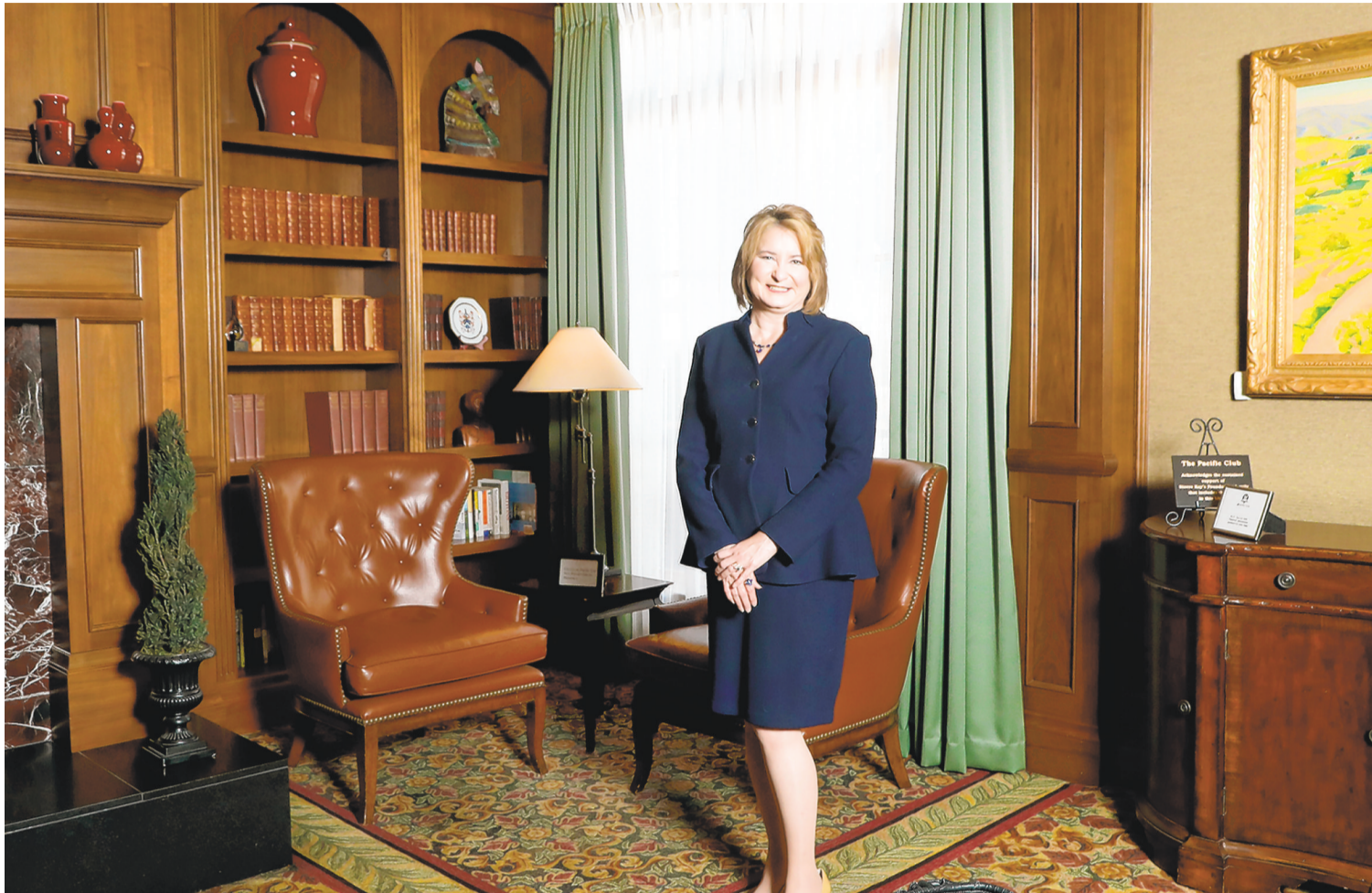


Daily Pilot

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2021 /// Now including Coastline Pilot and Huntington Beach Independent /// dailypilot.com



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

NEWPORT BEACH native Mary-Christine "M.C." Sungaila is an accomplished appellate lawyer who released her first nonlegal book, "Mother's Thoughts for the Day," in 2019, followed by "More Mother's Thoughts for the Day" in 2020. Sungaila will release a companion journal for the books this spring.

Mother knows best

Newport Beach-based appellate lawyer M.C. Sungaila is releasing a companion journal for her two compilation books, which feature a collection of motherly advice.

BY MATT SZABO

Given the vast improvements in technology over the years, Mary-Christine Sungaila, a well-known appellate lawyer who lives in Newport Coast, no longer has to look in her mailbox every day for an inspirational quote from her mother Jane.

"It was 'snail mail' for many years," said Sungaila, who goes by "M.C."

"She would send them to the office, and they would say, 'Mother's thoughts for the day.' And she would write some quote, or some positive thing. Along with this pile of business junk would come this really nice let-

ter."

Sungaila, a Corona del Mar High School graduate who earned her bachelor's degree at Stanford and law degree at UCLA, kept many of those motivational missives when she was just starting out in her career.

Today, the words of encouragement now come in the form of text messages. But they always come. Every single day.

Her mother, now 80, texts her daughter from her longtime home in the Port Streets neighborhood of Newport Beach.

"I was looking at some of them, and I thought, 'You know, somebody else could probably use these,'" Sungaila said. "She had

some pretty good advice, so I started compiling some of them."

At first her mother refused M.C.'s request to make the words of wisdom into a book. Sungaila, now 53, was persistent. She published the colorful gift book "Mother's Thoughts for the Day: Twenty-Five Years of Wisdom" in 2019, and a second volume followed the next year. They are available at most major online book retailers.

Sungaila has also recently started selling merchandise with some of the sayings on the items and is preparing to release a compan-

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Costa Mesa legalized retail cannabis, now what?

BY SARA CARDINE

Although Costa Mesa voters in November overwhelmingly supported legalizing the retail sales and delivery of cannabis inside city limits, determining the details of how to implement Measure Q and its allowances and prohibitions is a complicated matter.

Just ask members of the city's planning commission, who on Monday considered a draft ordinance establishing a framework by which business owners may seek permits to operate marijuana dispensaries in commercially zoned areas or set up delivery services.

It expands upon voter-approved Measure X, which allows for the manufacture, processing, distribution, testing and research and development of cannabis within a primarily industrial "green zone." Cultivation of marijuana is still prohibited by law.

The proposal before commissioners, in part, followed Mea-

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Associated Press

COSTA MESA planning commissioners on Monday considered an ordinance to regulate retail cannabis sales and delivery businesses, after voters passed Measure Q in November.



Photo by Susan Hoffman

CAROL WALLACE reflects over a photo of her son, who at 37 years old, committed suicide the day before Thanksgiving in 2020. St. James Episcopal Church in Newport Beach will hold an educational seminar over Zoom next month to address the topic of "collective trauma" exacerbated by the pandemic.

Trauma in times of COVID-19 tackled in Newport Beach church's Zoom series

BY SUSAN HOFFMAN

For the Rev. Canon Cindy Evans Voorhees of St. James Episcopal Church in Newport Beach, the pandemic has been especially challenging in addressing escalating emotional turmoil experienced by parishioners.

Since the initial lockdown last spring, Voorhees along with the church Care Team began witnessing intense and unusual behavioral changes from normal stable people as the pandemic rocked their world.

"There was heightened anxiety with everybody," Voorhees said. "Mothers going bonkers about taking on a new role of home-schooling children, divorce among elderly couples, unreasonable anger, people with cancer so scared of COVID they avoided surgery and the most vulnerable seniors feeling expendable."

St. James parishioner Carol Wallace endured two suicides of people close to her; first her son on the day before Thanksgiving, then her former daughter-in-law just before Christmas.

The emotions raw, pain erupts every time Wallace is asked about the number of children she has. She now replies that she has two instead of three.

"Just sometimes a memory hits me out of nowhere, and it's all I can do not to drop to my knees. Then it

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"There was heightened anxiety with everybody. Mothers going bonkers about taking on a new role of home-schooling children, divorce among elderly couples, unreasonable anger, people with cancer so scared of COVID they avoided surgery and the most vulnerable seniors feeling expendable."

— The Rev. Canon Cindy Evans Voorhees
Newport's St. James Episcopal Church

Outdoor sports on verge of returning

Orange County meets COVID-19 criteria that would allow competition to resume in high school football and water polo.

BY ANDREW TURNER

Outdoor high school sports in Orange County received favorable news Tuesday, as the county's coronavirus numbers cleared the threshold required for a return to competition.

On Friday, the California Department of Public Health released new guidance for youth sports that stated outdoor sports could compete within counties whose adjusted daily case rate per 100,000 residents was equal to or less than 14.

Orange County's numbers in that metric improved from a seven-day average of 20.7 cases (with a seven-day lag) last week to 11.9 cases in the most recent data, as provided by the Orange County Health Care Agency.

The news most immediately helps football and water polo, two fall sports that were on the cusp of losing their seasons in their entirety, giving them a chance to play an abbreviated schedule.

Commissioner Rob Wigod said last week that the CIF Southern Section will keep the end dates

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Ruling favors mother in suit vs. city

Court finds a jury could view Huntington Beach officer's 2017 fatal shooting of Dilla Tabares as unreasonable.

BY MATT SZABO

An appellate court last week ruled in favor of Tiffany Tabares, the mother of a 27-year-old who was shot and killed by a Huntington Beach Police Department officer outside of a local 7-Eleven in 2017.

A three-judge panel of the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled on Feb. 17 that a jury could find Officer Eric Esparza acted unreasonably when he shot Dillan Tabares seven times on Sept. 22, 2017, across the street from Marina High School.

Additionally, the judges ruled that a reasonable jury could conclude that Esparza should have suspected that Tabares had mental health issues, and that he unreasonably failed to follow police protocol on dealing with potentially mentally ill people before using force.

The opinion written by Judge Ryan D. Nelson reversed a previous ruling by U.S. District Judge

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ALSO FROM THE DAILY PILOT:



Photo by Spencer Grant

OBITUARY: REMEMBERING BARBARA DIAMOND, A REVERED LAGUNA BEACH REPORTER PAGE A2

SPORTS

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specified in its revised sports calendar. The final date to hold contests in the section for football is April 17.

It will still be up to individual schools, school districts and counties to make decisions about what sports will be allowed to return. Weekly COVID-19 testing is also a requirement to compete in football and water polo.

Estancia High School athletic director Nate Goellrich said the school intends to field a team for every sport that has been approved.

"I've been saying for a while I felt we would go from zero miles per hour to 200, and that's what we're doing to try to finalize all these details," Goellrich said. "[There are] a lot of details that will go into being able to host events, but we're willing to do whatever that takes to get our kids to play."

"It's been a long time coming for them, just to see even in the morning when rumors were flying [about] what the possible [coronavirus] numbers could be, walking around our campus, you could see just the excitement back in our kids."

Marina football coach Jeff Turley indicated that there was also a pep in the step of his players at practice,



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

NEWPORT HARBOR'S Morgan Netherton scores on a penalty shot against Cathedral Catholic in the first half of a nonleague match in Newport Beach on Dec. 21, 2019.

which was the first for the Vikings in helmets.

"Usually, kids are dragging and dreading the whole thing, and there was none of that," Turley said. "There was excitement. They were just full of energy. There wasn't one kid complaining."

"One of the kids sits there and goes, 'We're done? We can't keep going?' You don't usually hear that at the end of our 'Fourth Quarter' conditioning circuit. They're all excited."

Ocean View football coach Luis Nunez said it was a challenge for the kids to stay motivated with their season being delayed twice — once at the outset of the school year, and then again with the revised calendar pointing to a possible starting date in January.

"It's kind of a good life lesson that hopefully they can take away with them in life," Nunez said. "Just never give up, control what you can control, and thankfully a lot of them stuck with it

and they worked hard. Man, we play March 12!"

Meanwhile, the season will be a sprint for water polo, for which the season end date is March 20. Regardless of how short their season is, Newport Harbor junior attacker Morgan Netherton was thrilled when she was told the good news at the end of practice.

Netherton, a USC commit, described her happiness as "beyond words" to learn that there would be more games to be played.

"I was immediately so happy," Netherton said. "The fact that I get to play, hopefully in my own pool, next week or in two weeks is just amazing. I haven't done that in over a year."

Orange County, which is in the purple tier, moved closer to advancing to the less-restrictive red tier. The county's testing positivity rate dropped from 7.8% last week to 5.4%. The county is currently meeting the red tier criteria for testing positivity and its health equity quartile positivity rate, which is at 7%.

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MOTHER

Continued from page A1

ion journal to the books this spring, for those who want to drop jewels for their own family members.

"It really tracks what my mom was thinking ... and it allows you to do that in a guided way," she said. "For all of the people who said, 'I could never do that,' you can. Here's a roadmap for how to do that for your child or grandchild."

Sungaila has long made a name for herself as an appellate attorney, for her high-profile work in her field.

Her first big case in 1996, fighting a Tennessee judge who was convicted of forcing sex on five women in his chambers and eventually fleeing the country, went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. She has also worked on Holocaust art recovery cases and is currently representing the city of Costa Mesa in its battle to regulate sober living facilities.

In 2017, she was awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor for her professional achievements, humanitarianism and pro bono work.

She spends much of her time writing long legal briefs, but Sungaila said she originally wanted to be a poet or a writer for a living.

"Having had that thought, I immediately had an image in my head of starving in a garret," she said with a laugh. But she pursued the avocation to become a published author.

Jennifer Keller, a trial attorney friend of Sungaila's, is not surprised.

"She's very aware of her limited time on Earth and she wants to make a dent, which is admirable," Keller said. "She also knows everybody and is the queen of the networkers. I would say she's just a force for good in our profession."

Costa Mesa Mayor Katrina Foley said she will definitely be purchasing one of Sungaila's companion journals when they go on sale.

Foley — herself a lawyer — said she has known Sungaila since the 1990s, when she was starting out after graduating from law school.

While moving her law office last summer, Foley said she found a collection of articles about herself that Sungaila had clipped and sent to her, usually with a positive note attached.

"She inspired me to do that for others," Foley said. "I did that with other women lawyers or women professionals that I knew ... There's so much more meaning when you receive a personal note, something hand-written. Taking time out of your day to think about someone else, it makes it all the more meaningful."

Sungaila said the proceeds from her books go to benefit the Pacific Symphony's arts education programs, as well as Orange County celebrity chef Bruno Serato and his nonprofit Caterina's Club. She's on the board for the Pacific Symphony, one of her several nonprofit boards.

She said she only planned to publish one volume of "Mother's Thoughts," but the response has overwhelmed her, especially during the novel coronavirus pandemic.

"This is one of the only things in my life I've ever done just purely on instinct," Sungaila said.

"This book needed to be done. It was going to help someone. I don't know if it's just one person, but it was going to be a positive thing and reinforce family relationships. It would also help new, young professional women who might not have that kind of encouragement to stay in the game."

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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS

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