

School district looks abroad

Anaheim Union High School District banks on attracting international students amid ongoing enrollment declines.

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

Months before a fight erupted over mass teacher layoffs at Anaheim Union High School District, trustees considered a licensing agreement to help attract more international students.

The district's existing international program aims to "create exchanges exposing both the international students and district students to different cultures and experiences."

But with declining enrollment and sagging attendance rates, attracting F-1 visa students paying \$15,250 tuition is another way district officials have sought to inject revenue into a cash-strapped budget to maintain staffing levels

See **District**, page A2

ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



Don Leach

'UNSAVORY' IN FULLERTON OFFERS A TASTE OF FOOD POLITICS PAGE A7



Photos by Sarah Mosqueda

CHEF ROY CHOI joined journalist Jenn Tanaka in conversation at the Rancho Santa Margarita Library on July 13.

Choi's recipe for recovery



A KOGI BBQ Truck appeared at the Rancho Santa Margarita Library after Choi's talk.

At a library event, Chef Roy Choi shares his struggles, successes and memories of living in O.C.

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

When people line up for Roy Choi, it's usually for the chance to order his tacos. On July 13, hungry fans instead queued up for copies of his New York Times best-selling cookbook and memoir, "L.A. Son," at the Rancho Santa Margarita Library.

Seventy-five complimentary copies of the book were available on a first-come first-serve basis during Choi's Author Talk with OC Public Libraries on Saturday, funded in part by a grant from the California Department of Aging and administered locally by the Orange County Office on Aging.

Local Orange County journalist Jenn Tan-

See **Choi**, page A4

Newport's Murphy Karges, bassist of Sugar Ray, pens book

BY MATT SZABO

Murphy Karges can still remember the first practice for the band Sugar Ray in 1988.

It happened at a little beach house down on the Newport Peninsula. Karges, who had graduated from University High in Irvine a couple of years earlier, met up with Corona del Mar High graduates Mark McGrath, Rodney Sheppard and Stan Frazier.

"I got a phone call because Stan had dated my sister once," Karges said. "That's the only connection, and he knew me. He asked if I wanted to meet at the beach to jam."

Karges recalls the amazing energy that ran through the band. Almost a decade later, Sugar Ray would hit it big with the song "Fly."

The original grouping — McGrath on lead vocals, Sheppard on lead guitar, Karges on bass on and Frazier on drums — stayed together for 23 years.

See **Karges**, page A5



Courtesy of Andrew Karges

NEWPORT BEACH'S Murphy Karges was a founding member of the popular band Sugar Ray.

"I just wanted to help people. I wanted to encourage people to get rid of their fear and pursue what they love."

— Murphy Karges



File Photo

THE "HIJABI QUEENS" mural beamed from Anaheim's Little Arabia for two years before being painted over.

A beloved mural in Little Arabia is painted over

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

For the past two years, a mural of a stylish Muslim woman donning a red hijab gave Little Arabia in Anaheim a colorful sense of community.

Hijabis, who wear the headscarf in Islamic observance, proudly posed for selfies in front of the mural, which stood as a

rare, positive portrayal of Muslim women through public art.

But a coat of black paint has recently erased the "Hijabi Queens" mural that once covered the privately owned wall along Brookhurst Street, Little Arabia's officially designated thoroughfare.

See **Mural**, page A4

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San Clemente eyes sales tax to pay for sand

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

If coastal erosion has made anything clear to San Clemente officials, it's that staying a beach town is going to come at a steep cost.

By fall, the city has to scrounge up \$2.9 million to complete the first phase of a long-awaited beach nourishment project being overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Going forward, San Clemente will have to share 50% of the costs with the federal government to continue the project over its cyclical 50-year lifespan.

But without brand-name hotels generating bed tax revenue along its vanishing beaches, San Clemente simply doesn't have the money.

During a special City Council meeting on Wednesday, council members mulled over how to raise the needed funds, including putting a 1% local sales tax increase on the November ballot.

San Clemente City Manager Andy Hall estimated that \$2 million would have to be saved annually to cover a roughly \$10-million cost every five to six years when the Army Corps resumes beach nourishment efforts.

That's in addition to city-led projects, including a \$2-million emergency sand replenishment effort that's currently underway to shore up North Beach's critically eroded coastline.

The combined sales tax

rate in Orange County is 7.75%. City officials estimate that a 1% boost would generate more than \$13.5 million annually.

San Clemente Mayor Victor Cabral signaled his support for a direct tax to fund a sand budget, as opposed to a tax that would go into the city's general fund.

"The good thing about a direct tax is if you don't spend the money, it doesn't get spent somewhere else," said Cabral in making the case. "It's set aside for sand and the projects we designate."

Most residents at the meeting voiced support for raising the local sales tax specifically to fund efforts to shore up San Clemente's battered beaches.

"Truly, the only reason I pay my taxes is so I don't go to prison," Steve Lang told council members. "I vote 100% for a dedicated tax for sand."

But convincing enough voters to approve it during a general election that's poised to be polarized seemed too risky to other members of the council.

Councilman Mark Enmeier pointed to a city survey conducted in May that found 64% of residents supported a general tax measure, a mark too close to call for a direct tax, even when favorably considering the margin of error.

Enmeier supported the direct tax in principle but felt that a general tax measure funding public safety alongside beach sand projects was a safer bet, espe-



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

EFFORTS ARE underway to repair North Beach's eroded coastline, one of many costly projects in San Clemente.

cially as it would only require a simple majority vote while a direct tax would require approval by more than two-thirds of the voters.

"I'm really worried because if this doesn't pass, we don't have a beach town," he said.

Councilman Chris Duncan, a Democrat running against Republican Assemblywoman Laurie Davis for AD-74 in November, railed against state officials, who he blamed for failing to

help San Clemente face its coastal conundrums, especially as the vital Lossan corridor snakes through beachside railroad tracks that have been shuttered by repeated landslides.

"I know I'm disappointing a lot of my own supporters," he said. "But I'm trying to be realistic. I'm trying to be practical and bring a comprehensive approach to this."

Duncan pointed to two previous ballot measures in San Clemente proposing

to raise hotel bed taxes that both failed.

After a brief recess, he moved to indefinitely table discussion on a tax measure but found only the support of Councilman Steve Knoblock.

Cabral continued to express optimism in San Clemente voters passing a sand-only tax.

"I'm confident that we can get this supermajority," Cabral countered. "I will do whatever I can to convince people."

Cabral made a motion for a direct tax measure to be placed on the agenda for the upcoming Aug. 6 council meeting, where it was later clarified by Hall that only three votes would be needed to get it on the ballot.

Two other council members agreed and voted to resume the conversation next month.

gabriel.sanroman
@latimes.com
Twitter: @gsanroman2



DISTRICT

Continued from page A1

before initially approving 119 teacher layoffs in March.

Discussion on the licensing contract, though, was scant during the Aug. 10, 2023, school board meeting.

"There's no cost in entering into this agreement?" trustee Jessica Guerrero asked.

It wouldn't cost the district a dime, she was assured.

With that, the board voted unanimously to allow Lumicend, a newly formed Irvine-based company, use of the district's intellectual property, especially that of Oxford Academy in Cypress, in efforts to secure international school partnerships and recruit at least five full-time F-1 visa students every school year.

Before the contract vote, trustees approved a \$30,000 study in March 2023 by educational consultant John Ahn on market opportunities in Asia for the district's international program, which specifically recommended Lumicend as a third-party broker partnerships abroad, including for a proposed Oxford Academy Korea campus.

"Lumicend will be responsible for providing the necessary support and services required for a successful partnership in Korea, relieving the district of such responsibilities," Ahn wrote in the report stamped with Oxford Academy's logo.

Ahn later inked the licensing contract that followed as Lumicend's president.

He did not disclose if he had any relationship to the company, which received its state business license two weeks before the vote, when authoring the July 2023 study. The agenda for the school board meeting also did not attach the re-



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

THE ANAHEIM UNION High School District headquarters in Anaheim on Wednesday.

port, and it was later obtained by a TimesOC records request.

"Dr. Ahn's position with Lumicend was both disclosed and known as part of agenda consideration before voting," a district spokesperson said.

Trustees did not return a request for comment.

In 2017, the school board approved the district's application to the Department of Homeland Security's Student and Exchange Visitor Program to allow for the enrollment of international students on F-1 visas.

By then, AUHSD, which is 70% Latino and serves 27,000 students across campuses in Anaheim, Buena Park, Cypress, La Palma and Stanton, had already hemorrhaged roughly 2,000 students.

The district signed an \$83,000 contract with Linden Educational Services in 2019 to help organize school tours abroad, recruit international students and administer a housing program.

Supt. Mike Matsuda traveled to China that year to tour numerous school sites.

Before the pandemic shut down schools, the district had 21 international

students — primarily from China — attending its schools during the 2019-20 academic year, according to internal records.

Half of the international students attended high schools in Cypress and La Palma.

The pandemic interrupted recruitment efforts, but within two school years, the district's F-1 visa program rebounded from remote learning.

With tuition up from prepandemic levels, AUHSD collected nearly \$500,000 from educating its last international cohort, district documents show.

More than half of those students attended school at three campuses outside of Anaheim, including Oxford Academy, which is ranked as the fourth-best high school in the state, where students have to test into attendance.

According to an annual report by Homeland Security Investigations, AUHSD placed in the Top 200 for F-1 visa students enrolled at a secondary school, a list otherwise dominated by private schools.

"Private school students are tuition-paying students," said Christopher

Page, executive director of the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel. "Public schools are not built the same way. That's why private schools are well-suited for the visa program."

Declining enrollment is not unique to the district. According to the Public Policy Institute of California, student enrollment is down statewide with a 6% drop charted since 2013.

Between 2013 and 2023, school districts in Orange County shed 13% of their student body, a trend expected to continue through the next decade.

For as much additional revenue as AUHSD's international program has brought in over the years, board members still had to address projected budget shortfalls earlier this year.

"How did we address our declining enrollment?" board president Annemarie Randle-Trejo asked at the pivotal Mar. 7, 2024, school board meeting.

Assistant Supt. Jaron Fried mentioned the district's F-1 visa program that allows for the recruitment of international students first in his response.

The teacher layoffs,

which were later rescinded amid school-site rallies and administrative law hearings, prompted a renewed interest in the district's recent contracts, including its licensing agreement with Lumicend.

According to the Delaware Division of Corporations, Lumicend formed on June 9, 2023.

Later that month, Ahn referenced a Zoom meeting with Fried in an email to AUHSD's legal counsel.

"One of the topics we discussed was partnership arrangement options with overseas schools," Ahn wrote. "At that time, we briefly talked about a third-party entity or 'intermediary' as a possible way to shield the district from potential liabilities and other legal concerns that could arise."

In July, the same month the feasibility study was completed, Ahn sent the district's attorney a template of the licensing agreement that trustees would later be voting on and mentioned that a potential South Korean partnership would like a nonbinding agreement signed in August.

The proposed contract would give Lumicend exclusive licensing in South Korea.

Lumicend received its California business license on July 26, 2023, according to secretary of state records. Fifteen days later, trustees approved the licensing agreement.

Ahn did not respond to TimesOC requests for comment.

The district released a statement on April 25 defending its consulting contracts against criticisms aired during the layoff fight.

"Recent rumors and accusations about 'special relationships' and implied corruption related to the District's contracts with outside consultants are unfounded and reckless and may constitute defama-

tion," the statement read.

The district deemed consultants "thought leaders" who lent their expertise in agreement with its educational mission.

Its statement referred to Timothy Nguyen as Lumicend's owner but made no mention of Ahn, though secretary of state documents in October 2023 listed him as the company's co-manager.

"To be clear, Lumicend pays the District, not the other way around," the statement said. "This agreement provides revenue to the District and bolsters an important program."

Under the contract, Lumicend has already paid AUHSD an initial \$15,000 for licensing rights. But questions about disclosures of the company's potential profits from establishing international school partnerships with the district's intellectual property went unanswered.

With layoffs averted for now, AUHSD projects that it will lose 4,300 more students by the 2027-28 school year.

Whether the district's international program can blunt the impact remains to be seen.

Ahn wrote an email to district officials in January updating them on Lumicend's progress in terms of securing international partnerships.

"We do not have a firm signed commitment yet," he wrote, "but we are engaged in four separate discussions with schools in Vietnam, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and China, and we are hopeful that these negotiations will lead to partnerships this year."

The district repeatedly declined to comment on how many F-1 visa students or international school partnerships have been delivered by Lumicend, so far.

gabriel.sanroman
@latimes.com
Twitter: @gsanroman2

THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

By Stella Zawistowski

- ACROSS**
 1 City in civil rights history
 6 Greek salad cheese
 10 Finished
 14 Harvard and Yale, e.g.
 15 Remove wrinkles from
 16 Thoroughly bad
 17 Assesses
 18 Draped garment
 19 Guitar part
 20 Beg
 22 Royal realms
 24 www.aspc.____
 25 Intention
 26 Top of a door
 29 Sault_ Marie
 30 Vitality
 33 Wine, in Italian
 42 Social signals
 43 Fit for the occasion
 44 Rowboat propeller
 45 Breathed heavily
 48 May honoree
 49 Luau dish
 50 Place to see a play
 54 AL East team
 58 12-month period
 59 Locate
 61 Catch in a trap
 62 Have at stake
 63 Pre-owned
 64 Dine at home: 2 wds.
 65 Visual ____
 66 Allows
 67 Winter weather forecast
- DOWN**
 1 Location
 2 All tied up
 3 Top-10 ____
 4 Musician's timekeeper

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SUDOKU

By the Mepham 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								
	1	5		6		2	7	
			8			1		5
						3		8
			5		1			
		3						4
6	4				5			
	5	1		8		9	3	
			7					2

For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A6.

- 5 Firmly declare body!"
 6 Symbol of resistance
 7 Historical period
 8 Ripped
 9 Like "Moana" and "Inside Out"
 10 Jeans material
 11 " _ my dead
- 12 Pleasant
 13 Fraternal group
 21 Get older
 23 Harbor platform
 26 Smiled brightly: 2 wds.
 27 Lacking in skill

- 28 Soda bottle unit
 29 Brooklyn brownstone feature
 30 Concert location
 31 Annoyed
 32 Chaotic situation
 33 Mastercard competitor
 35 Sweden neighbor: Abbr.
 36 Invented by an author
 38 Deeply embarrassing
 41 Plant's anchor
 46 Month after March: Abbr.
 47 Unwanted sounds
 48 Old German money
 50 Supermodel Banks
 51 One who inherits
 52 " _ of Eden" (Steinbeck novel)
 53 Get up
 54 _ and ends
 55 After the deadline
 56 A Great Lake
 57 Mailed
 60 Take-home

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Don Leach | Staff Photographer

JACK CHAMPION'S "An Attempted Murder," a sculpture featuring two bronze crows, was introduced to the community on the grounds of Laguna Beach City Hall on July 12.

Crow sculptures land in Laguna Beach to portray 'An Attempted Murder'

BY ANDREW TURNER

Birds of a feather stick together. Whether you take it in the literal sense or stretch that meaning to some extent, there is much of that adage at play in the artistry in front of Laguna Beach City Hall. A pair of bronze crows — each approximately 6 feet tall and 1,000 pounds — have been on the building's lawn for about a week. The sculptures will remain there into September as part of the city's temporary public art program. Jack Champion, the creative who brought the birds to town, grew up with crows. His grandmother kept a crow as a pet, and he has been known to feed them himself. "I've got a little group of them that would follow me around," Champion said. "I feed them, and

they would follow my truck home. They recognize my truck, follow me up the hill. I've fed crows everywhere I've gone. I lived in Marin for 25 years before, and that's where I started feeding crows. In Oakland, I had crows there that I fed. They're easy to befriend, and once you gain their trust, they recognize you." Between an affection for crows and an interest in art, Champion, now 71, is merging pieces of his past with a full career in the rearview mirror. For roughly a decade, Champion has been a regular contributor to the artistic works at Burning Man. It was there that he introduced an installation in 2016 known as "Murder," which featured five large resin crows. A group of at least three crows is referred to as a murder, Champion explained, giving rise to the title of "An Attempted

Murder" for the current work on display in Laguna Beach. The bronze birds, which are covered in a black patina, will become available at the end of their stay. Champion said he will sell them for \$300,000 for the pair, and he will not separate them. "[Laguna Beach] seems like a nice place down there, that community," Champion said. "I'd really like it to stay there permanently. That's my ambition, is to have a permanent home for them. If I had my preferences, I'd rather have it in public view so that people can enjoy it, but I'm not opposed to selling it to a private collector." Champion attended art school for a year out of high school, but the life of a starving artist wasn't one he could embrace. It led him to a career in con-

See **Crow**, page A4

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MURAL

Continued from page A1

The business owner of Al-Amira Jewelry ultimately decided to replace it with marquee signage advertising his shop after an offer to share the wall did not pan out.

Now that the mural is gone, Karter and Doaa Zaher, the husband-and-wife duo behind the Hijabi Queens NFT project, feel like a cultural cornerstone of Little Arabia has been lost.

"The mural made Muslim hijabi women feel represented," Doaa said. "Some of them even moved closer to Brookhurst Street because of how much they felt like they belonged here. After it was taken down, it's had the exact opposite effect, where all of these Muslim women are shocked, sad and angry."

In 2022, the Zahers felt like the broad canvas of-

fered by the wall made it the perfect spot in the heart of Little Arabia for the project after months of searching locations all over Southern California.

Back then, the jewelry store owner only had one request: that the hijabi depicted be bejeweled in a nod to his business.

The Zahers happily obliged.

But last month, Karter received a call about plans to replace the mural.

He visited the jewelry store and pleaded against taking it down.

According to Karter, the business owner pointed to a jewelry store across the street as new competition and cited the need to re-purpose the wall for more advertising. He offered a compromise in the form of repainting a smaller mural to share the wall.

"I was 100% pushing to keep the whole mural intact," Karter said. "If it's half the size, it has no impact, literally nothing."

Representatives from Al-Amira Jewelry declined to comment for the story but pointed TimesOC to statements made on the business' behalf on social media.

Al-Amira Jewelry claimed that Karter wanted to charge \$5,000 to redo a smaller-sized mural with an \$80-per-month maintenance fee.

"In the [two] years the mural was up, people have tagged on it multiple times and every time we're the ones who get it fixed," the statement read. "This mural can and will be replaced with something that is actually for the community and not for profit."

Karter countered that he proposed a \$40-per-month maintenance fee — and the mural got painted over soon after.

With the Hijabi Queens mural now erased, Doaa said that a few Little Arabia business owners have reached out and offered

their walls.

Megan Dadsi, owner of La Zwina Boutique in Little Arabia, recalled feeling shocked when she first drove by the mural and noticed it was gone.

"It portrayed our community in a beautiful way, especially with the headscarf and being a hijabi myself," Dadsi said. "Even a lot of tourists and visitors to this area enjoyed the artwork."

Though Dadsi wants to remain neutral in the dispute, she reached out to Doaa and offered wall space by her business for a replacement mural, if needed, and if given the OK by the landlord.

No future mural plans have been finalized.

Two other Hijabi Queens murals that were part of the project remain intact elsewhere, but neither of those artworks had the front-facing prominence as the one painted over.

The mural's erasure has prompted debates within



AL-AMIRA JEWELRY'S business owner has painted over the "Hijabi Queens" mural that previously covered the wall.

Don Leach

the community about private property, public art and Little Arabia's identity as its business profile has only continued to grow since Anaheim voted to officially designate the ethnic enclave in 2022.

"Sure the jewelry store owns the wall, but that's not what this is about," Doaa said. "As Muslim Americans, and as Arab Americans, we are constantly fighting an outside beast, which is media propaganda, which is external communities, who have been calling us terrorists for decades."

The Zahers remain hopeful that community outcry might resurrect the mural in one form or another.

"We hope to find a positive outcome for everybody," Doaa said. "That includes the business owner. I hope that he opens his eyes to the fact that he has a responsibility to his community. I hope that he changes his ways. And I hope that his business doesn't suffer."

gabriel.sanroman
@latimes.com
Twitter: @gsanroman2



Sarah Mosqueda

COMPLIMENTARY COPIES of Roy Choi's bestselling cookbook and memoir, "L.A. Son," were handed out at the Rancho Santa Margarita Library.

CHOI

Continued from page A1

aka led the moderated conversation in which Choi spoke candidly about his struggles and his successes. "I always say I am not much of 'The Bear,' I am more Winnie the Pooh," Choi said, referencing the FX original series about food and family.

Choi also shared about his experiences in Orange County, including being nursed back to health by his mother in Ranch Santa Margarita after he suffered poor health while struggling with a gambling addiction.

"I lived in Orange County for a long time, we moved out here in high school," said Choi. "You will read in the book in the chapter about my downfall into gambling and reaching rock bottom ... in that recovery phase my parents were living out here in Ranch Santa Margarita."

Choi came to the United States from Seoul, South Korea, in 1972 and lived in Los Angeles with his family and later Villa Park. His family owned Silver Garden, an Anaheim Korean restaurant for three years, and Choi graduated from Cal State Fullerton with a bachelor's degree in philosophy in 1994. (In May, CSUF awarded Choi an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree during the university's College of Business and Economics Commencement ceremony at Titan Stadium.) But an obsession with Emeril Lagasse's "Essence of Emeril," which he writes about in "L.A. Son," inspired him to pursue the culinary arts. After working in some of New York's best kitchens, Choi launched gourmet Korean Mexican taco truck, Kogi BBQ, in 2008, which changed the narrative around food trucks.

"Although maybe a larger society wasn't eating at food trucks the same way they do now, it is a cultural thing. It comes from neighborhoods, it comes from immigrants and it comes from people that I grew up around. It is a very important resource and a way to become an American," Choi said of the food truck movement during his talk. "Unfortunately food trucks were looked down upon through many racist lenses and different narratives. If you remember, in the old days they were called 'roach coaches.'"

Choi capitalized on social media, in its infancy at the time, to usher in a new era for mobile kitchens and taco trucks. Kogi trucks

used to have regular stops in Orange County on their routes, but the trucks have yet to return since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

Audience members pressed Choi about Kogi BBQ coming back to O.C.

"The Kogi Truck had a really great history here in Orange County for almost 10 years. We stopped right at COVID, but we are hopefully looking to come back for sure," Choi said to resounding applause.

He also talked about his "bromance" with actor and director Jon Favreau, who he met when he was hired to consult on Favreau's 2014 film, "Chef."

"The moment we met it was like a rom-com, the moment we locked eyes it was over. That two-week job turned into a 12-year friendship," Choi joked. "It was fate that Jon and I met, we are kind of two sides of the same coin as people. We both believe in bringing joy and happiness to this world."

Since the movie, Choi and Favreau have worked together on the Netflix series "The Chef Show" and opened a "Chef Food Truck" parked at the Park MGM in Las Vegas.

Additionally, Choi is the host of "Broken Bread," an Emmy Award-winning PBS SoCal series co-produced by KCET and Tastemade.

Tanaka prompted Choi to share about fellow food truck owner and local Orange County chef Bill Bracken of Bracken's Kitchen. Bracken's nonprofit repurposes food waste into meals that get taken to food insecure communities, and Choi highlighted his work in the series.

"We wanted to find the people that inspire us and not what is big and popular in the world," Choi said. "With Bill, it was really important for me to include Orange County ... and he fit everything that we wanted to say."

Choi also discussed a new book due out in spring 2025, titled "The Choi of Cooking," which will highlight healthy recipes for those prone to late-night cravings, like himself.

"We have recipes in it like smash burgers and milkshakes and all the things that you crave after midnight," said Choi.

After the discussion, Choi signed copies of his book, and the first 75 to receive a copy lined up for his tacos after all, when a surprise Kogi BBQ truck arrived at the end of the event to serve them.

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CROW

Continued from page A3

struction.

Afterward, a new chapter unfolded, one still with tools but also creative freedom.

"During construction, it taught me a lot of things about assembling things, making things work," Champion said. "I created furniture and stuff when I was in construction, but after I retired, which is about 14 years ago now, I said, 'Well, I'm going to do what I set out to do. Now, I can. I've got a pension coming. I can do what I want now.' I started doing art, and I started going to Burning Man."

Champion introduced oversized elephant sculptures to Burning Man in 2022. The 30-foot elephants were referred to collectively as "Homage au Dalí," an attempt to recreate the 1948 painting "Los Elefantes" by Salvador Dalí.

The desert provides a



THE BRONZE sculptures in "An Attempted Murder" have a black patina applied to better resemble the likeness of crows.

Don Leach
Staff Photographer

"perfect landscape" to have the mundane stand out, Champion added.

"The desert landscape, ... it looks almost identical to what Salvador Dalí was painting in that picture, so it just fit there," Champion said. "I tried to bring out aspects of the painting

into my project. You could see in the distance in the painting there's a Greek temple that's way far off in the distance. I made a Greek temple there that housed the generator that powered the lights.

"I also made a giant picture frame to enclose it, to

see how many people would pick up on that, that they were in this painting and they could impose themselves in it by stepping into the painting."

andrewturner@latimes.com
Twitter: @AndrewTurnerTCN

Artist documents a changing Anaheim Boulevard

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

There goes the neighborhood.

When Anaheim resident Alkaid Ramirez came home from college he returned to a neighborhood that hardly resembled the one he had left. Entire buildings and historic homes along Anaheim Boulevard were replaced by high-rises or, worse, empty lots.

"I was gone for a couple years and I came home and looked at the street I was very distraught," said Ramirez. "It seemed like it was a whole different place when I returned."

It was then that the artist and educator felt compelled to document the changing boulevard and the continuous redevelopment of Anaheim barrios in an attempt to save some part of the community that was once there, even if it

was just its memory.

"Anaheim Blvd: Hood to Suburb" is the body of work that resulted from the four-year project. On view now at Crear Studio in Santa Ana, supported in part by LibroMobile Arts Cooperative, the solo exhibition uses traditional photography and poetry to craft a counter-narrative to the complex issue of gentrification and archive the swift changes.

Anaheim isn't the only city in Orange County where communities have been displaced in the name of progress. Downtown Santa Ana business owners along 4th Street have struggled with the ongoing construction of a \$509.5-million OC Streetcar project since 2021. In Stanton's Tina-Pacific neighborhood, fourplexes have been razed by the city, and empty units remain boarded up, the

result of a years-long effort to redevelop the area.

"It really comes down to how close this hits to home," said Ramirez. "This is me realizing that it's knocking on my front door."

In a piece called "Where Did the Neighbors Go?" an architectural light table displays a photo timeline of a luxury high-rise built in just nine short months on transparency paper. The light table stands on a patch of astro turf, signifying the artificial splendor of the quickly built housing. A suitcase sits at the center of the square of fake grass, a nod to the residents' displacement from the neighborhoods they are priced out of.

Ramirez uses Post-it notes to ask questions about the construction pictured on the photo timeline, notes made in the



ANAHEIM BASED documentary photographer Alkaid Ramirez stands with his project "Anaheim Blvd: Hood to Suburb," at the Crear Studio in Santa Ana.

Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

margins of the plans. Realtor marketing advertisements are also on the table in their original format and as a doctored version Ramirez has created to reveal their true intentions.

For a section title "Re-

turn to Sender" Ramirez has "hijacked" postcards from commercial real estate firms sent to his family home asking to buy the property and uses their same tactics to respond.

"One of things that the developers do is work together with house flippers or hedge funders that come to your property or send you postcards saying, 'Hey, we want to buy your house as is,' and they flood your mailbox with postcards from all these different companies," said Ramirez.

"ATTENTION Juan: I want to buy your property" reads a pink postcard from a Realtor. In identical fonts and colors, Ramirez has created his own postcard that reads "ATTENTION Monte: We are not going to sell you our home."

Folks are invited to bring in similar postcards they have received or fill out the ones Ramirez has created to mail back to the companies.

"We will send them out en masse, so we will flood their mailbox like they flood ours," said Ramirez.

From the planning phase, Ramirez moves the narrative into the leasing office and move-in marketing that is designed to draw people there. A-frames of posters declaring "Now Leasing" have been reimagined to read "Now Gentrifying" with the same festive balloons tied to the sign. Ramirez documents the replacing of the signs with three panels of photographs documenting the switch.

Ramirez has also tapped fellow Anaheim artist, Jesus Cortez, to participate in the exhibition. Two poems by Cortez, "What Will They Take?" and "Down by Anaheim Blvd" printed on large blueprint-style maps of Anaheim, with a single black pushpin to notate the Ramirez family home.

"His work is amazing, but I always get choked up a little bit at the end of this poem, because it talks about the night in July 2012 when one of the Anaheim police officers gunned down an unarmed Manuel Diaz," Ramirez said of "Down by Anaheim Blvd."

The poem references a protest against police brutality the shooting inspired and the Anaheim police department shutting it down.

"After the fear, after the fury, an encounter with a gentrifier ended in them telling me to leave the area of Anaheim Blvd," the last few lines of the poem read. "Only for me to remind them that I am more Anaheim than they they will ever be."

The most impactful piece is a collage of photographs that fit together to show the full stretch of Ramirez's childhood neighborhood off South Street and Anaheim Boulevard. Along the gallery's longest wall, an uninterrupted view of the change happening is given full visibility.

"We have two 15-foot

FYI

"Anaheim Blvd: Hood to Suburb" is on view until Sept. 14, when an artist talk at 2 p.m. is planned. Crear Studio Gallery is located at 222 W. 5th St. in Santa Ana and is open from 4 to 8 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays and noon to 4 p.m. on Saturdays.

images of Anaheim Boulevard, viewing it from the west side and the east side of the lot. As you go down both sides of the street, you will notice there are Post-it notes that tell parts of my oral history, parts of the things that I remember and what used to be there," said Ramirez.

Ramirez takes cues from Edward Ruscha's photographs of Sunset Boulevard and Hollywood Boulevard for the piece, and the unbroken line tracing the length of the street brings it into focus in a way that can't be observed by simply walking or driving it.

"As you go through the images, you start to see the changes in a grand scope. While you may be driving you can only see a building here and a building there; here you can see it all out in front of you."

The photo will be included in a forthcoming book published by Seaton Street Press called "Anaheim Blvd: Hood to Suburb," along with essays by Cortez and Crear Studio founder and author, Sarah Rafael Garcia.

"It's going to be a 6 by 8 book that expands at 8 feet, so we will have this giant panoramic photo in the book," said Ramirez.

And like the postcards, Ramirez encourages viewers to call a hotline he has set up to leave messages or stories of displacement for the redevelopers at (714) 729-3651.

Ramirez said he knows there are stories like his out there but different perspectives too. He said he would never want anyone who lives in these new developments to feel attacked. He said he hopes people come away from his work with a better understanding of just some of the ways gentrification is affecting Anaheim.

"My way of pushing these ideas is always being charitable to the individuals and being very harsh to the systems," said Ramirez.

Ramirez said he would like to see the money these new developments bring to the local economy be used for community centers and education opportunities for youth. He knows the development of barrios like his isn't stopping.

"I am hopeful for the future, but things continue to change, and we are still receiving postcards."

sarah.mosqueda
@latimes.com
Twitter: @SarahNMos



Dr. Maheswari Senthil is a nationally recognized surgical oncologist who specializes in the management of advanced abdominal cancers.

KARGES

Continued from page A1

Karges, who lives in Newport Beach with his wife and three sons, is proud of that. He's also proud that he's about to become an author for the first time.

His new book, "Basics for Bassists: How to Not Suck at Playing Bass," comes out on Tuesday.

Karges, 57, said the book took him about two years to complete. It comes after he ran a music school in west-side Costa Mesa for a couple of years, at the same time he was doing a YouTube channel.

He originally thought he'd be doing a video series on how to play bass, but it ended up in a book format.

"I don't want to just sit and do the hour thing," Karges said. "I was like, 'What if I can just put all my information in one place that they can take away and look at it on their own time?' ... I just wanted to help people. I wanted to

encourage people to get rid of their fear and pursue what they love. If it's bass and music, then wonderful."

The book features humor, self-deprecating at times, and plenty of illustrations. It also has storytelling that makes it appealing to music fans, including a chapter on Karges' own inspirations on bass.

Karges held a book-signing party Saturday night at House of Blues Anaheim's Foundation Room. After the signing, he performed with the Millennium All-Stars, which also features former members of bands like Third Eye Blind, Goo Goo Dolls and Panic at the Disco.

Karges has played bass for more than four decades, but he wants readers of his book to understand that much of music is simple, at its core.

"A song is linear, and you're only going to learn two parts, maybe three," he said. "There's a thing called the three-part



MURPHY KARGES at his home in Newport Beach on Wednesday.

Matt Szabo

method in the book. You only have to memorize six or seven notes for songs sometimes. You've got to know where they go, and you've got to have rhythm, and you've got to learn some skill. But I want to give people a path ... so they can see, 'Oh, that's not that hard, I can do that.'"

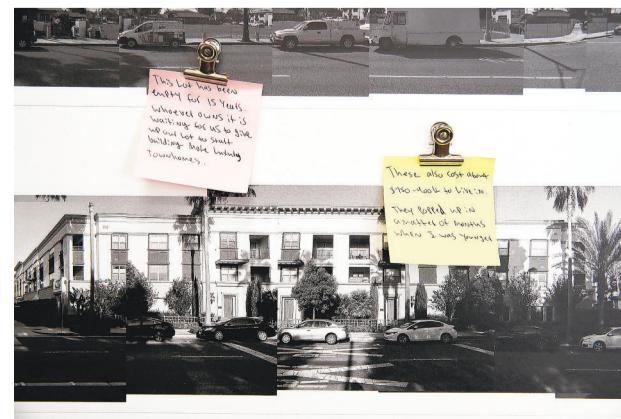
Karges said the process of putting the book together, including his two editors Matt Price and Erica Carlin, illustrator Paul Palmer-Edwards, and others, almost felt like a band piecing together an album. He dedicated the book to his late sister Stacy, who he said died in a car accident

in Seattle many years ago. She was his biggest fan.

The former Sugar Ray bassist maintains a passion for life, and he said he hopes that is evident in the book from the first words of Chapter One: "Congratulations. You picked a cool instrument."

"My overall writing rule is, don't be boring," Karges said. "I'd rather not write it if it was like a whole bunch of boring words with no energy, no heart and pictures of bad-looking hands with bad fingernails."

matthew.szabo
@latimes.com
Twitter: @mjszabo



A DETAIL OF Alkaid Ramirez's project, "Anaheim Blvd: Hood to Suburb."

forum

A WORD, PLEASE | JUNE CASAGRANDE

7 words whose common use would have made past grammar experts livid

These days, we're all experts in the perils of time travel. Through extensive research in front of our TVs, we know that if we go back in time we should never step on a bug, never try to talk sense into Yoko, and, most crucial, never, ever get romantic with an enchanting stranger who "reminds us" of our grandmother or



grandfather. But there's one peril we're completely unprepared for: old-timey grammar snobs. Turns out, Marty McFly and Stewie Griffin have been utterly negligent in preparing us for what would happen should we go back, say, 60 or 70 years and use a word like "deplete," "essential," "gorgeous" or "livid." Spoiler

alert: We would be wrong, wrong, wrong — at least according to some influential language experts at the time. Here's a list of seven dangerous words to put on a Post-it note in your time machine. Absolutely. Thinking about time traveling back to the Roaring '20s? If your answer is "absolutely!" you're in trouble. Word cops of the day, notably the au-

thor FK. Ball, had a bone to pick with "absolutely": "It is much used, but seldom needed," he wrote. Decades later, Ball's peeve was still going strong, with language commentators saying it's bad to use "absolutely" to mean "yes." Concept. Do you find time travel to be a fascinating concept? Well, if you go back to 1965, keep it to yourself. "The tendency

among some groups, particularly social workers, teachers, and advertising writers, to make the lesser seem the greater and to enfold the commonplace in the mantle of science or philosophy has had a debasing effect on the word 'concept,'" wrote Theodore M. Bernstein in the righteous burn on social workers we never

See Word, page A8

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CONTACT US

Carol Cormaci Executive Editor carol.cormaci@latimes.com

gabriel.sanroman@latimes.com

Beth Raff Advertising Manager (424) 225-9928 beth.raff@latimes.com

Matt Szabo, Huntington Beach and Sports matthew.szabo@latimes.com

10540 Talbert Ave., Suite 300 West, Fountain Valley, CA 92708

Andrew Turner, Laguna Beach and Sports andrew.turner@latimes.com

Reporters: Sara Cardine, Costa Mesa sara.cardine@latimes.com

Send Letters to the Editor to erik.haugli@latimes.com. See Mailbag for guidelines.

Sarah Mosqueda, TimesOC sarah.mosqueda@latimes.com

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Gabriel San Román, TimesOC

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MAILBAG

Air show and hot air in H.B.

The joke's on me. Huntington Beach City Council members Tony Strickland, Gracie Van der Mark, Pat Burns and Casey McKeon insisted they would majority-run the city like a business. I thought they meant like a hard-nosed, tight-budget business. Silly me. The summary of the "nine-page deal with the air show" (reported in the Daily Pilot by Sara Cardine on July 11) was truly gag-worthy. Even the ill-fated Poseidon desalination deal only guaranteed 30 years of bloated returns on taxpayer's backs. Our starched shirt "conservative" City Atty. Michael Gates managed to limit the bounty for Kevin Elliott's Code Four event management company to a mere 40 years. The corrupt, run-out-of-



File Photo

CANADIAN FORCES Snowbirds pass by in formation, followed by trails of smoke during the Pacific Airshow in Huntington Beach in 2019.

Dodger-town McCourts would have drooled at the lucrative parking deal. Our council and city attorney gave away parking revenues for 3,500 spaces, 600 of which would be for the exclusive use of the vendor for about a month, every

year. Nice gift from a city that depends on tourist income.

I was stunned by Gates' work ethic excuse. He claimed that it took the council "at least four" closed sessions to close the deal. Exactly like the student who whines about their D grade since they "worked really hard."

To top it off, Gates dismissed some of the financial giveaways as trivial: "None of this exceeded \$1 million." In a city with under 100,000 taxpayers, a million bucks per year is trivial? No wonder Gates fought in the courts for a year and half to keep the deal from going public.

Buzz McCord Huntington Beach

I leave town every July 4 to escape the war zone, as well as the air-and-noise-polluting air show. I can't imagine what humans with PTSD and our pets suffer from fireworks and loud jets flying low over Hunt-

ington Beach.

Most residents are unaware the city contracts with the "kill" shelter in Tustin. If every coastal city from Seal Beach down to San Clemente could have their own no-kill shelter, what's the matter with Huntington? Did we really need a playground on the beach or more playground apparatuses in the park? And now the majority City Council members ignoring important issues for our residents, more concerned with library books and spending millions of taxpayer dollars on frivolous lawsuits, has been exposed.

To quote Steve Shepherd in the July 14 Daily Pilot Mailbag, "Not once have they expressed even the slightest interest in the environmental or sustainability issues confronting our community."

Sadly, it might be too late for Huntington Beach. I am

See Mailbag, page A7

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CITY OF COSTA MESA NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING DATE CHANGE NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the public hearing originally scheduled for Tuesday, July 16, 2024 will now be held by the Costa Mesa City Council at its regular meeting at City Hall Council Chambers, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa, California on Tuesday, August 6, 2024 at 7:00 P.M., or as soon as possible thereafter, to consider:

ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE NO. 2024-02 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COSTA MESA AMENDING TITLE 13 (PLANNING, ZONING, AND DEVELOPMENT) OF THE COSTA MESA MUNICIPAL CODE TO ESTABLISH AFFORDABLE HOUSING REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS

OR MAKE CHANGES TO ORDINANCE NO. 2024-02 AND GIVE A NEW FIRST READING

AND A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING AND ADOPTING FEES RELATED TO THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN-LIEU FEES FOR THE PROPOSED AFFORDABLE HOUSING ORDINANCE (ORDINANCE NO. 2024-02)

Pursuant to Government Code Section 66016, data and analysis indicating the estimated fees required to comply with the Affordable Housing Ordinance have been made available on or before May 20, 2024. Copies of the in-lieu fees data and analysis can be obtained during normal business hours at City Hall, 1st Floor, City Clerk's Office, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa and on the City's website at: https://www.costamesaca.gov/trending/affordable-housing-ordinance.

Public Comments: Members of the public wishing to participate in the meeting may find instructions to participate on the agenda. Members of the public may also submit written comments via email to the City Clerk at cityclerk@costamesaca.gov and they will be provided to the City Council, made available to the public, and will be part of the meeting record. Any written communications, photos, or other materials for copying and distribution to the City Council that are 10 pages or less, can be e-mailed to cityclerk@costamesaca.gov, submitted to the City Clerk's Office on a flash drive, or mailed to the City Clerk's Office. Kindly submit materials to the City Clerk AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE, BUT NO LATER THAN 12:00 p.m. on the day of the hearing, August 6, 2024. All materials, pictures, PowerPoints, and videos submitted for display at a public meeting must be previously reviewed by staff to verify appropriateness for general audiences. No links to YouTube videos or other streaming services will be accepted, a direct video file will need to be emailed to staff prior to each meeting in order to minimize complications and to play the video without delay. The video must be one of the following formats, .mp4, .mov or .wmv. Only one file may be included per speaker for public comments. Please note that materials submitted by the public that are deemed appropriate for general audiences will not be redacted in any way and will be posted online as submitted, including any personal contact information. For further assistance, contact the City Clerk's Office at (714) 754-5225. The City Council agenda and related documents may also be viewed on the City's website at http://costamesaca.gov, 72 hours prior to the public hearing date. IF THE AFOREMENTIONED ACTION IS CHALLENGED IN COURT, the challenge may be limited to only those issues raised at the public hearing described in the notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City Council at, or prior to, the public hearing. Brenda Green, City Clerk, City of Costa Mesa Published July 21 and July 28, 2024

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Sudoku grid with numbers: 3 4 7 1 5 2 8 6 9, 8 1 5 4 6 9 2 7 3, 2 9 6 8 7 3 1 4 5, 5 6 2 9 4 7 3 1 8, 4 8 9 5 3 1 6 2 7, 1 7 3 6 2 8 5 9 4, 6 2 4 3 9 5 7 8 1, 7 5 1 2 8 4 9 3 6, 9 3 8 7 1 6 4 5 2



John Hill

John Hill passed peacefully on April 4, 2024. Born April 1, 1932 in Oak Hill W. Va to Claude & Mildred Hill. His childhood was marred by a disease that left him in a wheelchair. Dad was proud to be a Hill & persevered to continue honor the Hill Family Legacy. Dad went to Woodberry Forrest in Virginia where he excelled in academics & sports. John went to Yale, played freshman football graduating in 1954 with a B.S. in Industrial Engineering. After Yale, Dad came home to help run Mankin Lumber for 4 years. During this time he met Frances Ann Burruss and they married on Dec 21st, 1958, remaining together for 65 years. At OSU, John earned Masters degrees in Physics and Astronomy. After graduating from OSU, they moved to West Los Angeles where Dad took a job with Douglas Aircraft. This was the beginning of a career as an astrophysicist working on classified telescopic and missile defense projects. He was most proud of his work on the Space Station. He was the author of numerous technical papers and received many awards. The Hills moved to Costa Mesa in 1970 & raised 4 children. He loved traveling with Fran & family on trips to Hawaii, Canada & Europe with their daughter Samantha. Dad is survived by his wife of 65 years, Fran Hill, children, & spouses: Carolyn Hill Transue, John & Jeany Hill, Spencer & Emily Hill, Samantha & Jan Abrahamsson. Grandchildren Anna & Jason Lister, Preston, Anderson & Spencer Hill, Drake & Sara Abrahamsson & Sara's spouse, Levy Barlevy. Great grandchildren are Ella & Levi Johnson. Dad lives in us and everyone he knew & loved. We will miss our dear Dad. May he rest in eternal peace with Mom.



James V. Young

June 13, 1935 - July 13, 2024

James Vincent Young passed away peacefully on July 13th, 2024, at age 89. He is survived by his four daughters, Anne Williams, Karen Grecnic, Sheryl Lane and Kristi Porter, as well as his four grandchildren, Dustin Williams, Jason Perry, Parker Webster and Mikayla Webster, and two great grandchildren, Elliot Perry and Skylar Perry.

He was predeceased by his ex-wife, Joyce Darlene Young, on September 22nd, 2019.

Known as "Mr. J" to many, Jim ran a popular and successful barbershop on 17th Street in Costa Mesa for almost 50 years, before his daughter, Sheryl, took it over and renamed it The Classic Clipper.

Jim loved to fish and camp in the High Sierras and to hang out on the water at Lake Havasu and the Colorado River with his buddies. He did so up through his 88th year, before being diagnosed with lymphoma in November 2022.

"The Boys" were fixtures at The Chicken Coop in Costa Mesa, The Dry Dock in Huntington Beach, and at Lake Sabrina.

Jim spent his whole life taking care of his family members—we didn't make it easy for him—and he accomplished every single financial goal he set for himself. He did so by denying his own needs and dreams in order to make his kids' and grandkids' lives better. Through hard work and the Lord's blessings, he was a very accomplished man, and his generous spirit was a gift to all.

"We are eternally grateful to you and for you, my dear Papa. You've earned this rest in the company of your loved ones in Heaven. We look forward to seeing your sweet grin once more when we meet you there."

'Unsavory' offers a taste of food politics

A new exhibit at the Muckenthaler Cultural Center looks at unpalatable issues surrounding food.

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Delicious food can give us so much. Besides providing sustenance and nutrition, it can bring joy and happiness. Food can be associated with memories and comfort, and it can teach us about our history or where we come from.

But the problematic and often destructive ways food is sourced in modern society can also leave a bad taste in one's mouth. "Unsavory," a new exhibit on view at the Muckenthaler Cultural Center in Fullerton, explores these issues.

"I used to think about food as this very kind of neutral topic," said curator Jac Alva. "We watch cooking shows, we gather and we eat, but we don't think about how food is so often implicated in inequity, violence and disparities."

Several years ago while completing her masters program at Azusa Pacific University, Alva analyzed a banana installation by Honduran artist Leonardo González at Museo Museum and Cultural Center in Anaheim. The work inspired Alva to take an academic and artistic approach to food.

"I realized food, to me, can no longer be neutral. In order for us to survive, so many times we are relying on those inequities, that violence, relying on other people's misfortune in order for us to have food on the table."

Alva has gathered the work of 15 artists who use fine art, photography, low-brow imagery and recycled art to challenge what we value when it comes to food consumption and, more importantly, what we don't. Food is political, and "Unsavory" is designed to highlight the economic devastation caused by food waste, social injustices like



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

CURATOR JAC ALVA uses a combination of fine art, photography, low-brow imagery and recycled art to bring attention to the destructive aspects of modern and contemporary global food systems for the "Unsavory" exhibit at the Muckenthaler Cultural Center in Fullerton. She stands with Francisco Palomares' "Fresh Painting" above.

the lack of healthy food options or access to nutrition education, and scarcity felt within food-insecure communities.

Alva addresses America's dependence on sugar and her own struggles with artificial sweetener with a series that uses packets consumed by Alva herself to create collages that substitute expletives for traditional logos.

"This showcases this relationship I have with sugar, where I am addicted to it and I try to ween off of it by using artificial sweeteners, but I still seem to have the same problem," said Alva.

Nearby, "Deplorable Food Freck," a three-paneled work from graphic artist Greedy King, shows a landscape of nauseating depictions of food production, distribution and consumption from farm to fast food table.

"This is a play on Hieronymus Bosch's 'Garden of Earthly Delights,' only instead of a depiction of heaven and hell, in this case he is taking what is occurring in the food in-

dustry and he is slightly perverting it," Alva said. "But there is an element of reality in all three pieces."

With the work of Allison Bergman and Marcelle Sirkus, authors of "Food Not Food," real and natural food is photographed next to its artificially manufactured and processed counterparts.

"They are trying to educate the public about nutrition and about why it is we see things as food, when they are not because they are over-processed," said Alva.

In one image, a ripe Red Delicious apple stands next to a red corn-syrup-lacquered candied apple. In another, a pile of French-cut green beans transitions into a pile of green licorice bites.

Contrast is a key element to "Unsavory." The familiar is made unfamiliar, like with "Genetic Carnage" from Recycled Propaganda that uses the Chiquita banana logo but replaces the fruit in Miss Chiquita's hat with hand grenades and arms her with a gun. Delicious-looking sculp-



MCDONALD'S LUNCH boxes are part of Curator Jac Alva's "Unsavory" exhibition at the Muckenthaler in Fullerton.



A RENDITION of the Chiquita banana logo appears in "Unsavory" at the Muckenthaler Cultural Center.

tions."

Among the most powerful pieces in the exhibit is a service industry project from Ohio-based artist Morgan Bukovec, in which food isn't even visually present. One hundred guest checkbooks are nailed to the wall, with sexist sayings cross-stitched on them for a piece titled "Are You on the Menu?"

Each check has a remark, command or question that male customers said to Bukovec during her time working as a server and bartender.

"Some of them are microaggressions, some of them are very blatant statements and some are extremely unsavory," said Alva. "We are coupling this with an installation where you can share your story on a blank guest check. We are letting people express how

they feel about this work but also share their own story."

Alva maintains that the piece emphasizes the idea that food is political and even the experience of dining out can be hard to stomach when you consider all the complexities involved in the labor that makes restaurants possible.

"I think it is really important that we don't shy away from understanding and empathizing with people that are in the service industry and the things that they face," said Alva. Events planned in conjunction with the exhibit include a book-signing with Bergman and Sirkus on Aug. 1 and a Q&A with artist Tony J. Smith on Aug. 8.

sarah.mosqueda
@latimes.com
Twitter: @SarahNMos

MAILBAG

Continued from page A6

ashamed to tell people where I live and currently hoping to move.

Lynn Copeland
Huntington Beach

The Huntington Beach Airshow settlement (give-away of money) shows malfeasance and malpractice on the part of the Huntington Beach mayor and her gang. I am tired of watching our taxpayer dollars wasting away by incompetent and so-called governmental leaders!

Andrew Einhorn
Huntington Beach

Now that the actual agreement Newport Beach Councilman Tony Strickland and his fellow conservative council members made with Code Four on behalf of Kevin Elliot is

public, I understand why City Atty. Michael Gates wanted to keep the agreement secret. The reason given in court was that disclosing the agreement would hurt future litigation. And, for once, I agree with the city attorney. If this agreement is not a gift of public resources directed by the majority toward their principal backer, then the agreement is at least proof positive that Strickland should not be trusted with public resources and that Gates is a terrible litigator.

Galen Pickett
Huntington Beach

Mayor Gracey Van Der Mark's defense of the odious Pacific Airshow settlement is completely deceptive. H.B. taxpayers should not be stuck with a \$10-plus-million, potentially 40-year deal with a company headed by a political

pal of our city attorney. Based on this corrupt sell-out, the air show operator could even run multiple shows in a year, and residents would have no say in the matter! Since this scheme was cooked up in closed meetings, the public was completely unaware of these political giveaways. It's not surprising that our city attorney did not want this released. Since government malfeasance and political cronyism are real possibilities, an attorney general investigation is critical.

Carol Daus
Huntington Beach

Little did unsuspecting Huntington Beach residents know they'd be participating, after the 2022 election, in a new game show produced by and starring some unsavory actors — "Let's Make a Very Bad Deal." Behind door

number one, a ban on "pornographic" books in the children's and teen sections of the library. Behind door number two, a back-door plan to outsource management of the public library to a for-profit company. Behind door number three, a secret multimillion-dollar settlement with Pacific Airshow to give away a multitude of benefits, paid for by taxpayers, for up to 40 years. There have been many other slightly less deplorable "prizes" as well.

The city attorney and conservative majority on the City Council are the headlines in this show. Instead of doing what's best for all our citizens, they've sidelined the council minority, voting as a block to pass controversial agenda items and resolutions on votes of 4-3 or 4-0-3. Conversely, agenda items proposed by the minority

always fail 3-4.

The continual gaslighting is astounding. Last week the details of the secret settlement with Pacific Airshow were released, without mention that it was only because a private citizen sued and prevailed under the California Public Records Act. Mayor Gracey Van Der Mark touted a highly questionable, unverifiable annual \$100-million financial benefit to Huntington Beach and surrounding cities, due to the three-day air show, as one of the reasons this costly settlement was such a great idea.

When the minority three City Council members issued a statement regarding the abhorrent settlement details, the mayor accused them of political gamesmanship, casting aspersions on the integrity of the City Council, and using the settlement as a

means of campaigning for reelection. Is this the same mayor who, at a recent meeting, sternly lectured us on polarization in the community and called for cohesion?

It's well past time for this atrocious game show to be canceled and the bad actors fired, fined, disbarred and/or incarcerated.

Michele Burgess
Huntington Beach

In response to Apodaca's latest

I applaud columnist Patrice Apodaca for her insightful commentary about the recent tragedy at Fashion Island (Daily Pilot & TimesOC, July 14). Despite mass shootings in Laguna Woods and San Bernardino, far too many people believed gun vi-

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Shiril Goedike, *Water Games—Calais Sur Mer*, 1964, Oil on canvas, 30 x 41 in. The Buck Collection at UCI Jack and Shanaz Langson Institute and Museum of California Art.

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WORD

Continued from page A6

knew we needed till he laid it down. A concept, Bernstein insists in “The Careful Writer,” isn’t an idea. It’s “an idea that results from drawing a generalization from particulars.” You’ve been warned.

Deplore. If you think “deplorable” is a loaded word today, take a little trip back to 1942 when one Eric Partridge couldn’t think of a single thing more deplorable than the way we modern folks use the word “deplore.” As he wrote in “Usage and Abusage,” you can’t deplore a human being (did I mention it was 1942?). “‘Deplore’ governs a thing or quality, not a person.”

Essential. For me, the best reason to travel back to 1961 would be to lure author Thomas Elliott Berry onto my time machine for a return trip to 2024.



James Carbone

“DOC” PARKS his “Time Machine” DeLorean at a “Drive-In to the Future” double feature of “Back to the Future II” and “Back to the Future III” in Montclair, Calif., in September 2019.

I’d take him to a cosmetics counter and show him all the products made with

essential oils. Then I’d take him to a bookstore and turn to the entry for “es-

sential” in every dictionary on the shelf. Then I’d sit back and watch his head

explode. As Berry wrote in “The Most Common Mistakes in English Usage,” the word “essential” means only “necessary for the existence of. ... It should not be used synonymously with ‘important.’”

Gender. Returning now to the Department of Don’t Go There, the word “gender” doesn’t mean what you think it means. At least it didn’t used to, according to Bernstein. People and animals don’t have genders, he said. Only words do. “‘Gender’ is a grammatical term, denoting (in English) whether words pertaining to a noun or pronoun are classed as masculine, feminine, or neuter,” he insists in “The Careful Writer.” “It is not a substitute for ‘sex’ (but, then, what is?).”

Gorgeous. There’s more than one reason you should avoid calling someone “gorgeous” if you go back to 1965. For the most important of them, I refer

you back to the grandmother/grandfather warning above. But almost as perilous: Anyone who read Bernstein’s book will sneer at your vocabulary. “‘Gorgeous’ applies not to a person but to the adornment of a person,” he wrote. “As a synonym for ‘beautiful’ or ‘splendid,’ the word is slang.”

Livid. Have you heard that someone was so angry they were “livid”? Or perhaps you heard someone use “livid,” as Truman Capote did, to mean a shade of red? Back in the day, that would have made Berry downright ... well, livid. Per his 1961 rant, “livid” means only a bluish color, the color of lead or the color of bruised flesh.

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.

MAILBAG

Continued from page A7

olence would never make its way to Newport. Sadly, that view simply isn’t true any longer.

Alarmed by mass shootings at Sandy Hook, Parkland, Uvalde and scores of other schools, 50 of my Laguna Beach neighbors and I co-signed an open letter last summer urging President Biden to convene a gun safety summit at Camp David. When we posted the letter online, 1,000 people coast to coast quickly added their names.

The next time the Surgeon General issues a public health warning about gun violence, my friends and I hope he will encourage the president to take a page out of Jimmy Carter’s 1978 playbook, when the former president hosted Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Menachem Begin of Israel for two weeks at Camp David until they forged a peace agreement.

Imagine what could happen if Biden invited

representatives from the National Rifle Assn., 2nd Amendment proponents, national law enforcement officials and family members of shooting victims to Camp David. I am a realist, so I am sure their initial discussions would be raw and discouraging; still, I am equally certain that in the end they will be able to agree on several new gun safety measures Congress can approve.

America’s killing fields are littered with victims of gun violence. This now includes Newport. The time has come for a summit at Camp David.

Denny Freidenrich
Laguna Beach

Thoughts on Newport elections

It looks like a new day might be coming for the Newport Beach City Council. Instead of voting too frequently as a block like it has for the last seven or eight years, rumor has it that the council members might become a bit more

independent. That also means that they will be listening closer to the will of the people in their district. Perhaps in the not too distant future, even the enflamed fliers that befool every election in Newport will be the exception rather than the rule.

The council is less democratic than it should be because members must be voted on at large rather than by residents of the district they represent, the latter making so much more sense. Candidates consequently need a whole bundle of money to run at large.

It is true that the city is home to some very wealthy people, but that is no excuse to make running for office out of reach for everybody who wants to serve. Wealth is a reality of coastal California, but it shouldn’t influence council elections. Let’s make it so everyone who wants to serve has a chance to do so without having to seek financial backers. Newport’s council would be so much more responsive to

the people it represents if we could take some of the money out of politics.

Lynn Lorenz
Newport Beach

Model planes vs. vernal pools

A gang convenes in Costa Mesa every other week to use historic, archeological, and environmentally sensitive city property. They openly lobby the City Council to comply or be ousted from office. So, the council ignores federal, state and local laws to appease them. But this is no drug kingpin, it’s the Harbor Soaring Society — headquartered out of town — who have *insisted* since the 1970s they’re *entitled* to fly their toy planes on the vernal pool watershed of Fairview Park despite having many other flying venues.

This vernal pool complex is so rare that scientists from the federal and state Departments of Fish and Wildlife have told Costa Mesa to protect the pools,

as have biologists the city hired to update the park’s master plan, the steering committee the city appointed, the Fairview Park administrator, over 800 members of the Fairview Park Alliance, and 70.9% of residents who voted Measure AA into law in 2016 to protect Fairview Park.

This site is also precious because it is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places as the Fairview Indian Site, and one of only two federally listed archaeological sites in Orange County. California Administrative Code, Title 14, Section 4308c, states, “No person shall remove, injure, deface or destroy any object of paleontological, archaeological, or historical interest or value.” Yet, there are aerial photographs showing damage to the vernal pool watershed, and the vernal pools it feeds, over the past 50 years.

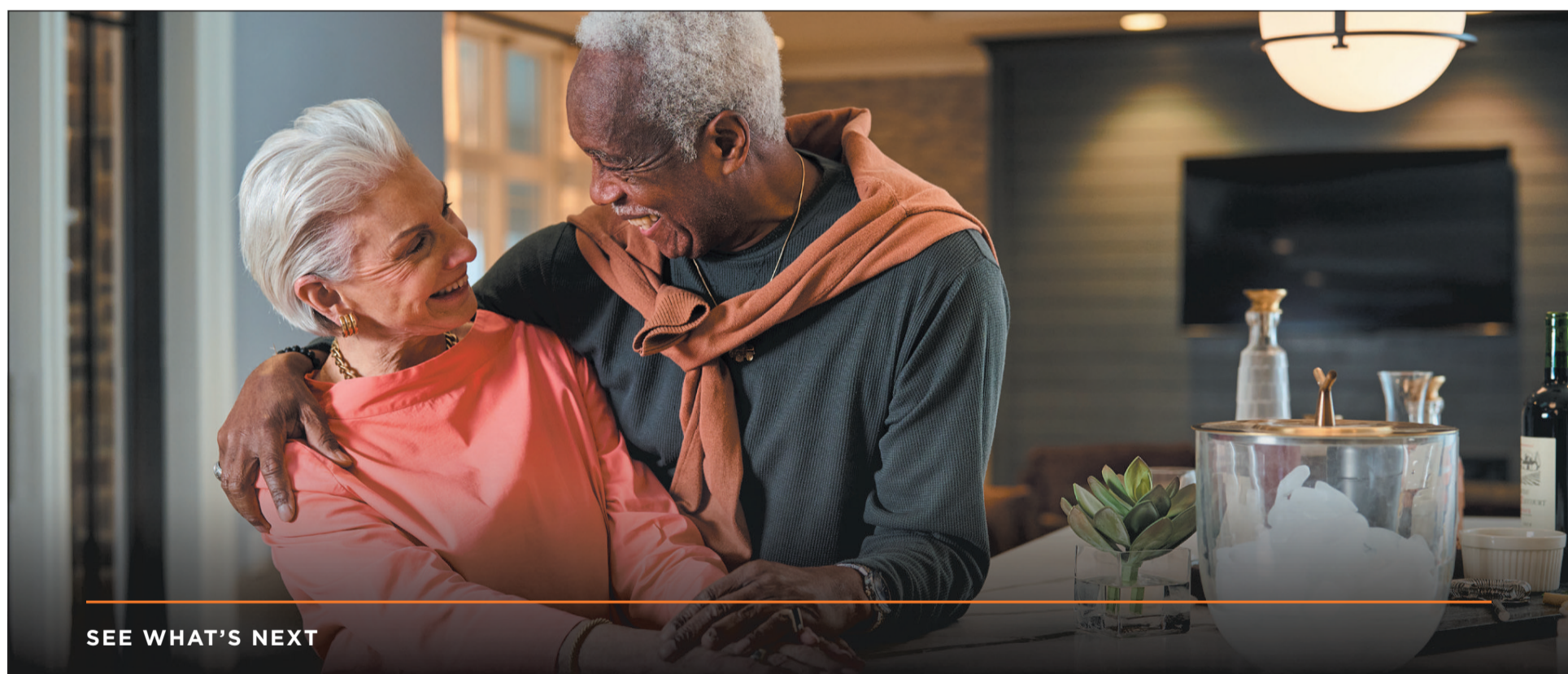
Fairview Park environmentalists were ready for this month’s City Council meeting, where the permanent fate of HSS would be decided. But instead, the

city manager gave the hobbyists a six-month extension without public notice or input, pushing the item past the election.

Bizarrely, while HSS continues its activity over the vernal pool watershed, the council is spending almost \$100,000 of our tax dollars to restore and monitor three of the vernal pools fed by it. And although state Sen. Dave Min has given \$10 million to Costa Mesa for parks and open space, whether it is used as the scientists recommend in the Fairview Park Master Plan *depends entirely upon the City Council and city manager*.

Will they abide by the laws and scientific facts and vote with the residents, environmentalists, biologists and Native American tribes to protect and restore this unique treasure, or will they continue to cater to a few hobbyists who want to relive their glory days?

Priscila Rocco
Kim Hendricks
Fairview Park Alliance
Costa Mesa



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