



Courtesy of the Hilbert Museum

HILBERT MUSEUM co-founder Mark Hilbert playfully puts his hat on the bronze sculpture of his likeness. The bust, which includes his late wife and museum co-founder Janet Hilbert, is in the lobby of the museum's North Building.

Hilberts honored with bust unveiled at the art musuem

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

The shared legacy of Mark Hilbert and his late wife, Janet, is now officially set in bronze. The likeness of the longtime Newport Beach residents and founders of the Hilbert Museum of California Art at Chapman University in Orange is captured in a bronze bust created by sculptor Juan Rosillo to preside over the 22,000-square-foot space housing the 5,000 piece Hilbert Collection.

The bust was unveiled by Chapman University President Daniele C. Struppa and Mark Hilbert this week during a ceremony and lunch with Chapman leadership, museum donors, staff, family and friends.

With Janet, who passed away in December, Mark established the museum in 2016 through a gift of artwork and funds to Chapman. Last year, the museum reopened after undergoing a three-year expansion project that tripled the museum's footprint.

"It was always our vision to be able to show more of our Hilbert Collection to the public and create more lifelong fans of California art," Mark said in a statement. "We're grateful to Chapman University for giving us this platform, and for helping make our dream come true. With this latest unveiling at the Hilbert Museum, Janet and I can remain here in spirit indefinitely to meet the next generation of California narrative artists, scene painters

and other visionaries committed to capturing the wonders of the Golden State. My only regret is that my beloved Jan is not here to see and enjoy this."

In addition to housing what is considered to be one of the largest troves of California narrative art, the Hilbert Museum also features private collections of Disney and other animation art, works by American illustrators, Native American arts and American design.

The Hilbert legacy bronze is set in the lobby of the museum's North Building.

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Costa Mesa earmarked a slice of cannabis tax revenue for the arts. Where is it going?



City of Costa Mesa

COSTA MESA'S ARTventure, an annual juried exhibition of community art, is one of the city's efforts to showcase local artists.

BY SARA CARDINE

When Costa Mesa officials drafted the city's retail cannabis ordinance, they agreed to dedicate one-half cent of the 7-cent-per-dollar tax toward the implementation of an Arts & Culture Master Plan. But until recently, it's been unclear where the money's going.

Adopted in 2021, the same year as the cannabis law was crafted following the passage of Measure Q, the arts master plan took years to create as public input was sought on how citywide art and cultural events, programs, policies and staffing might be developed over a five-year period.

The document comprised existing events — like a utility box

art program and the annual ARTventure — and also called for new commitments, such as establishment of the seven-member Arts Commission and creation of a full-time arts specialist, hired in 2022 at an annual salary of \$120,000.

Some saw the tax earmark as a shot in the arm for local arts, including Costa Mesa Mayor John Stephens, who helped draft the recommendation as part of a council-appointed cannabis ad hoc committee.

"Everybody, I think, realized it was a good thing to put money behind — here's a fund to hopefully spur and inspire some investment into public art,"

See **Cannabis**, page A4

H.B. man given 30 years to life for killing

O.C. Superior Court Judge Gary Paer said that if he could have, he would have given a harsher sentence.

BY PAUL ANDERSON

A 37-year-old transient was sentenced Friday to 30 years to life in prison by an Orange County Superior Court judge who said if he could he would have punished the defendant even more for killing a homeless woman and then decapitating her and burying her in the backyard of his family's Huntington Beach home.

Antonio Padilla was convicted Feb. 18 of second-degree murder in the June 30, 2022, killing of 60-year-old Regina "Gina" Marie Lockhart.

Lockhart was a "well-known transient" in the city, Senior Deputy Dist. Atty. Janine Madera told jurors in her opening statement of Padilla's trial.

"She frequented Beach Boulevard and Slater Avenue," Madera added. "She was a veritable fixture."

Orange County Superior Court Judge Gary Paer declined a request from defense attorney Daniel Kim of the Orange County Public Defender's Office to not consider a prior strike for Padilla in sentencing.

Paer noted the defendant was convicted of a violent felony and that the prior conviction was 11 years ago, so it was not "extremely remote. ... And that prior strike was one of violence."

The prior strike conviction was a felony assault, but Madera said he also "split the head open of his mother," but it wasn't reported.

Padilla's crime showed a "high degree of cruelty" and it was done while he was on probation, Paer said.

Paer said he would not con-

See **Sentence**, page A2

ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



Courtesy of Packard Motor Club

THE CROWD: COASTAL ORANGE COUNTY TEEMS WITH ACTIVITY THIS SPRING PAGE A2

Vox Kitchen shakes up South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

After nearly two years, Vox Kitchen & Bar opened at South Coast Plaza on April 7.

"We signed the lease two years ago and the project took about a year and [a] half to finish," said Viet Nguyen, Kei Concepts' chief executive.

The Kei Concepts company includes several popular restaurants like Súp Noodle Bar, Nep Cafe, Kei Coffee House and ROL Hand Roll Bar.

Most of the restaurants in the Little Saigon-based hospitality group are located in the Fountain Valley and Westminster area, including the original Vox Kitchen. The Pan-Asian fusion concept is inspired by Nguyen's time working as a restaurateur and executive chef in Las Vegas and Los Angeles.

"I worked all over the country and when I came back to Orange

County, there was not much of the food scenes I was used to," said Nguyen.

Nguyen incorporated Latin American dishes into the Vox menu, which also offers egg fried rice and spicy noodles.

"I love Peruvian food. The whole entire time I was working in L.A., that was something that was comforting," said Nguyen. "We would go out and eat Peruvian food at least twice a week."

The menu includes dishes like chifa fried rice — a take on the Chinese Peruvian dish arroz chaufa — made with garlic, scallions, sesame, fried egg and aji, the spicy green sauce containing aji peppers, popular in Latin American cuisine. The most recognized Peruvian dish, lomo saltado, is a signature at Vox, on the menu with saltado shaken fries, served with roasted tomato, red onion,

See **Kitchen**, page A4



CEVICHE, FILET garlic noodles, mushroom fried rice and spicy wontons are on the menu at the recently opened Vox Kitchen & Bar at South Coast Plaza.

Courtesy of Vox Kitchen & Bar

CROWD

Continued from page A2

sary outing is named for the late former Los Angeles Rams center Rich Saul. The Childhelp Classic is celebrating its 43rd year on the Orange Coast and will be co-chaired this season by **Debra Violette and Catherine Caporaso**. Eileen Saul, Rich Saul's widow, will act as tournament coordinator.

Organizers expect to raise more than \$600,000 benefiting the work of Childhelp in O.C., saving the lives of the most abused and neglected children in need. Platinum title sponsors of the golf tournament are **Jacquie and Michael Casey**, joining executive sponsors the **O'Connell Family Foundation** and the **Cleo A. Bluth Family Charitable Foundation**. To learn more, visit childhelp.org.

ANNE AND JOHN WORTMANN RECOGNIZED

They are calling for "All Hands on Deck!" Newport Sea Base will host its Good Sea Scout awardees **Anne and John Wortmann** on May 16 at a reception in support of youth involved in the various programs

offered at Sea Base. More than 10,000 local youth participate in Sea Base marine-focused experiences annually. John Wortmann is a Newport Beach Commodore, and the chairman of the Board of Governors for Balboa Bay Club, among many other civic and charitable endeavors supported by both he and wife Anne, the Pasadena Rose Queen in 1976. For ticket information, sponsorship outreach and more, contact **Elena Garcia** at (714) 546-4990 x121 or Elena.Garcia@scouting.org.

A LIFE OF MILITARY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

April 5 marked **Leo "Marty" Schlocker's** 100th birthday in Newport Beach, his home since 1964. The WWII Army veteran was an enlisted member of the 513th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 17th Airborne Division attached to Gen. George Patton's Third Army. Wounded and captured by the German Army during the Battle of the Bulge, Schlocker discarded his dog tags that indicated his Jewish religion, fearing death, and was sent to Stalag 9B as a prisoner of war.

Following his service,



Courtesy of Packard Motor Club

THIS 1932 Packard 901 will be among the vintage cars on display May 8 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Newport Beach.

Schlocker returned to the U.S. and served 23 years with the Los Angeles Police Department, 25 years in the Army Reserve, and 30 years with the L.A. Airport Authority as superintendent of operations. A lifetime member of the Newport Beach Elks Lodge 1767,

Schlocker joined his wife, **Pamela**, family and friends celebrating his 100th, and a lifetime of family, community and national service.

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



Jan Landstrom

LEO "MARTY" Schlocker and his wife, Pamela, are all smiles as they prepare to cut the cake at Marty's 100th birthday celebration.

KITCHEN

Continued from page A1

rice, thick-cut French fries and choice of protein like chicken thigh or filet mignon. The crab congee is also a standout, with sweet crab crowning the silky, savory rice porridge along with scallions, fried garlic, shimeji mushrooms and a soft, buoyant egg yolk.

Expanding into South Coast Plaza, one of Orange County's premier shopping destinations, is a strategic initiative for Nguyen and his team. While the chifa fried rice, saltado shaken fries and congee have sold well at Vox in Fountain Valley over the last seven years, Nguyen is introducing some new dishes at the Costa Mesa location.

"When you come to South Coast Plaza, we actu-

ally have a new and updated menu," Nguyen said. "We are planning to launch a few more things on the menu and make it more encompassing."

A rich seafood scampi, for example, with shrimp, bay scallops, fish and tender calamari luxuriating in flavorful white wine broth that's served with ciabatta rolls for dipping is exclusive to South Coast Plaza. There is also a children's menu with options like garlic butter noodles and egg fried rice, and Nguyen said the kitchen wants to develop a focus on accommodating diners that may have food allergies or restrictions.

"In the past, we focused on what is traditional, how we understand this dish, but now we are getting into more offerings like brown rice, gluten-free and some vegan options," said Ngu-

yen. "We think that will be great for everyone who loves to dine out but can't because of dietary restrictions. That is what we are going to focus on for the next few years."

The space seats 92, including seating on the patio and at the outer bar, which is located near the escalator and where Nguyen said they plan to launch a happy hour. Guests can sip cocktails with a Peruvian slant like a lima sour, made with Pisco, lychee and cucumber or a chifa old fashioned that adds Chinese five-spice and cinnamon to the classic whiskey cocktail.

Vox Kitchen & Bar is located in the Crate & Barrel wing in the former Mezzet Mediterranean Cuisine spot and joins another exciting new addition refreshing the dining options on

the Plaza's Bear Street side. Japanese brand Ramen Nagi opened just last month and drew long lines over the weekend.

Vox's long-awaited opening is well-timed too, considering Nguyen is needed in Aliso Viejo, where construction is beginning on Vox's third location at The Commons at Aliso Viejo Town Center.

"Trader Joe's is there, 99 Ranch Market is opening up, Philz Coffee is opening up and Daiso is there, so we will be next door to some great brands," Nguyen said.

Vox Kitchen & Bar is open daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. at South Coast Plaza at 3333 Bear St., Suite 118 in Costa Mesa.

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VOX KITCHEN & Bar's signature Lomo Saltado, a take on the Peruvian beef stir fry made with french fries, is served at the new Costa Mesa location at South Coast Plaza.

Courtesy of Vox Kitchen & Bar

CANNABIS

Continued from page A1

Stephens said Thursday. "My view was we'd see some great public art."

Now, with more than \$3.3 million in total revenue having so far been generated from the legal sale of marijuana, the application of the arts funding is not so visible.

Parks & Community Services Director Brian Gruner explained during an April 3 Arts Commission meeting the cannabis tax funds were not being accumulated for a special purpose, but were going into the city's general fund, from which arts programs and initiatives have historically been covered.

Gruner told commissioners while city leaders initially projected the cannabis tax revenue would be sufficient to fund the total implementation of the master plan's programs — around \$8 million annually — actual income has been less robust, possibly due to a cap placed last year on the number of dispensaries allowed to do business.

"Currently, the tax revenue coming in is not sufficient to basically fund the arts master plan, so the council has been supplementing additional funds from the general fund to help offset that," he said. "The council has been very, very supportive of the arts, and they certainly make that a priority to continue the funding, at least for the next fiscal year."

Total implementation of the five-year plan — which began July 2021 and ends in June 2026 — is estimated to cost \$1,941,700, including a projected cost for next fiscal year of \$457,300, according to figures provided by Gruner at last week's commission meeting.

But given the arts master plan funding constitutes 1/14 of the total cannabis tax taken in, the city would have to earn \$27,183,800 in revenue



City of Costa Mesa

A UTILITY BOX art wrap program is included in Costa Mesa's Arts & Culture Master Plan.

from dispensaries for arts and culture programs to be fully funded.

By contrast, figures provided in the 2024-25 adopted budget show only \$420,967 in arts-related cannabis taxes will have been collected by June 30.

That the earmark is being returned to the city's general fund came as a surprise to resident Jim Fitzpatrick, a former planning commissioner-turned-cannabis-consultant who makes frequent appearances at public meetings to decry what he sees as waste and mispending at City Hall.

"Measure Q came after the Arts & Culture Master Plan. [The arts tax] was never intended to fund it," Fitzpatrick said during the Arts Commission meeting. "It was always intended to be incremental, over and above, to do more for the City of the Arts. Now [staff] is saying they're having to supplement it with the general fund. They've got it backwards."

City Finance Director Carol Molina, in the throes of preparing next fiscal year's budget, deferred questions about the cannabis tax to Costa Mesa spokesman Tony Dodero,

who clarified that the city's intention was that the revenue would be the sole funding source for programs identified in the document.

"Ultimately, the money from Measure Q is supposed to totally fund the master plan, but at this point it's not. And, because of that, for the last three years the city's been taking money out of the general fund to fund the master plan," Dodero said Wednesday.

Stephens said while that's not exactly what he envisioned when the council approved the tax set-aside, he doesn't think of using the general fund to pay for arts programming as a "subsidy."

"My vision was that it would be tangible, that people would be able to see a tangible art piece and trace it back to the cannabis art funds," the mayor said Thursday. "But it's still obviously an additional source of funds we didn't have before. If that allows us to get [an arts specialist], that wasn't what I was thinking — but I don't disagree with that."

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THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Stella Zawistowski

ACROSS

- 1 Presents
- 6 City's smaller cousin
- 10 F on a gas gauge
- 14 Folded sheet of paper
- 15 Double-reed instrument
- 16 Akron's state
- 17 Gulping down
- 19 Taking lots of time
- 20 Home's storage area
- 21 Hurries
- 23 _ homo (Biblical phrase)
- 25 U2's lead singer
- 26 Citi Field or Petco Park
- 29 Hamsters, horses, and hares
- 33 Snakelike fish
- 34 Conveyance
- 36 _ semper tyrannis
- 37 Guitar attachment
- 38 "I Can" rapper
- 39 "_ heard of him"
- 40 Speed measurement: Abbr.
- 41 Italian ice confection
- 45 Lion's home
- 46 Flaky seasoning: 2 wds.
- 48 Large snake
- 50 Sagacious
- 51 Domesticated
- 52 Not in class
- 55 Hiking path
- 58 Similar to
- 59 "Shh! Don't tell!": 3 wds.
- 64 Scissors sound
- 65 Have to have
- 66 Glow brightly
- 67 Probability
- 68 Has a meal
- 69 Big name in supermarket chicken

DOWN

- 1 Some significant

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14						15					16			
17					18						19			
	20								21	22				
			23			24		25						
26	27	28						29			30	31	32	
33				34			35				36			
37							38					39		
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46			47					48			49			
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52	53	54							55			56	57	
58						59	60	61	62					63
64						65					66			
67						68					69			

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.

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

For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A3.

others: Abbr.
2 Des Moines' state
3 Not hilly
4 Leaned
5 Ask for
6 Haul from behind
7 Sash with a

kimono
8 Got a gold medal
9 Colorful gin cocktail
10 "_ Prison Blues"
11 "We're in trouble!"
12 Part of a poem

- 13 Captains' diaries
- 18 Happen
- 22 Yard or meter
- 24 Flow (from)
- 25 Paul McCartney, for one
- 26 Lines of stitches
- 27 Arizona city
- 28 First Greek letter
- 30 All kidding _
- 31 Pep (up)
- 32 Fragrance
- 35 A Bobbey Twin
- 41 Financial profit
- 42 "Goosebumps" author: 2 wds.
- 43 Udder parts
- 44 Part of a couch
- 47 Uses a broom
- 49 _-keen
- 52 As well
- 53 Tie tightly
- 54 Lose traction
- 56 Colored eye part
- 57 Former "Tonight Show" host Jay
- 60 Breakfast brew
- 61 Ready to go
- 62 Product plugs
- 63 Six plus four

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