



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

GALLERY DIRECTOR Tyler Stallings comments on Douglas McCulloh's photo collage print, a piece made from Google search photos from the Spirit Mountain area on display at the "Spirit of the Land: Artists Honor Avi Kwa Ame" group exhibition at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa.

'Spirit of the Land' celebrates Nevada landscape, heritage

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

On the southernmost tip of Nevada, south of Las Vegas, sits Avi Kwa Ame, the Mojave name for Spirit Mountain. The surrounding land is the place of origin for 10 Yuman-speaking tribes of the Mojave: the Hualapai, Yavapai, Havasupai, Quechan, Maricopa, Pai Pai, Halchidhoma, Cocopah and Kumeyaay, which all consider the land a source of life. The area is also sacred to the Hopi and Chemehuevi Paiute people.

Avi Kwa Ame is celebrated in Frank M. Doyle Arts Pavilion's current exhibition, "Spirit of the Land: Artists Honor Avi Kwa Ame," at Orange Coast College. The traveling group exhibition is organized by the Barrick Museum of Art at the University of Nevada Las Vegas and curated by Kim Garrison, Checko Salgado and Mikayla Whitmore.

"Spirit of the Land" is an exhibition that over 50 artists, writers, musicians and dancers have participated in four-plus different venues at this point," said Garrison, who is also a faculty resident at Orange Coast College. "All of them are creating a love letter in their own way to place that we all care about."

The show also celebrates a recent bill introduced in Congress that would permanently protect 443,000 acres of the Avi Kwa Ame area as Nevada's fourth national monument. Garrison and the other two curators are key activists, and their advocacy through the arts is partly responsible for bringing the proposal forward.

"As the national monument was developing and progressing, Kim wanted to make



A LIFE-SIZED character, Mx. Burlap, appears in "I am Them, They is I," by artist Jynx Prado, on display at the Frank M. Doyle Arts Pavilion at Orange Coast College through Dec. 1.

sure to keep it in people's thoughts, and so she organized several exhibitions in the Southern Nevada area in the spring," said Tyler Stallings, director at the Frank M. Doyle Arts Pavilion. "Part of the idea was not only to have it in people's thoughts but also to encouraging community members to engage."

One way the exhibition cultivates engage-

ment is through an interactive postcard campaign.

"I really like that art has the power to engage us ... and I really like that it is a safe and welcoming environment to talk about this. This exhibition gave not just artists but members of the communities involved of all kinds

See *Spirit*, page A2

Billboard project receives approval from F.V.

An electronic message center installed on private property could generate more than \$31 million for the city.

BY ANDREW TURNER

A nearly eight-story-high electronic billboard proposal submitted to the city more than three years ago got the go-ahead from the Fountain Valley City Council Tuesday, as the panel moved to adopt an ordinance that would allow it to be installed on private property.

The Becker Boards project, which seeks to build a 73-foot-tall electronic message center with two displays at 18375 Euclid St., required a code amendment for the Fountain Valley Crossings Specific Plan. Fountain Valley could see more than \$31 million in revenue from the billboard over 40 years.

Council members passed the

See *Billboard*, page A3

HBPD honors officer for lifesaving action

Officer Meghan Haney talked a woman out of jumping off a building.

BY ERIC LICAS

Units working patrol on the graveyard shift for the Huntington Beach Police Department have to be ready for anything. That was especially true on June 15, 2021, Officer Meghan Haney said.

"We see people when things are coming at their lives unexpectedly because things are happening when they're asleep or at 2 or 3 a.m.," Haney said. "We get people on their bad nights and their good nights, but we just go out

See *Officer*, page A7

Seal Beach police add sensory kits to help serve people with special needs

BY SARA CARDINE

When Seal Beach police officers hit the streets, their patrol vehicles are packed with devices and pieces of equipment designed to keep them and the public safe in unforeseen circumstances.

And now the department has added one more safety tool, though it's not any type of firearm, shield or armor but rather a backpack containing a fidget spinner, headphones, rubber toys and a kitchen timer — items that

may have a calming effect for people with autism spectrum disorders or other special needs.

The idea of providing sensory kits was broached by Sgt. Joe Garcia, the father of a 9-year-old son on the spectrum who is using his personal experiences and discoveries about the complex disorder to help the Seal Beach police department better serve the local community.

Garcia, 42, said he and wife Evelyn were taken aback six years earlier when their son, Joey, was

diagnosed with autism. While most kids at that age were beginning to speak full sentences, Joey was mostly nonverbal and would occasionally have "meltdowns" when situations seemed too intense.

"We were new parents — we had no idea how to deal with a child with autism," Garcia recalled in an interview this week. "Then he was in extensive therapy and receiving ABA [Applied Behavior Analysis]."

See *Kits*, page A2



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

SGT. JOE GARCIA on Tuesday displays a sensory kit designed to help officers in the field interact with children and adults with autism. Garcia hopes his experiences with his son will better serve the community.

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Courtesy of the Bowers Museum

BOWERS MUSEUM President and CEO Peter Keller and Anne Shih, chairwoman of the museum's board of governors.

OBITUARY

Bowers Museum mourns loss of longtime leader

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

For more than three decades Dr. Peter C. Keller served as president and chief executive officer of the Bowers Museum in Santa Ana. On Nov. 10 the museum announced Keller's passing and the end of an era. Keller died on Nov. 8 at the age of 75.

"With his leadership and experience, we have brought amazing exhibits from all around the world to Orange County," said Anne Shih, chairwoman of

the museum's board of governors, in a press release.

Keller joined the Bowers Museum in 1991 and in his time there oversaw two major building expansions. In October 1992, Bowers opened its doors to a crowd of 17,000 people in a space nearly six times larger than the original city-run museum of 1936. In 2007, Keller oversaw the opening of the new Dorothy and Donald Kennedy

See *Obituary*, page A7



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

POSTCARDS FROM art on display at the "Spirit of the Land: Artists Honor Avi Kwa Ame" group exhibition.

SPIRIT

Continued from page A1

the opportunity to participate in telling stories about this place through a community call for postcard art.

Garrison said they received over 200 entries of postcard art, which are included in the show at the Doyle in a slide show.

The postcards also served another purpose.

"In every venue, those postcards have been made available to the public along with the addresses of all the various representatives for this landscape, and people can write what they want at the postcard station and we will mail it for them," Garrison said.

Existing alongside Spirit Mountain is a local place known as Christmas Tree Pass, a holdover from the mining era of the nearby rural town of Searchlight. The work of artist and

co-curator Mikayla Whitmore, titled "Sunrise Sunset," focuses on a tradition that has evolved at the pass.

"Christmas Tree Pass traverses the west side of Spirit Mountain over to the east side. At one time, there used to be a lot of pine trees and people would go cut them down for Christmas trees. This is how it got its name," said Stallings. "Now there are not many pine trees left there, but the tradition of people going up and decorating the smaller plant life is there, but the thing is they often leave the Christmas stuff there."

Whitmore photographs the western tradition of decorating the juniper and pinyons with one photo showing a naked shrub in the light of day and the same shrub covered in a tangle of red, silver and gold tinsel garland as the sky darkens.

See *Spirit*, page A4



A COLLECTION of discarded Christmas decorations made in the impression of Spirit Mountain in southern Nevada.

KITS

Continued from page A1

havioral Analysis]. We just learned a lot through the services my son was receiving about what would help him cope with his frustration."

They learned, for example, giving Joey a fan with LED lights seemed to capture his attention and distract him from upsetting stimuli, while a weighted lap pad provided physical comfort. Headphones helped shut out loud noises, while setting a simple kitchen timer provided a finite time window during which the child could relax.

Garcia, who came to the department as an aide in 2000 and joined the force six years later, immediately saw how these tools could help improve police work.

"Our hope is to help the officer build a rapport with that person and help get answers for something they're investigating, so the officer can perform their duties as best they can," he said.

The sensory kits are just the latest of Garcia's recommendations, according to department spokesman Lt. Nick Nicholas, who described an ongoing effort to ensure safe and successful police interactions with differently abled individuals.

"We've done a really good job, both in Orange County and the Seal Beach Police Department to provide our officers special training on how to identify and interact with people who have developmental disabilities," he said of sessions led by mental health experts.

"However, that's not necessarily enough. Now we're taking the next step to make sure these interactions are more positive."

The department last year created stickers citizens can place in the windows of their homes or vehicles to indicate a person with special needs may be inside. That alerts officers on scene in a crisis that an individual might not display a typical or expected behavior when interacting with police.

"We've seen across the country a tragic increase in occasions when police respond to a situation that may involve a person with autism or developmental disabilities," Nicholas said, indicating behaviors may be read as intoxication or unprovoked violence.

The trend isn't a new one. In 2001, the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin reported people with developmental disorders were seven times more likely than the average adult to encounter law enforcement and suggested training and the use of special techniques

by officers.

A 2017 study published in the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorder tracked 284 adults and adolescents over a 12- to 18-month period and found 16% experienced police involvement, primarily due to aggressive behaviors.

On June 14, 2019, an off-duty Los Angeles police officer shopping at a Costco store in the city of Corona engaged in an altercation with Kenneth French, a 32-year-old man with a cognitive disability, who'd been at the store with his parents, that ended with French's death.

The officer's attorney claimed French acted aggressively, provoking the officer to defend himself and his family. Opposing lawyers maintained the death could have been prevented had the officer recognized signs of French's disability and employed deescalation techniques.

Seal Beach Mayor Joe Kalmick studied autism spectrum disorders as a psychology student at UCLA under famed Norwegian scientist and ABA pioneer Ole Ivar Lovaas in the 1960s. Acknowledging the disorder as something often misunderstood among the wider community, he said Monday it's important to spread awareness.

"This has to carry over to the



UCI Health



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

SENSORY KITS used by Seal Beach police include headphones, fidget toys, a weighted blanket and other items to calm people with autism.

children in our city on the spectrum, so they know there's support out there and they're not alone," he said Monday. "So, we've taken all of Sgt. Garcia's ideas and just run with them."

In recognition of Autism Awareness Month in April, police officers place magnetic decals on their vehicles and wear one of two patches featuring a seal balancing a puzzle piece or set against a background of puzzle pieces — an image that has come to define the awareness movement.

Available year round for \$10

with proceeds being donated to Seal Beach agency Autism Partnership, the patches, like the stickers and sensory kits, are signs of a deeper commitment of the city's support for those with special needs in Seal Beach, Kalmick said.

"These are members of our community just like anyone else," he added. "The more understanding there is, I think the more progress that is made."

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forum



James Carbone

THE LA CAÑADA High School marching band performs at the La Cañada High School football field in 2019. The passage of Proposition 28 is expected to restore about \$1 billion in K through 12 funding for music, theater and other arts education.

COLUMN | PATRICE APODACA

Elections matter when it comes to schools

Elections, as they say, have consequences. And they unfailingly have consequences for our schools.

Last week's midterm elections were no exception. Although overshadowed to a large degree by other highly contentious issues, education was very much on the ballot this time around.

California's Proposition 28 is an obvious example. The measure — designed to offset the decades-long cuts in arts education that have largely impacted schools in lower income areas — would restore about \$1 billion in K through 12 funding for music, theater, dance, graphic design and other arts curricula.

Proposition 28 doesn't raise taxes but would instead be funded by requiring the state to set aside the equivalent of at least 1% of total public schools funding each year for arts education. Most of the money would go toward hiring new teachers.

The effort to pass the measure was led by Los Angeles Unified Supt. Austin Beutner, who argued that despite a record-high state budget and an Education Code that mandates schools provide music and arts education, only about 20 percent of the state's schools have a full-time program. California — the beating heart of the entertainment industry — lags behind most other states in the share of students enrolled in arts courses.

The initiative passed easily, with more than 62% of voters approving. Opposition was practically nonexistent, with support coming not just from the arts community but from business leaders too. The only complaints centered not around its intent but on its method of funding because it would hamstring legislators during times of tight budgets.

Not to be flippant, but when has education funding ever made sense in California? Voters rightly recognized the importance of finding a reliable way to support arts education, which has been decimated since Proposition 13 in the late 1970s upended public school funding in the state.

During the past four-plus

decades, the arts have been treated as a luxury only more affluent students in California could regularly access. For the rest, arts programs have typically been the first to be cut, particularly given the pressures on schools to drill students on "core" subjects such as math and reading to improve scores on standardized tests.

But the majority of voters apparently realized that we've paid a high price for our neglect of arts education. Indeed, rather than an extravagance, arts education is a demonstrably essential part of an effective, well-rounded curriculum.

Research has shown a strong link between arts education and academic success. Participating in arts programs enhances brain development, encourages creativity and collaboration, and hones communication, fine motor and emotional intelligence skills — qualities that will serve students well as they progress through academia and later when they enter the job market.

Arts are also an important way to engage children in the learning process. Students involved in arts programs are far less likely to drop out, more likely to achieve a high level of academic accomplishment and many times more likely to graduate from college.

Education experts have also stressed that arts education should be treated as a critical component of efforts to help students recover from the devastating educational, social and emotional impact of the pandemic. It can be a key means of reconnecting students with their peers and restoring lagging confidence after too much time spent in front of a computer screen.

The funding of arts education wasn't the only educational issue figuring in the recent elections. In a sign of the times, the races for open spots on school boards — once among the most mundane of electoral contests — are now center stage in the nation's culture wars.

In keeping with this troubling trend, many of the dozens of candidates

See **Schools**, page A4

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BILLBOARD

Continued from page A1

code amendment and approved a development agreement by a 4-1 vote, with Councilwoman Kim Constantine dissenting.

Another billboard proposed by Outfront Media received the green light from the council to be built on city-owned land on the opposite side of the 405 freeway in May. That electronic message board would go in at 10955 Ellis Ave., adjacent to the water tower.

Becker Boards will make an initial payment of \$60,000 to the city. Once the billboard has been constructed, and upon final approval from the city, the company would then pay an annual fee of \$550,000. Every five years thereafter, that fee will increase by 10%.

"The freeway is owned by the state of California," Councilman Glenn Grandis said. "It's not owned by the city of Fountain Valley, and one of my big concerns is what happens if the state decides tomorrow to say, 'You know what, look at all this revenue we have. We're putting a billboard there instead,' and they get the revenue.

"To me, I would rather we do it before the state has the chance to do it because anything that's there will be grandfathered. ... Between these two boards, first year alone,

I think we're getting ... almost \$1.3 million in combined revenue. You don't think the state wants that money? I think we need to act while we can before the state comes in and takes that over."

Outdoor advertising signs are not permitted in areas Caltrans identifies as landscaped freeways. The stretch of road from mile marker 12.41 to 12.50 along the 405 Freeway is among the select areas in Fountain Valley that fit that designation, Matt Jenkins, a senior planner for the city, said. Construction would take place in an industrial area adjacent to the 405 and the Santa Ana River.

The new sign would include two 672-square-foot (14 feet high, 48 feet wide) display panels meeting at one end to form a "V" shape. The content displayed on the billboard would be shown to drivers and passengers traveling along the freeway in both directions.

Joseph White, president of Becker Boards, said messages on the panels would remain for at least eight seconds. He also said the company would utilize louver technology to mitigate light spillage.

"The louver technology that would prevent light pollution to different drivers from different angles, this is something new that I really appreciate Becker Boards

has come up with for this proposed project," outgoing Councilman Michael Vo said. "This is one of the requirements that we have had, and this is something that I think will benefit all the drivers on the freeway."

To bring the Becker Boards sign in step with the Outfront Media project, Mayor Patrick Harper suggested an initial 15-year term that could be renewed for 15 years. There would also be a 10-year option after that. Becker Boards had proposed an initial 40-year term, but White indicated the new terms could be agreed to.

"We've added restrictions in the type of advertising that we have within our development agreement," White said. "No political speech, no marijuana, no tobacco, no adult uses. We're allowing city branding, where the city can use this to brand city events, and emergency messaging in times where these signs need to be taken over by the state or local jurisdictions.

"This ordinance ... only allows one sign. There's not going to be a proliferation of billboards created from this, and if they do, they're going to have to go through the same exact process that I did, and they're going to have to declassify a freeway, so there's a big barrier of entry."

Concerns expressed by the



Courtesy of city of Fountain Valley

THE EXISTING SIGN at 18375 Euclid St. A 73-foot-tall billboard has been proposed for installation at the site.

public included the possibility of the sign serving as a distraction for drivers and loss of sales tax due to advertising for out-of-town businesses, as well as the potential light impact on residents, including those living south of the project in Costa Mesa.

Constantine, who has adamantly opposed both billboards, also quibbled with the location. "We're going to see it, and this

is our coveted Crossings area," Constantine said. "That's 162 acres and was rezoned in January 2018 to mixed use from industrial. It's supposed to be our new downtown with restaurants, nightlife, housing. ... I don't see why we would want to put this there."

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DISCARDED CHRISTMAS ornaments make up the Spirit Mountain outline on display at "Spirit of the Land: Artists Honor Avi Kwa Ame."



Don Leach
Staff Photographer

SPIRIT

Continued from page A2

For found object installation, "Western View of Spirit Mountain Depicted in Holiday Trash," the holiday decorations left behind were collected and used to create a mural of Avi Kwa Ame.

"I don't believe that people have knowledge that the area is also a sacred area to 12 different Native American tribes, 10 of which consider it their place of creation or as one tribal elder puts it, their Garden of Eden," said Garrison. "Of course that is a cultural disconnect. Is there room for both of those uses of that land-

scape? I think there is if we practice a Leave No Trace policy."

Concurrent with Spirit of the Land is a group exhibition of Chicana/o/x artists recapturing and reconstituting concepts of nature titled, "For some memory or some land." The show includes work that examines themes of land by Jynx Prado and Jackie Castillo. There are also pieces from Narsiso Martinez, an artist and former farmworker, that examine the agricultural industry.

The two shows work together to tell stories about the land we live on, its fragility and the conflicts over who takes ownership of it.

Garrison said that part of the process of intermingling artists, storytellers, scientists and people from different communities, from rural areas to cities to tribal nations, is the ability to gain different perspectives and consider the different cultural uses of the space.

"A lot of the art is trying to highlight some of the tensions or the issues of area," Garrison said. "It is not just only a love letter."

"Spirit of the Land: Artists Honor Avi Kwa Ame" and "For some memory or some land" are open through Dec. 1.

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SCHOOLS

Continued from page A3

for school boards throughout Orange County, and the nation, ran on platforms advocating "parental rights," an innocuous-sounding term often used as a stand-in for anti-Critical Race Theory and anti-LGBTQ agendas.

The candidates that ran on these alarmist platforms, for the most part, lost to their more moderate, sensible opponents who understand that attempts to ban books, sanitize history and muzzle educators are driven by misinformation, ignorance and intolerance. Nonetheless, this ex-

treme movement isn't going away. It's still possible that other districts in Orange County will follow last spring's vote by Placentia-Yorba Linda School District trustees to ban the teaching of CRT. The Orange County Board of Education trustees have taken a similar stand.

Nor is the controversy likely to die down anytime soon. After Placentia-Yorba Linda's decision, Cal State Fullerton told school officials it would pause placement of its student teachers in district classrooms, citing concerns that the policies conflict with university goals that promote equity and inclusion in education.

The fact that the recent school board races were

highly competitive, with greater sums of money going into campaigns and some candidates even making national news, shows us just how contentious issues surrounding education have become. And they also show us, whether for good or bad, that voters expect a voice in what students learn and, to a larger extent, in determining the very role of public education itself.

Another reason why elections matter.

PATRICE APODACA is a former Los Angeles Times staff writer and is coauthor of "A Boy Named Courage: A Surgeon's Memoir of Apartheid." She lives in Newport Beach.

THE DAILY COMMUTER PUZZLE

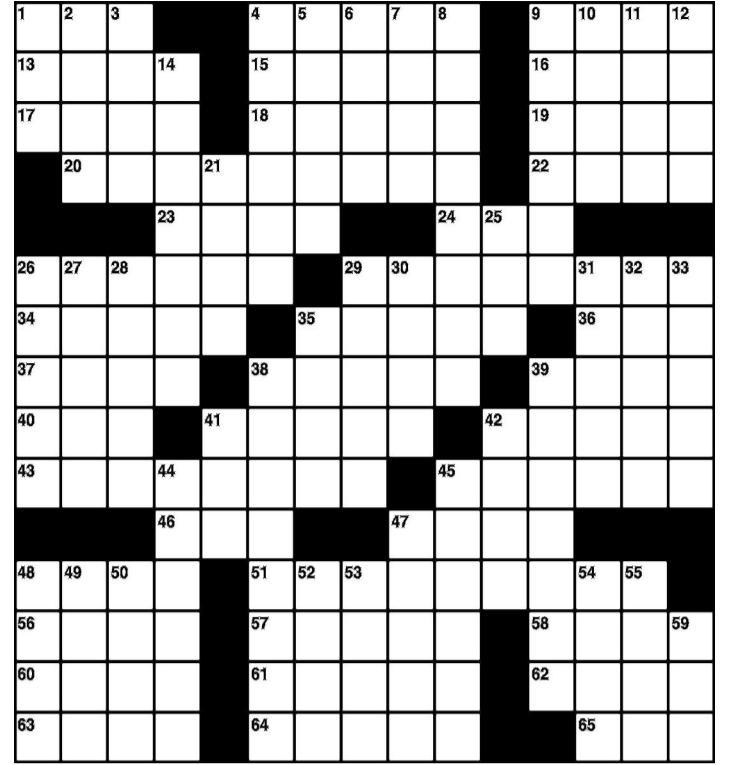
By Jacqueline E. Mathews

ACROSS

- 1 Shade provider
- 4 McEntire's namesakes
- 9 " _ boy!"; supportive cry
- 13 Actor Wyle
- 15 Banishment
- 16 Feline sound
- 17 So _; island near Africa
- 18 Lucifer
- 19 Amanda of "The Whole Nine Yards"
- 20 Broke
- 22 Inquires
- 23 Pain in the neck
- 24 _ at ease; nervous
- 26 Warning
- 29 Marshal one's forces
- 34 Royal decree
- 35 Pharmacy supply
- 36 _ off; fled
- 37 Rooster
- 38 Paul of "Hollywood Squares"
- 39 One-act play
- 40 Fury
- 41 Lousy lecturers
- 42 "I'll Be _"; Jackson 5 hit
- 43 Decreased
- 45 Las Vegas athlete
- 46 _ West
- 47 Walkway
- 48 Put _ chore; procrastinate
- 51 Lagged behind the group
- 56 Actor Baldwin
- 57 In debt
- 58 Like Easter eggs
- 60 Stink
- 61 Cut into tiny pieces
- 62 _ away; dismiss
- 63 Impudent talk
- 64 Wrapped up
- 65 90 degrees from ENE

DOWN

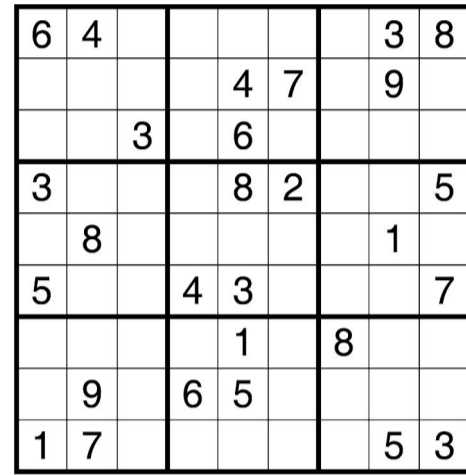
- 1 Suffix for persist
- 2 Kept in the _; informed
- 3 Hit Broadway musical
- 4 Put up a fight
- 5 Glorify
- 6 Use the teeth
- 7 "Woe is me!"
- 8 Wise
- 9 Fill with outrage
- 10 Part of every wk.
- 11 "Star _"
- 12 Painting & sculpting
- 14 Nag
- 21 _ as a pin
- 25 Fleur-de- _; Easter flower
- 26 _ B. DeMille
- 27 Worship
- 28 Moral flaws
- 29 Dug for coal
- 30 Automobile pioneer
- 31 Vexed
- 32 Dem. Rep. of the Congo, formerly
- 33 Word of welcome
- 35 Funeral fire
- 38 Feeling friendless
- 39 Actress Brooke
- 41 "Don't _ stranger"; parting words
- 42 Powdered drink
- 44 Hits
- 45 Tattered
- 47 Cyclist
- Armstrong
- 48 Boatman's items
- 49 _ market; swap meet
- 50 Bank charges
- 52 Look-alike
- 53 Orange skin
- 54 Facial features
- 55 Hideaways
- 59 FDR, HST, _ , JFK



SUDOKU

By the Mephram Group

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit sudoku.org.uk.



For answers to the crossword and Sudoku puzzles, see page A7.

- 25 Fleur-de- _; Easter flower
- 26 _ B. DeMille
- 27 Worship
- 28 Moral flaws
- 29 Dug for coal
- 30 Automobile pioneer
- 31 Vexed
- 32 Dem. Rep. of the Congo, formerly
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College Corps offers win-win for students, local nonprofit

BY MATT SZABO

Manuel Cardenas is a freshman at Concordia University. The 18-year-old did not always have it easy growing up in Palmdale.

"Both my parents came from Mexico as immigrants," he said. "Coming up, we did struggle. We lived on the floor and all of that. But now I'm blessed that I have a meal, and I'm good. I'm fortunate to be here."

Cardenas started work this week at the South County Outreach food pantry in Irvine. He is excited to give back — and earn some money for college in the process.

That's the idea behind College Corps, a new statewide paid service program that Gov. Gavin Newsom and the California Volunteers Commission launched this year.

Concordia and Irvine Valley College are two of nearly 50 colleges statewide participating in the program, including those in the UC and Cal State systems, community colleges and private universities. The program has more than 3,200 fellows, California Chief Service Officer Josh Fryday said.

They work in one of three facets: distributing meals to those facing food insecurity, tutoring and mentoring low-income students, and taking climate action.

South County Outreach now has 18 workers from the two Irvine schools. They have bolstered the staff at a critical time, with Thanksgiving and Christmas around the corner. South County Outreach chief executive LaVal Brewer said that November

is the busiest month of the year for his nonprofit; by Thursday, the pantry had already served more than 200 families this past week.

"We've got to let as many people get through this front door as possible, so that we can begin to engage with people and get to the point where we can solve their low-income status," Brewer said.

He added that it really made sense for South County Outreach to team up with College Corps. Brewer previously worked with PlayWorks, which has a partnership with AmeriCorps.

Food is donated by Second Harvest, Orange County Food Bank, local churches and community groups, but South County Outreach will go to grocery stores to purchase food as well. It also offers rental and utility assistance programs, as well as educational programs.

Cardenas spent six hours at the pantry on Wednesday, his first day on the job, to help stock up food and prepare meals. The food items tend to go quickly in the morning, leaving workers in a constant state of keeping a close eye on the inventory.

He said he will work 450 hours there this year as a College Corps fellow. In return, he receives \$10,000, which will go toward paying his tuition.

"I really related to the food insecurity," Cardenas said. "Back where I'm from, a lot of people don't have a meal when they come back home. I wanted to help here, provide a little bit of my help to provide a meal for someone else. I feel like



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

VOLUNTEER ISABELLA FILORIO, a senior at Concordia University, helps hand out fresh produce at South County Outreach in Irvine on Thursday. Concordia is one of many colleges statewide participating in the College Corps program.



MANUEL CARDENAS, a freshman at Concordia University, helps restock the aisles at South County Outreach in Irvine.



VOLUNTEERS EMAIL AHMADZAI and Isabella Filorio help restock fresh produce at South County Outreach.

I'm at a good point where I don't have to worry about my next meal, so I feel like I should give that same comfort to someone else."

Yair Rivera, 21, is a freshman at Irvine Valley College. He has been working at South County Outreach for about three weeks through College Corps.

After a difficult childhood that included life as a foster kid and time spent in juvenile hall, he said that ed-

ucation saved his life. Rivera, who said he also faces food insecurities sometimes, is proud to be giving back to the local community.

"This experience has been way beyond what I expected," he said. "It's definitely a job where I come and look forward to being here each day. I know I'm not here full time, only two times a week, but it makes me very emotional. It

makes me happy to see when people come by with their food in carts and knowing that I'm providing them with my help."


Fryday said there are many benefits to the College Corps program, which leads to what he calls a win-win situation.

"What they're doing here is they're building professional skills, they're building professional network — social capital that's so criti-

cal," he said. "A lot of times, low-income students have to end up taking jobs at a fast food restaurant or a coffee shop. But with College Corps, they get to do work where they can pursue their passion, they can learn skills, and they can make a difference and get help paying for school at the same time."

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OFFICER

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there and do our best to figure out the situation.”

Others on duty were busy handling a major traffic accident and a disturbance involving a man with a machete at about 4 a.m. that day. That’s also about the time she heard a dispatcher’s report that someone was standing on a two-story building, contemplating suicide.

When she pulled up to the commercial structure on Beach Boulevard, she saw a woman in her 40s pacing along the edge of its roof. The businesses inside were closed at the time, and all the doors were locked.

“Still, to this day, I’m not quite sure how she got up there,” Haney said.

A fire engine crew and another officer were already at the scene. But they were struggling to connect with the person in crisis.

“So, I see the only way that I can really talk to her on a semi-face-to-face level is if I go on this outside staircase of an adjacent building,” Haney said. “That was the only way that we could build any rapport, or it would be just me yelling up at her.”

Haney propped herself up against a handrail and leaned from the staircase so she could speak with the woman. At least 2 feet separated where she stood and the roof of the building next to her. If the woman decided to go over the edge, it was unlikely Haney or anyone else at the scene would have been able to stop her.

Once she was in a better position, Haney reached her arm out to the woman on the roof to greet her. She agreed to shake the officer’s



Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

MEGHAN HANEY, a Huntington Beach police officer, was awarded the medal of lifesaving by the department for her effort in talking a suicidal person out of killing herself.

hand but remained pensive and gave only brief responses as they spoke.

“I’m looking down and ... if I were to step off it would be a two-story drop,” Haney said. “Had she jumped, that would be soul-crushing.”

But the fact that the woman was willing to say anything at all told Haney that there was a chance she could get through to her.

The woman told the officer that concerns related to her family had been mounting over the past several years. Haney declined to go into detail about what she and the woman discussed, citing respect for her privacy.

Haney did her best to re-

late to the woman and keep their conversation going, drawing from department training in crisis deescalation and the officer’s own experiences both on and off the job. She offered the woman a blanket to keep warm on a particularly cool summer evening and said anything she could think of to make it clear that she was there to help.

“Her story was not too much different from what a lot of other people are going through,” Haney said. “She just needed somebody to talk to. It didn’t seem like, from our conversation, she had anybody telling her not to do this, and I needed to be that person.”

The woman’s demeanor

remained distant, and there wasn’t any specific turning point during their exchange, Haney said. But after spending about 15 or 20 minutes talking, she told the officer “I’m scared.”

“I’m scared too,” Haney replied, shortly before the woman agreed to come down from the roof.

Paramedics checked to make sure she hadn’t suffered any physical injuries that needed immediate attention before she was taken to a facility to receive mental health treatment. A tragedy was averted, but overcoming the crisis that morning would likely be just one step on a difficult path toward wellness for that woman, Haney said.

“Her family life wasn’t going to change in that single night,” Haney said. “So, that’s what the really crappy thing is, is that you’re walking away from this hoping that they get better. But the reality is, their issue is a lot more ... than them not committing suicide.”

But Haney wasn’t able to linger on the episode for very long because new emergencies develop practically every night she and other officers are out on patrol. She didn’t have many chances to revisit what happened until she was recognized for her actions with the Huntington Beach Department’s lifesaving award during an

“She just needed somebody to talk to. It didn’t seem like, from our conversation, she had anybody telling her not to do this, and I needed to be that person.”

— **Meghan Haney**
Huntington Beach police officer

Oct. 9 ceremony.

That night in June wasn’t the first time Haney has found herself talking someone out of ending their own life. In the past, she has encountered others, often younger people, who had been cutting themselves or were threatening to gulp down a lethal dose of medication.

Over the past 30 days, there were 14 confirmed suicides in Orange County, according to data from the Orange County Health Care Agency. Since 2001, an average of about 25 cases have been reported every month.

If you or someone you love might be struggling with depression, stress or any sort of hardship, help may be found by dialing 988 to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline or by texting “talk” to 741741. More resources are available at <https://988lifeline.org>.

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Courtesy of the Bowers Museum

DR. PETER C. KELLER, the late president of the Bowers Museum, is survived by his wife, Signe Keller.

OBITUARY

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Wing, which added 30,000 square feet of space for the East West Bank and Anderson-Hsu-Tu galleries and the 300-seat Norma Kershaw Auditorium.

Besides expansion, Keller concentrated on bringing fine art and culture from around the world to the museum and Orange County as a whole.

Along with Shih, Keller forged partnerships with some of the world’s greatest museums, including the British Museum, the Palace Museums in Beijing and Taipei and the Museo del Oro in Bogotá, Colombia. The two colleagues traveled to China more than 100 times in the last 25 years, and the partnerships they spearheaded led to more than 50 exhibitions, like “Secrets of the Silk Road,” “Terra Cotta Warriors,” and “Mummies: Treasures from the British Museum.”

Even on his final day, Keller was working to bring world-class art to Bowers, preparing for the opening of “Guo Pei: Art of Couture.” The show, highly anticipated by Keller, includes 40 works of couture art selected by Chinese fashion designer Guo Pei.

“I couldn’t be more thrilled to welcome back the world-famous couture designer, Guo Pei,” the late Keller said in a statement this fall. “In an entirely new exhibition opening Nov. 12, ‘Guo Pei: Art of Couture’ will present collections

“With his leadership and experience, we have brought amazing exhibits from all around the world to Orange County.”

— **Anne Shih**
chairwoman of Bowers Museum board of governors

hand-chosen by the icon herself.”

The show is now open and runs through May 14.

Keller was born in Allentown, Penn. in 1947 and attended George Washington University where he earned a bachelor of arts in geology. He earned his master of arts and PhD in geology from the University of Texas at Austin, where he specialized in the geology of northern Mexico.

He put his expertise to use as the director of education at the Gemological Institute of America and also served as curator of mineralogy and later associate director for public programs at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles before coming to Bowers.

An avid traveler, there were not many places Keller hadn’t been, but in 2022 he fulfilled a bucket-list ad-

venture when he travelled with Ed Roski and his wife, Signe, to the South Pole.

In 2013, the Orange County Arts Council awarded Keller a Helena Modjeska Cultural Legacy Award for lifetime achievement, and in 2021, the Bowers added his name above an entrance to the museum to honor 30 years of his leadership.

Keller is survived by his wife, children and grandchildren and will be privately buried in his hometown. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Bowers Museum. Donations will be used to grow his favorite permanent collection exhibition, “Spirits & Headhunters: Art of the Pacific Islands.”

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