- 41 Knox & Worth
- 42 Taste or touch
- 43 Treat with contempt
- 45 Crop grower
- 46 TV's "Grand _ Opry"
- 47 By area, Vietnam's largest city
- 48 Talk on and on
- 51 Final section
- 52 Org. for Eagles & Ravens
- 55 Fair
- 58 Cahill or Cibirian
- 60 Spin around
- 61 _ up; busy
- 62 Sword fights
- 63 Without
- 64 Quiche ingredients
- 65 Poems of praise



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 A5.

DOWN

- 1 Part of a goblet
- 2 Succotash bean
- 3 Shorten
- 4 Compete
- 5 Daring feat
- 6 Clucker
- 7 _-shattering; way too loud
- 8 Chests of drawers
- 9 Corkscrew shape
- 10 Walking stick
- 11 _ house; school event
- 12 Small amounts
- 14 Passionate

- 19 Actress Sally
 - 22 Performance
 - 25 Brother of Beau Bridges
 - 27 Uses a plus sign
 - 28 Great fear
 - 29 Embargoes
 - 30 Tolerant of new ideas
 - 31 Sicker than before
 - 33 Tender to the touch
 - 34 Very spicy
 - 36 Look through a keyhole
 - 38 Not excessive
 - 39 Long sandwich
 - 41 _ mignon
 - 42 Made wood smooth
 - 44 Gibb & Williams
 - 45 Summer cooler
 - 47 Follows, as advice
 - 48 LAX arrivals
 - 49 Pool water color
 - 50 Char
 - 53 Emery board
 - 54 Not as much
 - 56 Sizable
 - 57 Calf's place
 - 59 Singing couple
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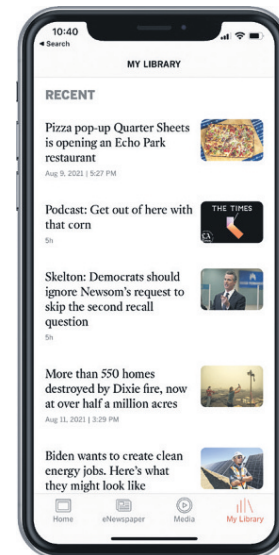
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The state of what's next. **Los Angeles Times**

LIFE

Continued from page A1

who would eventually fall in love with sailing.

Bercovitz died of prostate cancer on June 21.

A handful of his loved ones gathered to reminisce Friday at the American Legion, where he served as sergeant at arms for the past 25 years, longtime friend and fellow veteran Jim Voelkl said. Fairwind, his pride and joy, was a well recognized fixture in the harbor just a few yards from the hall's patio. That's largely because he would invite practically anyone interested in coming aboard to go sailing with him.

"It's the only boat like that that can hold as many people," Kemp Bailey, a Navy veteran and one of the first people to ever sail with Bercovitz in Newport Beach, said. "And it was: come one come all, basi-

cally an open door policy. I don't think anybody's ever been turned away from being on the boat."

Bercovitz made it his mission to spread his passion for sailing. He would reach out to youth groups, charitable organizations, law enforcement and veterans advocates and was constantly arranging outings for them, Voelkl said.

Fellow Army veteran Walter White credited Bercovitz and the many friends he made while crewing the Fairwind for helping him learn to manage post-traumatic stress disorder. The friends gathered with him at the Legion Friday were shocked to learn that he was struggling to control his anger around 2018 before a therapist recommended that he invest in some sort of outlet, which led him to reach out to "Skipper."

"It was the camaraderie that was developed, and

the friendliness," White said. "He had a tradition. It involved rum. At the end of every trip someone was tasked with getting the glasses out. He would say 'nobody got hurt, nothing got broke, I think we came back with the same number of people we started with, and then we'd toast.'"

The Fairwind competed in local boat races almost every Monday night in the summer over the past 25 years, even though the 40-foot, 54-year-old Japanese-built vessel wasn't primarily designed for speed, Voelkl said. But those competitions were the introduction to a lifelong passion for multiple generations of sailors.

The iconic boat has hosted numerous weddings officiated by "Skipper" himself. It has also played a role in many funeral ceremonies, helping loved ones revisit cherished memories that had been formed on its

decks.

Shaun McCrae said he learned everything he knows about sailing from Bercovitz. The veteran and his boat also helped him create a positive relationship with his previously estranged adult son, Dylan Prosser.

Prosser expressed to his father an interest in sailing. McCrae knew Bercovitz was a stern captain in need of a crew at the time, so he convinced him to take son under his wing.

The three of them would go on to sail hundreds of miles together. McCrae said watching Prosser go through the same trials he had and develop similar skills made the fact that they were family undeniable to him.

"It's different," McCrae said of his bond with his son. "In a way, it makes us tighter than even a father and son might be, because we're more like brothers.



Eric Licas

LONGTIME FRIENDS of the late Tim "Skipper" Bercovitz stand aboard his 40-foot wooden Ketch, Fairwind, on Friday.

Everything he went through on this boat, it's almost identical to how I learned."

He, Prosser, Bopp, Bailey, Voelkl and White said the Marina simply would not be the same without "Skipper" and his Fairwind parked in the harbor. So, they were relieved when the boat's new owner decided

to keep it there and convert it to a charter vessel for local trips. That means future generations may continue to board prized, wooden-hulled vessel to fall in love with the ocean all over again.

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TEAM

Continued from page A4

nated in him winning the 138-pound title in the Inland Division finals and placing sixth at state. He sported an overall record of 38-8.

Duda Rodrigues

150 | Newport Harbor | Jr.

Local girls' wrestling shined with four individual state champions. Among those wrestlers, only Rodrigues did not compete for two-time defending state champion Marina. Rodrigues (36-0) kept pace with Qureshi, authoring an undefeated season of her own. She conceded just one point in her five matches at the state meet.

Saiheron Preciado-Meza
189 | Marina | Sr.

A transfer from Lakewood, Preciado-Meza was inserted into the Marina lineup and quickly became a vital piece of the Vikings' repeat efforts. Bound for the University of the Cum-



James Carbone

MARINA'S DESTINY MARQUEZ is the CIF State individual wrestling champion in the 235-pound weight class. Marquez will be competing at the University of the Cumberlands.

berlands, she pinned all five foes she squared off with at state. Preciado-Meza (33-1) took her only loss in the Queen of the Hill at Corona, then ran the

table with six tournament titles thereafter.

Eugenio Franco

195 | Corona del Mar | Jr.

Franco, a verbal commit

to Cal Poly, has proven that dominant wrestlers run in the family. His older brother, Emilio, now in the wrestling program at San Francisco State, was seen

at his matches with some regularity. Franco went 52-8 with 18 pins. The runner-up to Fountain Valley's Ryland Whitworth in the CIF finals, Franco topped the gold bracket at Masters before turning the tables on his league rival in the consolation semifinals en route to a third-place finish at state.

Ryland Whitworth

195 | Fountain Valley | Jr.

An imposing figure, Whitworth continues to be a tough wrestler to score against. Whitworth (39-6) racked up six titles, including a run of four in a row from the Sunset League finals through the Masters blue bracket. He wound up placing fifth at state.

Destiny Marquez

235 | Marina | Sr.

Marquez put the finishing touches on a triumphant trio for Marina at the state finals, capping it in dramatic fashion with a 1-0 decision over Alhambra Mark Keppel's Allie Phillips in the championship

match. She had a 37-2 overall record. Marquez will be joining forces with Preciado-Meza at the University of the Cumberlands.

SECOND TEAM

Name, School, Year, Weight

Hunter Jauregui, Fountain Valley, Fr., 106

Adrian Jimenez, Marina, Sr., 113

Presley Anderson, Marina, Sr., 116

Bach Le, Edison, Sr., 120

Demian Pryima, Newport Harbor, So., 120

Loscar Riestra, Corona del Mar, Sr., 132

Anthony Manno, Newport Harbor, So., 145

Antonio Aramburu, Corona del Mar, Jr., 152

Zion Hernandez, Corona del Mar, Jr., 160

Khale McDonnell, Fountain Valley, So., 170

Jeremy Kanter, Laguna Beach, Sr., 182

David Calix, Costa Mesa, Sr., 220

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