

FOOTHILLS SENTRY

The Best News In Town Since 1969

East Orange • Old Towne Orange • Orange Park Acres • Villa Park • Silverado/Modjeska Canyons • North Tustin

A Monthly Community Newspaper

DECEMBER 2025



Photo by Tony Richards

Orange's new Antepasado Park, located in the Cypress Barrio adjacent to also-new Well 28, formally opened Oct. 9. Cutting the ribbon are, from left, Orange Councilmembers Kathy Tavoularis and Arianna Barrios, Paul Guzman of the Orange Barrio Historical Society, Councilmember Ana Gutierrez, Mayor Dan Slater, Mayor Pro Tem and Orange County Water Board President Denis Bilodeau, Councilmember Jon Dumitru and Water Board 2nd Vice President Erik Weigand. See Antepasado Park and City of Orange, page 2.

Orange Council restricts Design Review Committee purview

By Tina Richards

The Orange City Council agreed to limit the scope of the Design Review Committee (DRC) to historic properties only, Oct. 28, but not without push-back.

The move drew criticism from two different camps: historic district residents who saw it as an end run against efforts to replace the DRC with a Heritage Commission, and residents from other parts of the city who did not want to lose the DRC's oversight of building projects impacting their neighborhoods.

The very existence of the Design Review Committee has been challenged for over a decade. Established in 1974 to "uphold community aesthetics," the committee has been viewed by some as a roadblock to development.

Preemptive solution

With the DRC under fire again last year, the Old Towne Preservation Association (OTPA) and Orange Legacy Alliance (OLA), unwilling to lose the committee's review of projects in historic districts, volunteered to work on a plan to create a Heritage Commission to replace the DRC, draft a preservation ordinance and revisit the processes used to grant and oversee Mills Act contracts. The Mills Act gives owners of historic properties a tax break in exchange for money spent on preservation.

OTPA and OLA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the city in October 2024. A draft preservation ordinance was submitted last May. In June, a city financial audit conducted by Grant Thornton, described the DRC as a "roadblock to development, stifling advancement and acceleration via laborious procedures and inflexible approach."

That pronouncement was not backed up with any data, specifics or analysis. Past and present members of the DRC, themselves professional architects, landscapers and land use experts, noted that good projects that meet city guidelines are readily approved. Problem projects take more time, but the DRC "makes them better" by enforcing city design and landscaping standards.

Grant Thornton's claim, however, spurred the city to restrict the DRC's purview as soon as possible and, in so doing, dismiss ongoing efforts by the Old Towne Preservation Association and Orange Legacy Alliance. Volunteers were blindsided at the August council meeting when a 5-2 vote directed staff to draft an ordinance reducing the DRC's focus to historic properties only, leaving the preservation work in limbo.

Swift shift

Arianna Barrios and Ana Gutierrez opposed the August directive, with both noting that it un-

dermined the work of the OTPA/OLA volunteers, cut back the DRC's role with no supporting data, and put too much emphasis on administrative approvals.

The proposed ordinance sailed through the planning commission with one dissenting vote, Sept. 15, and was presented to the city council six weeks later. Under the modified ordinance, the DRC's scope is limited to projects involving historic resources. All other projects will be reviewed administratively by staff. The community development director, aided by a preservation consultant, will determine which projects should proceed to the DRC.

Before the council addressed the staff-drafted DRC ordinance, Barrios presented the preservation version prepared by OTPA and OLA. "A year ago, in a unanimous action, the council did an MOU with those groups to study the Mills Act, the DRC and the need for a preservation ordinance," she noted. "These people were volunteers; their work hasn't been approached as it should be. I fear that a preservation ordinance will never see the light of day. I wanted to put this one in a public space, let everybody see it."

Ana Gutierrez added that the group had worked on the project for over a year, but it appeared at the last meeting as if nothing had

See "Design" continued on page 3

Orange rescinds previous approval of campaign contribution transfers

By Tina Richards

Orange City Councilman Jon Dumitru has changed his mind regarding a controversial campaign contribution ordinance. He is now urging his colleagues to rescind the council's May 2024 vote to allow political committees supporting one candidate to give money to political committees supporting another.

Before last May, Orange did not allow funds from candidate-controlled committees to be transferred to another candidate-controlled committee. Dumitru asked the council to remove that restriction from the ordinance in April 2024, but it did not come to a vote until the May 14 council meeting with the hour approaching midnight.

Dumitru sought the change at that time, because, he said, the restriction violated free speech; few other Orange County cities had such a contribution limitation; and inter-committee transfers of campaign funds allowed candidates to support each other.

The vote was close, with Dumitru, Denis Bilodeau, Kathy Tavoularis and John Gyllenhamer casting a "yes," and Mayor Dan Slater, Arianna Barrios and Ana Gutierrez opposed.

At the Oct. 28 council meeting, Dumitru asked the council to allow him to meet with the city attorney to amend that ordinance to disallow committee to committee contributions. Reporting that he had, in the last year, witnessed abuses of that provision, he now believed it was a bad idea and not in keeping with Orange's fair political practices. The council agreed with his request, and he and Barrios subsequently met with City Attorney Nathalie Adourian to revise the ordinance. It was revisited at the Nov.

See "Rescinds" continued on page 5

NEWS INSIDE

HERE TO HELP YOU

Homeowners suffering from next-door problem development projects get the runaround from the City of Orange.

See Letter, page 4;
Gas leak, page 5

TOO COOL FOR SCHOOL

Former students of beloved middle school teacher/mentor ensure his legacy is remembered.

See Influential, page 6

FLAGS FLY, STAY DRY

Community members scramble to protect Field of Valor installation from predicted rainfall.

See Volunteers, page 7

SOLDIERING ON

Orange Elks honor military veterans with focused events filled with respect and remembrance.

See As long, page 8

FEE-FREE PARKING PASSES

The Orange City Council agreed to issue exemption permits to people who live in Old Towne's forthcoming paid parking zone.

See Residents page 8

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Letters	Page 4
Canyon Beat	Page 5
Obituary	Page 10
Service Directory	Pages 11-13
Professional Directory	Page 13
Community Sports	Pages 14-15

Villa Park considers airborne enforcement of illegal fireworks

By Carrie Graham

Responding to numerous complaints about falling debris from illegal fireworks, the City of Villa Park is considering using drones to help patrol the skies around the Fourth of July. The idea was inspired by a similar program launched this year in Stanton.

Back in April, Stanton passed an ordinance that holds registered property owners liable for illegal firework usage on their land. The city then contracted with Turbo

Data Systems (TDS), a citation and enforcement company, to provide drones that record footage of fireworks being set off. TDS worked in conjunction with the city's code enforcement to issue citations.

The results were undeniable. The roughly \$10,000-price tag for the service resulted in almost a million dollars in citations issued, with one homeowner alone receiving a ticket for \$300,000.

Villa Park would follow a similar path. Passing an ordinance is a

90-day process, requiring a public hearing and the opportunity for public comments. The city council will need to make a decision soon if it wants to start the program in 2026.

The city may decide to pass the ordinance but postpone drone usage, at least for now. Stanton is currently fighting for the ordinance in court, after homeowners challenged fines they believed were unfair.

The current ordinance has no cap on fines, meaning each fire-

work set off is its own \$1,000 penalty.

Villa Park will also need to clearly define that fines for illegal fireworks usage are immediate. The program would be run through code enforcement rather than the already at-capacity sheriff's department. Those guidelines generally give property owners at least 30 days to come into compliance before incurring fines.

Villa Park will likely wait to see how Stanton's case plays out before committing to drones.

Antepasado Park opens in Orange



Photos by Tony Richards

Antepasado Park celebrates the culture of the Cypress Barrio.

A new pocket park in the City of Orange celebrated its grand opening, Oct. 29, with a ribbon cutting, Mexican food and free succulents for all in attendance. Located in the Cypress Barrio alongside the city’s newly minted Well 28, the park is named Antepasado, the Spanish word for "ancestor" to honor the past and present residents of the historic neighborhood that has flourished, despite decades of adversity. The park is marked with plaques celebrating the neighborhood and its contributions to the city.

The Cypress Barrio was originally populated by Mexican American farm workers, who’s families remained in the community for generations. It was, for much of the 20th century, the only place in Orange where a person of Mexican descent could buy a home. Councilwoman Arianna Barrios reports that a city map, circa the 1920s, called the area “Mexican town.” “I’m proud of this little park,” she told the audience at its dedication. “This park will remind us forever that there was a culture



Residents add to the new park's ambiance with a game of checkers.

here and that those who came before us made us who we are today.” Mayor Dan Slater recalled an early threat to the neighborhood when the city rezoned it r-4. Developers tore down the older homes and replaced them with fourplexes. A city councilman at the time, he was petitioned by residents to stop the destruction and protect their neighborhood’s history and culture. The best outcome at that time, however, was merely reducing the zoning to r-2.

Robert Baca of the Orange Barrio Historical Society grew up in the neighborhood and has been a force behind the city’s recognition of the historic community’s resilience and rightful place as a protected resource. Paul Guzman noted that his family has lived in the barrio for more than 100 years. As a member of the ribbon cutting team, he said his hope is that Antepasado Park will open the hearts and minds of Orange and that in looking back, we can all look forward.



Robert Baca shared stories of the Barrio's culture and history and his efforts to help preserve it.



The Barrio Historical Society lined the streets adjacent to the park with vintage autos in recognition of the neighborhood's rich past.

City of Orange Well No. 28: A multi-benefit project



Photos by Tony Richards

Well 28's grand opening was celebrated with a flourish.

By Denis Bilodeau, President, Orange County Water District, and Mayor Pro Tem, City of Orange

The City of Orange recently celebrated the completion of Well No. 28 — a milestone project that reflects what can be achieved when local government, regional agencies and community partners work together for the common good. Located at Maple Avenue and Lemon Street, Well No. 28 is a vital addition to Orange’s water system. At 1,000 feet deep, it is the City’s deepest and most productive well, equipped with a 600-horsepower motor capable of producing 3,000 gallons of water per minute. When operating at full capacity, the well will provide about 14% of the City’s total water production — enough to serve roughly 20,000 residents. This project was made possible through collaboration and innovation. The Orange County Water District (OCWD), which manages the groundwater basin supplying up to 85% of the drinking water for 2.5 million people across north and central Orange County, helped fund the project with grant dollars from the Santa Ana River Conservation and Conjunctive Use Program. OCWD also funded the design and installation of an advanced treatment system at the site to remove PFAS, ensuring our water meets all state and federal drinking water standards. Although the City of Orange

did not cause the PFAS issue, we remain committed to solving it. Working with OCWD and our regional partners, we continue to invest in treatment solutions that safeguard public health and sustain our local water supply. The story of Well No. 28 is also a story of creative land use and community benefit. Originally, the city had designated a different site for this well near Chapman University’s Panther Village student housing. When Chapman expressed interest in that parcel, the city and the university reached a mutually beneficial land swap. The exchange provided Chapman with the land needed to expand student housing while giving the city a better site for its new well — a true win-win for both education and infrastructure. Adding even more value for the community, the city built Antepasado Park in front of the well site. Though small in size — less than 5,000 square feet — this pocket park carries deep cultural and historical meaning. “Antepasado,” meaning “ancestor” in Spanish, honors the nearby Cypress Street Barrio. Well No. 28 represents the best of Orange—innovation, collaboration, and respect for our community’s heritage. By combining a reliable local water source, advanced treatment technology, thoughtful land use, and meaningful cultural recognition, this project delivers lasting benefits that go far beyond water infrastructure.



The well, over 1,000 feet deep and powered by a 600-horsepower motor, is the city's most productive.



A state-of-the-art filtration system separates PFAS contaminants from the well water before it is piped into a storage facility.

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Orange hires preservation consultant

The Orange City Council approved an agreement with historic preservation consultants Chattel, Inc., Nov. 12, to draft a comprehensive historic preservation ordinance.

The agreement follows assurances from city officials that the recent rescoping of the Design Review Committee will not compromise work on a preservation ordinance. A draft preservation ordinance was completed earlier this year by a committee comprised of Old Towne Preservation Association (OTPA) and Orange Legacy Alliance (OLA) members, but it was not considered for adoption by the city council.

Concerned that “We are starting from scratch,” Arianna Barrios wanted to make sure that the committee’s work has not ignored and that Chattel will confer with OTPA and OLA and update her on their progress. Outreach with those organizations is part of the agreement.

Under the \$66,317 contract, Chattel will provide tools for the city’s effective management of historic and cultural resources. Those tools include establishing a local historic register; criteria for listing and de-listing historic resources; processes to establish historic districts and local landmarks; a Heritage Commission; guidance for historic resources outside of historic districts; refined Mills Act program requirements; criteria for cultural heritage and neighborhood character districts; and applicability to archaeological and tribal resources.

Say it again, “sunset”

With that contract approved by unanimous vote, Barrios took the opportunity to revisit her request for a sunset clause on the ordinance restricting the scope of the Design Review Committee passed in October. That ordinance was agendized for a second reading during the current meeting.

Before approving the second reading straightaway, she noted that the historic preservation ordinance should be finished by June and that the DRC ordinance should end at that time as well.

Ana Gutierrez agreed. Jon Dumitru offered an alternative. Noting that things change and “something could pop out that says pump the brakes,” he suggested benchmarking the ordinance in June rather than just ending it. A review of its effectiveness would be in order, he explained. “We want to reach a conclusion that works.”

It took three separate motions and three separate votes, but the council ultimately voted to approve the second reading of the ordinance, with the proviso that it be revisited in June. The vote was 5-1, with Ana Gutierrez registering a “no.”

"Design" continued from page 1

been done. “We can’t negate their work,” she said. “Limiting the DRC first is putting the cart before the horse. It’s better to work on both (DRC role, preservation ordinance) together.”

But wait, there’s more

Mayor Dan Slater said while he appreciates the efforts of the community, but “we are going to get this done. The preservation ordinance is taking too long.”

To residents of the city’s historic districts, the role of the DRC and need for a preservation ordinance are intertwined. Most agree that creating a Heritage Committee is a suitable alternative to the DRC. But that leaves development in the rest of the city without an independent reviewing body.

Residents making public comments during that night’s hearing suggested that the ordinance eliminated public noticing and oversight of new projects; that it moves things out of the public eye; that city staff is not required to have design or landscaping expertise; and that the ordinance completely changes the way projects are approved.

“This is personal,” Laurie Sandoval told the council. “I live next door to a project that’s been ongoing for six years under a conditional use permit. The city has done nothing. What criteria

will staff use to evaluate size and neighborhood compatibility, who will evaluate privacy issues?”

One for all

“This may hurt Orange in the future,” Laura Thomas said. “The rest of Orange neighborhoods are excluded. You’re going to end up with a hodgepodge. All neighborhoods deserve the same consideration as Old Towne. All neighborhoods deserve to have their character and identity preserved. Staff has limited knowledge in these areas. The DRC knows its stuff.”

Adrianne Gladson, a DRC member, noted that the council received 44 comment letters opposing the ordinance and just four in favor of it. “This ordinance needs work,” she said, “we should get this right.”

Mayor Slater assured the audience that work on the preservation ordinance would continue, Arianna Barrios was not so sure. She asked that a “sunset” clause be inserted that would take effect when the preservation ordinance was approved. That was rejected.

“We are racing to do this, she said. “It assumes no CEQA liability, language about public notice and does not include the Eichlers. What criteria will the community development manager use for administrative review? Without specifics, this opens up a nightmare.”

The vote to approve was 5-2 with Barrios and Gutierrez opposed.

Orange Elks open "Little Free Library"



Checking out the books in the Elks' Little Library are, left to right, Kevin Wagner, Mike Cash, Megan and JC Cortez.

The Orange Elks "Little Free Library" has been installed next to the lodge parking lot, off Grand Street. The Library provides books for people of all ages to read and share. An entire shelf is devoted to younger readers.

The Little Free Library is part of the Orange Elks Reading Promise. The Reading Promise provides a new book for young students to keep, and, hopefully, inspire them to read more. The Little Free Library is accepting book donations.



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DAN SLATER

Merry Christmas, Orange!

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

Tough love

Dear Editor:
I have sent the following to the Orange City Council:
We must focus on our future, which includes increasing funds available to repair and replace decaying infrastructure and address service cuts. We must get back on target to address these financial problems and other issues. We must stop living in the past and trying to prevent change from happening. There is much opportunity and a better

and brighter future for our city if and only if we change our ways and work to make our better and brighter future happen.
Just a few of the issues I am concerned about:
1. How will the structural deficit be ended by having enough property and sales taxes coming into to pay the current bills and to save money for our future?
2. What is the plan to replace the aging fire stations, which have sketchy living quarters and bays that don't fit the new bigger

fire trucks?
3. When are we ordering new fire trucks and when do we take delivery?
4. When is City Hall getting needed repairs to roof, plumbing and other areas to prevent further damage to the building?
5. What are the plans to have enough money to open our libraries for more hours? Moving money from one account to the library is not acceptable. We need new funding sources.
6. What are the plans to open our swimming pool during the summer? Again, we need new funding sources.
7. Does our PD have enough vehicles and funding to maintain our safety and security?
8. How much money is needed to have the Planning Counter open more hours to better serve

the public?
9. How are upgrades to our aging water main system being funded? What is the plan for upgrading our water mains to prevent new sinkholes from developing?
10. Is Panda Mart opening?
11. Is SC Fuels starting to consolidate staff from Orange into Knoxville?
12. How much money is needed to address deferred maintenance on city owned properties?
13. What is going on with the Orange Yards project?
14. When is the new Enterprise Area Zoning coming forward for approval?
15. When will City staff receive market rate wages and more employees hired to serve our residents?
16. What can be done to attract

and retain new businesses?

Reggie Mundekis
Orange

Sounding off

Dear Editor:
Re: Orange Plaza Accidents
Council members are concerned that noise from rumble strips would disturb businesses and residents, yet they allow gas powered leaf blowers. That makes no sense at all, actually borders on stupidity, especially for those who voted against a similar blower measure in 2023. Thirty years ago my wife and I were thrilled to purchase a home in Orange. It won't be long until we're gone.

Stephen Tyler
Orange

Ed Note:

Residents of Orange who do not live in a historic district have decried the loss of the Design Review Committee, as an oversight tool for projects throughout the city. They have been assured that there are already measures in place (zoning, code enforcement) to protect them from irresponsible or illegal development. Two East Orange residents dispute that claim with facts, photos and multi-year complaints to the city. Neither project called out in the following letter or on page 5 was referred to the DRC; both homeowners believe the outcome would have been different had they been.

Dear Editor:
For years, the City of Orange has looked the other way at a massive two-story, 2,400-square-foot structure built only 16 inches

from my property line. This structure was never approved through zoning, planning, or the design review process, and it continues to violate multiple city ordinances, including height, setback, and size restrictions.
Even more troubling, the city issued a building permit 11 months after nine sliding glass doors had already been permanently removed.
No roofing permits were ever issued when 40 acrylic skylights were taken out and replaced with heavy cement roof tiles, which have caused the roof to sag. The same structure has been re-roofed three separate times without permits, and the city is fully aware yet has done nothing.
This isn't just about one property — it's about accountability and equal enforcement. Homeowners like myself are required to obtain permits for even minor repairs, while others are allowed to make

major structural changes without proper review. This selective enforcement not only violates the city's ordinances but undermines public trust in government.
The city's ongoing neglect has resulted in flooding, loss of privacy, and significant harm to neighboring property values. When city officials knowingly ignore unpermitted construction and allow illegal structures to stand, it raises serious concerns about integrity and oversight.
I urge the City of Orange to uphold the same standards for all residents and to take immediate action to correct this blatant disregard for zoning and building laws.

Laurie Cesena
Orange

(The writer included a list of violations, at right, that apply to the offending structure.)



A large haphazardly built structure sits 18 inches from the neighbor's property line. The city has offered no relief.

City of Orange Code Violations Summary – Illegal Nonconforming Structure (930 N. Meads Ave., Orange)

Violation / Issue
Structure built without zoning, planning, or design review approvals
Setback violation – structure only 16 inches from property line
Height and size exceedances (≈ 20 ft / 2,400 sq ft)
Erroneously permitted / illegally established structure
Alteration of illegal nonconforming structure
Re-roofed three times without permits
Replacement of skylights with heavy clay-cement tiles
Added ridgecaps increasing roof volume
Sagging roof due to excessive roof load
Permanent removal of nine sliding glass doors (one wall)
Applicable Code or Rule Summary
All new construction must be reviewed and approved under City of Orange Municipal Code (OOMC §17.08 & §17.10; OPA Specific Plan).
Minimum 5-ft setback (10 ft on reverse corner) required for accessory structures (OOMC §17.13.070).
Accessory structures limited to 10 ft height and 120 sq ft unless otherwise approved (OOMC §17.13.070).
A structure lacking required entitlements cannot be considered legally established (OOMC §17.38.020).
Structural improvements or alterations prohibited unless brought into full compliance (OOMC §17.38.065).
Re-roofing that changes materials or load requires a building permit and inspection (CBC §R907 / OOMC §15.04.020).
Change to heavier materials requires structural review for weight load (CBC §R802 & §R907).
Volume increase constitutes a structural alteration (CBC §R106).
Violates building safety and structural integrity standards (CBC §R301 & §R802).
Structural change requiring permit and review (CBC §R105.1).
Change from enclosed to open structure
Water runoff / flooding onto adjacent property
Cypress trees suggested over septic tank
Blight and nuisance from deteriorating and sagging roof
Loss of privacy from seven windows facing neighbor's property
Grotto / water feature with pumps and lighting – no permits
City's failure to enforce known zoning violations
Requires new planning and zoning review; unapproved change of use (OOMC §17.12).
Grading or drainage cannot cause water to flow onto neighboring parcels (CMC §13.66.070).
Planting prohibited above septic systems (California Plumbing Code §722.1 & §1101).
Public nuisance under OOMC §8.54 (conditions endangering safety, aesthetics, or property values).
Violates privacy and neighborhood compatibility goals (OPA Specific Plan §3.2 & OOMC §17.08.020).
Requires electrical, plumbing, and zoning permits (OOMC §15.04 & §17.12).
Municipal Code §1.08.010 – duty to enforce adopted ordinances consistently and equitably.

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It all adds up

Purple people power

Congrats! Special election turnout in the two largest (if still very small) of four Silverado and Modjeska area precincts combined was higher than the county at large with final election results not certified until Dec. 2. Registered canyon voters who came out to cast their vote on Proposition 50? An impressive 64.5 percent, as opposed to countywide, at 52.1. Of over 1,312 registered, 847 participated either via vote-by-mail or in person.

Results were not close county-wide, with a Prop 50 victory of 55.4 percent, but extremely close in the canyons, with 50.2 percent reported voting "yes" at press time. Prop 50 supporters bested anti-50 voters by exactly three votes, only slightly complicating the reliable narrative of a purple region with locked-in GOP representation at every level of governance: county, state and federal. The Canyons Vote Center served

182 in-person voters with 665 locals apparently trusting the U.S. Postal Service and County Registrar.

Ironically, redistricting resulting from passage of Newsom’s anti-Trump political Hail Mary will likely only further secure continued dominance of Republican electeds in the newly formed 40th Congressional District, with ex-incumbent Young Kim already challenged by former Riverside rep Ken Calvert.

Two canyonites worked the Community Room Vote Center site adjacent our library, a four-day in-person polling place. Neighbors might not realize the commitment required for the job, including long hours, in-person and online trainings, set-up and take-down days, all to accommodate the minority of voters eschewing mail-in voting. “I really like doing it,” says veteran poll worker Rusty Morris “It’s a small investment in our democracy.”

Follow the money

One further reason to celebrate the success of the recent Silvera-

do Country Fair, which benefits the Inter-Canyon League (ICL): a report from Station 14 Fire Chief Steve Kerrigan that, once again, we are a Firewise compliance-certified community, approved by Cal Fire as part of the National Fire Protection Association. Annual recertification matters to homeowners whose insurance premiums are reduced as a result. Attending the annual Fair --- paying admission, buying beer --- helps ICL support Chipper Days, which along with “credits” earned through participation by community members and reported hours spent on clearance toward defensible space, along with drop-offs at Aguinaga, add up to maintaining our Firewise status. Civics education takeaway? Your good time dancing, eating, listening to live music, and playing games at the annual volunteer-run (!) Country Fair becomes ICL’s financial sponsorship to the tune of \$3,000 for a single Chipper Day.

Unrestricted generosity

Big shout-out from your Silverado-Modjeska Recreation and Parks District (SMRPD) board to generous community members who quickly answered its call for emergency donations. Over \$1,000 funded both the Community Thanksgiving Dinner in Silverado and weekly “Lunch Bunch” meals through the end of this year. President Ted Wright

and SMRPD board members welcome end-of-year “unrestricted contributions,” budget-speak for non-dedicated funds used to cover operational expenses and respond to unanticipated expenses or emergencies.

Hay, Santa!

Christmas in the Canyons returns to the Silverado Community Center on Saturday, December 13 from 10 – 4 featuring over 60 vendors, including of fine art, arts and crafts, clothing -- all good for holiday gift giving. Food, music, song, and storytellers. Hayride and, yes, Santa Claus.

You’ve been warned...

... and now, if you’re navigating our local Cleveland National Forest fire roads absent visible license plates or in unregistered street-legal or off-road vehicles, you’ll be cited. For months, Silverado residents have complained about traffic, litter, and reckless driver behavior, and now law enforcement promises to respond not only with warnings but stopping, checking, and issuing citations for ATVs and side-by-sides not displaying plates or otherwise breaking the law.

Arachnophilia

December Library of the Canyons highlights include the Wednesday, Dec. 5 (5 p.m.) book club discussion of the memoir

"Being Henry" by actor Henry Winkler, who made a TV career being Arthur Fonzarelli, Barry Zuckerkorn and Gene Cousineau, and a Thursday, Dec. 18 (11 a.m.) presentation on spiders by the Irvine Ranch Conservancy.

More Santa!

Did you know that our branch library is a drop-off location supporting collection of gifts for vulnerable children and teens as well as low-income adults and seniors? It’s easy to support the county’s annual Operation Santa Claus/Senior Santa & Friends campaign. Pick up a tag for a suggested item and return with gift(s) collected. They’re sent on by OCPL to a warehouse display “gift shop.” Administered by OC Social Services Agency in association with the Senior Santa and Friends program, OC Health Care Agency, OC Probation, OC Child Support Services and OC Community Resources, new and used toys, clothing and medical items are then distributed by foster families, elder care providers, and volunteers.

Winter camp

Tucker Wildlife Sanctuary (ENC) offers two short winter camp weeks, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. daily, this year Dec. 22-26 and Dec. 29 to Jan. 2 with holidays off.

Registration now open at en-center.org/camps/winter-camps/

Gas leak illustrates neighbor’s concerns



A gas line ruptured by a construction crew wreaked havoc.

Residents on Grovewood in East Orange have, for years, complained to the city about the construction of a large home on their street. It does not reflect the original plans submitted, eschews city permits and has disrupted the neighborhood for five years.

Owners of the adjacent properties say the massive structure is incompatible with the neighborhood and asked for a thorough review by Orange’s Design Review Committee, the body that, until recently, insured that projects met neighborhood and city standards.

“We have talked to code enforcement, planning staff, gone to the planning commission and testified at city council meetings,” neighbor Laurie Sandoval reports. “No one from the city ever gets back to us.”

Because the house is so large, the existing utility infrastructure will not support it. Additional wiring needed to be installed. On the morning of Oct. 30, crews, without notice, began digging up the Sandoval’s front yard, looking for the existing electrical cable.

They ruptured a gas line, about 11:43 a.m., setting off what was described as a major eruption.

The fire department came. The police department came. The gas company came. The street was essentially shut down. Residents were advised, but not required, to evacuate. “We stayed,” Sandoval says, “because we had nowhere to go. Even though the smell of gas permeated the house – and the entire neighborhood – the gas company said we were safe.”

It took hours for gas company crews to locate the main shutoff valve and turn off the gas. The leak continued until well into the night, with the fire department remaining on scene until the leak was contained.

“This didn’t have to happen,” Sandoval admonishes. “How do you start digging without knowing where the gas lines are buried? The city has allowed this homeowner to waver from his ‘approved’ plans, build a retaining wall right next to our property, backfill and excavate without oversight.”

Serrano Water District thanks OCWD



From left, OCWD General Manager John Kennedy, SWD Director Greg Mills, OCWD Director Cathy Green, OCWD 1st Vice President Van Tran, SWD President Brad Reese, SWD Director Robbie Pitts, SWD General Manager Jerry Vilander and OCWD 2nd Vice President Erik Weigand.

The Serrano Water District (SWD) Board of Directors voted unanimously to present the Orange County Water District (OCWD) leadership and staff with a proclamation, in thanks for their “forward-thinking” in the water industry and “outstanding leadership, dedication and commitment to resolving the PFAS challenges.”

The proclamation commended OCWD for its valuable assistance in enhancing local water supplies for SWD customers. OCWD assisted with construction of the

"Rescinds"
continued from page 1

12 meeting, with the arguments for and against inter-committee transfers mirroring those made 17 months ago. Bilodeau argued that the prohibition was an overreach, that it could not withstand judicial review; that it increased transparency because campaign contributions are now posted online and the public can easily see who donated to who.

Tavoularis advised that she hated “going backward on anything,” that the revision to the ordinance was “politically motivated,” and that it s creating a solution for something that is not a problem.”

Barrios lauded returning the prohibition of inter-committee contributions to the ordinance. With candidates able to transfer donations made to their campaign committee to another candidate who they support, it allows “people playing the insider game to override grassroots candidates,” who are not part of a political network. “I was disappointed when we changed it last year,” she said.

Gutierrez was, she said, “happy to see this come back.” When she first ran, she recalled, “I had no money, no knowledge. Just family and friends. I raised \$8,000, and here I sit.”

Dumitru’s change of heart was the only change from last year’s discussion. “All policies should

C.L. “Larry” Pharris Jr. Filtration Plant which removes PFAS from our groundwater wells. Additionally, Orange County Water District has loaned SWD \$8 million for the construction of a new Well number 6 for a 20-year term at 3.5%.

be revisited periodically,” he explained. “Things change. I want to make sure campaigns in the city are transparent.” He noted that he sought guidance from the Fair Political Practices Committee and the state Attorney General’s office.

“Prohibitions of contributions from one committee to another can be narrowly tailored, so as not to chill protected free speech,” he advised. “This ordinance does just that, and the state says this is fine.”

The vote to disallow committee to committee contributions was four (Dumitru, Barrios, Gutierrez, Slater) to two (Bilodeau, Tavoularis). John Gyllenhammer was absent.

Influential teacher honored by former students

Students who had Maurice “Preach” Lyerla as a teacher at Villa Park Elementary and Cerro Villa Middle School decades ago remember him still.

He was, they say, the single most influential teacher in their young lives, in charge of everything from student government to school dances to coaching every sport his young athletes wanted to play. He knew every kid, their families, when they were where they were supposed to be, and when they weren’t.

“One day I road my bike home from school a different way,” Cyndee Kellar Paulus recalls. “He called my mother to tell her I was ‘going astray.’ When I got home she asked me what I thought I was doing. Nothing got by him.”

Steve Palmer, Lyerla Class of 67, met him in 1957. “I was afraid of my kindergarten teacher, who was also my aunt,” he says. “I refused to get out of the car every morning and Preach would pull me out and carry me into class. Once I got there, I was fine.”

Many of Preach’s students stayed in touch with him long beyond their school days, meeting for lunches and celebrating birthdays. Now in their 70s, they want to make sure he is never forgotten.

Steve Palmer floated the idea of installing a commemorative plaque in his honor at Cerro Villa, the school where he taught from 1965, the year it opened, until he retired in 1993. He taught sixth grade at Villa Park Elementary for nine years, moving to the new middle school to “follow up on his students.”

Palmer approached the Orange

Unified School District about the plaque project a year ago. “I was willing to pay for the plaque,” he says. “I just needed permission to install it.” Nothing happened. Shortly after Superintendent Rachel Monárrez joined the district, Palmer met with her. Two weeks later he had the permission he needed, and plans were made for a small ceremony to acknowledge the plaque and celebrate Preach.

About 25 former students and district officials gathered outside a classroom, Nov. 8, to remember their teacher.

“As a teacher, it’s good to feel and know that you’ve made a lasting impression,” Monárrez said. “Mr. Lyerla served more than 30 years. He was a mentor and a guide.”

Villa Park City Councilman Robert Frackleton, a Preach alumni, noted that, “It’s the teachers who make the difference. The ones who get it done.” He recalled that Preach always hired a professional band from Hollywood to play at school dances. A local garage band was not good enough for his Cerro Villa students. Frackleton also reported that Villa Park Mayor Nicole Jones also had him as a teacher. “Preach is well represented on the Villa Park City Council.”



Maurice "Preach" Lyerla passed away in May 2024.



Preach, second from left, celebrated his 90th birthday in 2021 with former students. From left, Cyndee Kellar Paulus, Julie Oswald Checkham and Marla Small Patterson.



Steve Palmer was instrumental in getting the plaque honoring his favorite teacher installed at Cerro Villa.



Former students display a class photo from 1967. From left, Suzanne Jones, Cindy Koppel Kraus and Karen Largerquist Aiello.



Villa Park City Councilman Robert Frackleton shows off his Cerro Villa ID card.



Superintendent Rachel Monárrez applauded Lyerla for being the kind of teacher every school district wants.

Canyon resident named foundation director



New Directions for Women (NDFW) named Heather Black-Coyne, a resident of Silverado Canyon, executive director of the organization. She previously served as chief clinical director for the organization.

One of the county’s sole non-profit addiction facilities dedicated to women and children, New Directions for Women provides a safe, healing environment for women to find recovery from addiction.

Heather Black-Coyne has a personal journey of addiction and experience with long-term recovery. Her professional career in addiction treatment spans over 15 years and she is committed to serve across multiple levels of care, populations and the administration of treatment.

Her work is dedicated to treatment that recognizes the needs and experiences of women. Her belief in the power of storytelling is also reflected in her approach to leadership.

Black-Coyne is married; the couple have five children combined and recently welcomed a new grandchild.

The Villa Park High Homecoming Queen and her court pose after the crowning. Left to right are Susan Kim, Samaira Multani, Queen Trinity Laurenson, Melayna Kiflezhie and Gabriela Torres. Mason Culp was the Homecoming King with his princes Philip Tran, Youssef Badf, Ethan Cisneros and Yamin El Kahlout.

Foothill and Villa Park crown Homecoming Queens



Peyton Harrison was crowned 2025 Homecoming Queen at Foothill High School. Peyton is also a volleyball player at FHS.



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Volunteers rally to outrun rain

Predictions of heavy rain in the area forced an early closing of the Field of Valor Veteran's Day flag display at Handy Park. Slated to remain on display until Nov. 13, volunteers were quickly assembled on the 12th to remove over 1,000 flags from the field ahead of the forecasted rain.

On short notice, some 60 volunteers from the Community Foundation of Orange, the Elks Lodge, American Legion Post 132 and El Modena High School rushed to the park to remove the flags from harm's way and get them safely stored until next year. It didn't, however, rain that day.



Glenn Easterbrook, Susan Wood and John Schutz from the American Legion carefully wound flags around their flagpoles.

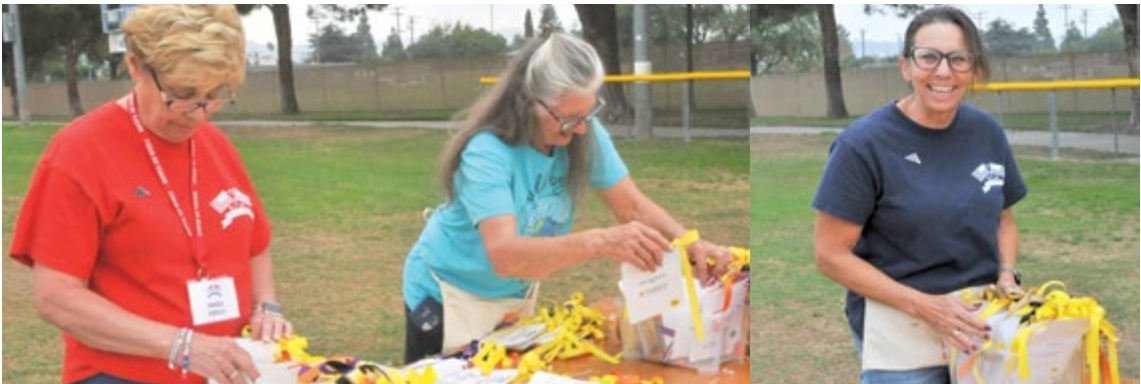


Volunteers went back and forth, removing flags from the field and taking them to the staging area. As one volunteer noted, "We've done this before; we've got it down."



Field of Valor at Handy Park

Photo courtesy Orange Elks



Panda Kisela, Nikki Karell and Debbie Kisela alphabetize the cards that were attached to the flags to recognize individual soldiers.



City Parks employees Josh Garcia and Cesar Marquez took charge of the wiring and lighting removal.



El Modena High School's Aiden Aguirre, Rivers Pinsin, Isai Cano and Trenton Yoshikawa used teamwork to straighten and wrap flags for storage.

Imagine a new regional park in Orange



Orange Hills Regional Park is our vision to permanently connect Irvine Park to Peters Canyon

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- Better wildfire protection
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www.SaveOrangeHills.org

As long as there is a vet, the Orange Elks will never forget



The cake celebrating the 250th USMC birthday is cut by, from left, Ricardo Paco; Mark Wayland, the oldest Marine present; Lance Corporal Sean Perez, the youngest Marine present; Colonel Mark M. Tull, USMC, retired; and Jose Gadea.



Veterans and Elks, left to right, Brian Fitzpatrick, Terrie Schatz and John Smith shared their military experiences with Palmyra Elementary students.

By Bill Neessen

The week surrounding Veterans Day is busy around Orange Elks Lodge as members plan, organize, carry out and participate in programs dedicated to those who served.

Orange Elks veterans greeted students at Palmyra Elementary School as they arrived the morning of Nov. 7. They shared their experiences as veterans, talked about military history and answered questions posed by student.

Later that day, Lodge #1475 hosted Orange High School’s Marine Corps Junior Reserve Of-

ficers Training Corps in celebration of the USMC 250th birthday.

The Orange High program is one of the biggest in the West, with over 200 cadets attending.

Elks members then volunteered at Handy Park to help the Community of Orange Foundation set up the Field of Valor, a tribute to the men and women who are serving and have served in the military. Over 1,100 American flags were set up, with each flag dedicated to honor a friend or family member.

On Veterans Day, the Elks worked with the American Legion Post 132 to honor vets at a special event. Over 120 veterans

and guests attended a ceremony at the Post. The Orange High School’s Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps presented the colors, followed by the program and dinner provided by the lodge.

The week ended with the Veterans Night Program at the lodge. The program included patriotic songs, recognizing our members who served in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard and Space Force.

Veterans Committee Chairmen Brian and Stephanie Fitzpatrick presented the 21st Heroes Scholarship Award to E-5 Petty Officer Andrea Alexander, U.S. Navy.



U.S. Navy Petty Officer Andrea Alexander, far left, with two sons, received the Heroes Scholarship Award from Elks Stephanie and Brian Fitzpatrick.



The colors were presented by Orange High School USMC JROTC at the American Legion Post event.

Wishing the OPA Community Family

Merry Christmas

Happy Holidays

-&-

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Residents in Old Towne paid parking zone will get permits

By Carrie Graham

Moving forward in the process to establish paid parking in Old Towne, the Orange City Council approved a portion of an ordinance giving free parking permits to residents, but balked at the inclusion of businesses in the ordinance as written.

While Councilmember Ariana Barrios, who lives near the Old Towne zone, recused herself from the Oct. 28 council discussion; the rest of the members largely agreed that those living in Old Towne shouldn’t be saddled with sudden parking costs. Residents, who must prove they live there, will be issued permits to park in paid parking slots for free.

The council, however, was not as amenable to the portion of the ordinance addressing parking permits for businesses.

“My problem,” Dumitru said, “is that the whole basis behind this was folks who are working down there would be funneled into the parking structure and other areas. And now there’s an inclusion of a permit for employees at \$50 a pop for each permit. But it doesn’t limit each business to how many permits,” said Dumitru. He later asked Public Works Director Christopher Cash what was to stop businesses from committing fraud.

Unclear on the concept

The parking system for businesses would require merchants to request permits for their employees as needed. To qualify, the employee must work for the business full-time. While the business would be responsible for the application and the \$50 per month price tag, payable only in six-month increments, the permit itself would be assigned to a specific employee license plate number.

Cash admitted that the current system leaves some room for dishonesty, but was optimistic that with over 1,000 free parking spots still available in the area,

many businesses will likely opt not to foot the \$600 per year bill per employee. “There is part of this that’s the honor system, and part of us monitoring the number of permits issued,” he advised. “If we find businesses that are not being honest in their application, that would certainly impact our ability to continue to do the program the way that we’re describing it.”

Asked how the city would rein in permits if they get out of control, Cash said the permits must be renewed every six months, meaning changes can be made quickly if data shows the current system isn’t providing the desired results. As part of the city’s contract with ACE Parking LLC, awarded over the summer, it will provide a “parking manager” who will track metrics that Public Works can use to bring proposed tweaks to the council.

OK for some

Dumitru motioned to bifurcate the residential and business portions, passing the residential while continuing the commercial side to a later meeting once city staff had a chance to create more solid criteria.

Ana Gutierrez seconded the motion to bifurcate, advising that the criteria for business permits “could be by size or by type of business, but not free rein determined by public works. Not knowing the true parameters is not making it fair and equitable. It cannot be that I’m going to give eight to this one business, 10 to this other one, five to this one and three to this one. It’s just too open.”

The lone dissenting voice on the issue was councilman Denis Bilodeau. “We have a two-hour parking standard in Old Towne,” he said. “It’s not enforced, and I think that is why we have so many parking congestion problems. If you’re not going to enforce the existing regulations, then why would anybody follow any of them? I’m not knocking the OPD. They have more important things to do than play meter maid, but we’re not enforcing the existing parking regulations in Old Towne. I think this system will not be as profitable as some may think.”

The council will resume discussion with revised criteria from city staff at the last meeting of the year on Dec. 9.

Troop 543 names three Eagle Scouts



Eagle Scouts Ethan Tjoa, Tristin Morgan and Logan Doan with Scoutmaster Tim Endo.

Troop 543 from Salem Lutheran School held a Court of Honor in October to celebrate its 102,103 and 104th Eagle Scouts: Ethan Tjoa, Tristin Morgan and Logan Doan. Eagle Scout is the highest rank in the Boy Scouts program, awarded for leadership, service, skills and completing a service project.

Ethan Tjoa’s Eagle project was an Eucharistic Procession Canopy for La Purisima Catholic Church in Orange. Ethan graduated from El Modena High School, and will graduate from USC in May, before continuing to medi-

cal school.

Tristan Morgan created an eight-foot arbor with climbing roses at the Meditation Gardens in Tustin for his Eagle project. Tristan currently attends Orange Lutheran High School.

Scout Logan Doan created a “science life lab” for Salem Lutheran Church, consisting of four planter boxes to allow more space for Salem students to work on their science projects during the school year. Logan graduated from El Modena High School, and is currently a sophomore at Santiago Canyon College.

TAWC announces Young Women of the Month



Abigail Schaaf

The Tustin Area Woman’s Club has named Abigail Schaaf, Ellie Knoll and Olivia Jackson as its Young Women of the Month for November.

Abigail Schaaf is an International Baccalaureate candidate at Foothill High School. She is involved in Mock Trial, Spanish Honors Society, National Honors Society and is on the board of the Health Occupations Students of America Club.

Outside of school, Schaaf works as a coach at Wildfire Gymnastics, volunteers at Cell Dogs, Inc. and has spent the last two summers as an intern at the University of California, Irvine Ethics Center. After graduation,



Ellie Knoll

she plans to attend college in Europe to study international relations on a pre-law track.

Ellie Knoll of Tustin High School has volunteered for over six years at the Asian American Senior Center where she has built meaningful relationships and learned the rewards of giving back to her community.

She is currently the secretary general of the Model United Nations program, co-president of the Asian American Pacific Islanders Club, and captain of the varsity tennis team.

Outside of school Knoll works at Kumon. She plans to attend a four-year university and is applying to schools now.



Olivia Jackson

Olivia Jackson, also of Tustin High, is a four-year volleyball player and competed in the CIF playoffs for Tustin High School. She is the vice president of the Freeminers Club at THS, where she encourages students to dive into STEM and explore their creativity through hands-on projects and presentations. She also participates in the THS T-Tech program and completes service hours through the AVID program. After high school graduation, Jackson plans to pursue a career in the accounting field.

Also named for November are Uzma Nassr of Beckman High School and Katally Lin of Legacy High School.

The Orange Elks introduce Antler youth



Antlers members Brooklyn Colvin and Bailey Karich help the younger Halloweeners win a prize.

The Orange Elks Antlers, a group of young people between 12 and 20, bring fun, friends and leadership together to support the community.

The Antlers planned and carried out two events in October. They held a movie night, screening “The Nightmare Before

Christmas,” with all attendees treated to pizza, ice cream and treats.

The group also participated in “Trunk or Treat,” part of the City of Orange’s annual Treats in the Streets celebration. The volunteers helped young trick or treaters spin the Elks prize wheel.



The Orange Elks Antler Program, for youth between the ages of 12 and 20, was recently established by the Orange Elks. The nine charter members are, left to right, Neilani Ito, secretary; Victoria Vega, president; Tyler Collins, vice president; KJ Martinez; Brooklyn Colvin, treasurer; Bailey Karich; Robert Nelson; Seth Lawrence; and Nick Masdea.

Orange to revisit fireworks sales

By Tina Richards

With one safe and sane 4th of July fireworks sale under its belt, the City of Orange is reconsidering some of the details pertaining rules for participating nonprofits, timing and permit duration.

City staff presented a number of suggestions to the council at its Nov. 12 meeting, based on input from fireworks merchandisers and nonprofits.

Those suggestions included reducing the number of permits from 12 to eight; moving the application process from March to January; extending the permit duration to two years or removing an organization for one year after participating.

Staff also suggested removing the restriction on organizations “affiliated with a registered 501(c)3” from applying for permits.

The intention in that case was to limit applications to one per nonprofit, but recognizing that

many organizations are interconnected or linked, that restriction is burdensome.

While council members were amenable to moving the timeline to January, less certain about removing the “affiliated organization” section, and issuing permits for two years, they did not agree to reduce the number of permits.

Booth reboot?

“Why would we reduce the number of permits?” Ana Gutierrez inquired at the top of the discussion. The answer was disparity in sales. Because fireworks were permitted in just half the city, sales ranged from \$80,000 to \$13,000, suggesting that 12 booths oversaturated the market. Reducing the number would allow all participants to do better.

Jon Dumitru pointed out that there was only one booth in West Orange, with most of them on Tustin Street. Spreading them out more might have driven a different outcome, he suggested.

Noting that Orange is in competition with other cities for fireworks sales, he said he would like to stay at 12 to give more opportunities to nonprofits.

“Reducing the number after the first year seems too soon,” Arian-na Barrios objected. “Much of the disparity seems to be location, but it’s too soon to know. We need to learn more about locations.”

Denis Bilodeau noted that one booth actually shut down early due to poor performance. “The first year was tough,” he said, “because everybody was scrambling. I’d suggest cutting it to 10 rather than eight.”

City Manager Jarad Hildenbrand told the council they did not have to agree on a number right then. “That would be an administrative fix,” he said. Staff, he said, could propose language reflecting options for one-year or two-year permits and removing (or not) the affiliated organization option. The discussion will resume at the council’s December meeting.

Tustin foundation collecting pajamas for children

By Guy Ball

There’s nothing like getting a new set of nice, warm pajamas, but it’s a luxury that many Tustin area families can’t afford. This year, the Tustin Community Foundation (TCF) is again trying to make that happen for more than 3,000 people.

“Over the past few years, our generous community has collected and donated almost 3,000 pairs each year, which we now distribute to newborns through seniors via 19 organizations and nine TUSD school resource centers,” noted Erin Nielsen, executive director of TCF.

“Project Pajamas brings smiles to deserving children and seniors throughout our community,” she said. “This year, we hope to beat our 2024 milestone”

New pajamas from local residents and businesses are distributed through partner groups including Tustin Veterans Outpost, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Tustin

Family Resource Center, family resource centers at all Title 1 schools, Mary’s Path, OC Rescue Mission and Tustin Police Department’s Santa Cop.

Donating is easy. New pajamas in any size can be dropped off at the Tustin Community Bank, 13891 Newport Ave., or at over 26 other locations. Cash donations are also needed to supply sizes not covered by drop-offs.

For more information, a list of drop-off locations, or to donate online, visit tustincommunityfoundation.org and click on the “Project Pajamas” logo box. You may also call the foundation at (714) 393-8506.



VP Library offers holiday programs

The Villa Park Library will host the Lil’ Dickens Carolers and invite attendees to make a snow globe, Wednesday, Dec. 10 at 5 p.m. This program is for all ages.

Teens and adults are invited to make a masterpiece out of an old book by folding pages into unique designs, on Saturday, Dec. 13 at 2

p.m. All supplies are provided.

A Recipe Exchange program, featuring a food trivia contest, is slated for Saturday, Dec. 20 at 2 p.m. The community recipe book will be released afterwards.

The Villa Park Library is located at 17865 Santiago Blvd, in the Villa Park Towne Center. (714) 998-0861.



Folded book pages

OBITUARIES

Beth Newell

1944-2025



Marjorie Beth Newell died in California on November 4, 2025. She was 81. She lived her life with love, joy and family. Her journey took her from the open farmland of Illinois to Seattle, London and Chicago before settling in her much-loved canyon in California.

Marjorie Beth Rittenhouse was the middle child in a close family of five children. Her parents were Floyd and Dorothy Rittenhouse. Growing up on her family farm, she learned crop rotation, large livestock care, and the marketing of produce and fresh eggs in addition to cooking and baking skills. She also learned the values of life in big family and a small community. Years of voice and piano study led her to perform in numerous choral groups. She attended Southern Methodist University and the University of Illinois, and she put her education degree to work teaching elementary school in Illinois and Washington.

On a very hot Illinois day in 1966, she was married to Bruce Newell, and they began their

59-year-long adventure together by moving to Seattle, where she worked as a teacher and he as an apprentice architect. Her third-grade students loved their well prepared, pretty, young teacher and were impressed by her dedication, teaching while wearing a cast from a snow skiing incident.

An adventurer at heart, she eagerly packed a suitcase in 1968 for a move to London where she worked for an American bank, traveled and started her family with the birth of daughter Lindsay. The young family of three returned to Chicago in 1970 where they were able to travel, visit their families and become a family of four with the birth of a son, Birkin.

Never fearing change or distance, Beth moved to southern California in 1974 where her architect husband was offered a work opportunity. Here they soon discovered a somewhat remote canyon named for an early resident, Helena Modjeska, and moved there in 1977. Here she gave birth to sons David and Edward.

While her husband was off working or fighting fires as a volunteer firefighter, she did all the hard work of caring for a family of six. Always the teacher, she insisted on perfect attendance, and drove endless miles in her Volkswagen to many lessons and activities. While doing that she taught piano lessons in her home for the canyon children. When a major fire threatened their canyon in 2007, Beth was proud of her men: all three sons and her husband were firefighters working on the fire lines.

Finding interest and inspiration

from a neighbor from an earlier era, Helena Modjeska, a Polish Shakespearean actress in the later 1800s, she became a docent at Modjeska's home "Arden." Making this place her home for nearly 50 years, she became a student of all things Modjeska, a docent in her landmark home, and a board member of the Helena Modjeska Foundation where her prompt meeting minutes earned praise. She wrote The Friends of Arden docent newsletter from 2009 to 2019, each month relating some well researched incident from the life of H.M.

In 2010 she received the Ellen K. Lee Award from the Foundation for her service. She also received the United States President's Volunteer Service Award.

Beth will be remembered by all as a fierce defender of her children, proud grandmother of six, an accurate historian, and an educator. But all who knew her will

remember a sweet and gracious woman of grace and charm.

In lieu of flowers consider making a donation to the Helena Modjeska Foundation at helenamodjeska.org.

A further reflection by Sarah Sarkissian...

Beth Newell is gone and we are still here, so we have to keep her in the ways we can.

Beth loved Bruce. She loved Lindsay, Birkin, David and Edward, and their children. We still have them to remember her by.

She loved the canyon and creek, and walked it daily as long as she could. She was proud when she was able to make sure the hill above her own hidden home would always remain unchanged. Some might have chosen travel or excitement. Beth chose a steep hill covered in gray-blue ceano-

thus.

We know how she loved Arden, Madame Helena, the Count and their gardens and home. And Shakespeare, of course.

Beth loved music and teaching music. She wore pearls to every lesson, even for her single last pupil. If we are especially lucky, we can remember walking the canyon in days leading up to her recitals, the pianos sounding in houses where young musicians were getting ready to perform.

Years later, Beth could still remember which child had loved which piece, which composers were their favorites. Those children, now adults, will always have the beauty she helped them create. No one forgets that.

So dear Beth, at our last lesson you said you had to cancel the coming week because of a doctor visit and you needed to be brave. I'm sure you were brave. Now we get to be brave too.

Vox Populi heard in Modjeska Canyon



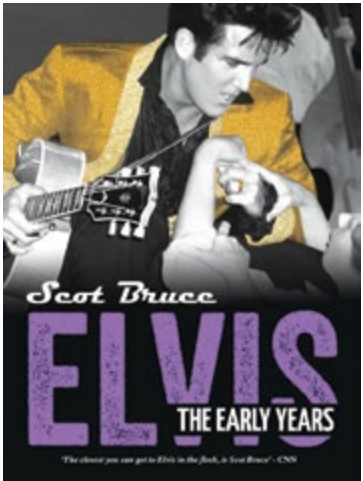
Photos by Leo Hetzl & Andrew Tonkovich

By Andrew Tonkovich

The recent Modjeska Canyon sign wars over Proposition 50, ethical civic engagement, and perhaps democracy itself developed, finally, into populist whimsy in the final days before the election. After the posting of weirdly confusing "No on 50" messaging resembling ransom notes, further thefts of "Yes on 50" posters, and righteous community backlash came the spooflash, with bespoke signs on unlikely themes posted in response to the proxy political debate. Arriving first was an unshy celebration of intimacy, then an Old Testament commentary, and, in following days, a stoner meme, a police code, and a numerological (or perhaps alcohol) reference. The people have spoken, and drawn, and they are democracy-loving, fun-loving and funny!



"Elvis Takes the Stage" at Celebrity speaker series



up singers, appeared in music videos with Faith Hill and Sheryl Crow, and on "Days of our Lives" and the "Bold and the Beautiful."

On "True Hollywood Story: Elvis in Hollywood" on E!, Bruce played Elvis in the recreating scenes.

Tickets are \$45. Bowers members may buy a ticket for \$35. For tickets, contact Barbara Hagan, (714) 272-1134 or crecendoticketsbowers@gmail.com. Reserved tickets and additional tickets may be paid for at the door.

The event begins at 10 a.m. at the Bowers Museum Norma Kershaw Auditorium, 2002 N. Main Street. Parking is \$7 cash at the museum.

The Guilds of Segerstrom, including the Crescendo Guild, raise funds to support the Center's community engagement and arts education programs.

Scott Bruce, an Elvis Presley tribute singer, will appear at the Celebrity Speaker Series of the Crescendo Guild of Segerstrom Center, Thursday, Jan. 15.

A top Elvis impersonator, Scott Bruce has performed with the Jordinaires, Elvis' original back-



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Villa Park is celebrating the holidays!

Santa Tour – Saturday, Dec. 6, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Santa wends his way through the city streets atop an OCFA fire engine, making stops throughout the city to listen to children’s Christmas wishes and pose for photos. He, along with his Villa Park City Council Elves, distribute candy canes along the way. Sponsored by the Villa Park Community Services Foundation; see the schedule and map at vpcsfoundation.org.

Christmas Tree Lighting – Saturday, Dec. 6, 6-8 p.m.
Listen as the VPHS choir sings Christmas carols, sip hot chocolate and enjoy holiday cookies as 10 Christmas trees are lighted in the City Center. Santa will

make an appearance. The event is co-sponsored by the Villa Park Women’s League and Rotary Club of Villa Park.

Dry Land Boat Parade – Sunday, Dec. 14, 5 p.m.
It’s a tradition! All sorts of decorated vessels travel through the city, displaying their creativity and spirit as they go “Reeling in the Holidays!” To register before the Dec. 11 deadline, see vpcsfoundation.org for the form.

Villa Park Hanukkah Celebration – Wednesday, Dec. 17, 6:30 p.m.
Sponsored by the Villa Park Community Services Foundation, the event will take place in front of City Hall.

Wreaths raise funds for OPAWL

Orange Park Acres Women’s League is hosting its yearly holiday wreath and decor fundraiser through Lynch Creek Farms. Please check out the holiday wreaths, garlands and centerpieces at OPAWomen.org.

The OPAWL Pickleball section is looking for new players. The women meet every Tuesday at 3 p.m. If you are interested in joining, whether a beginner or pro, contact Julie Maurer at maurer@socal.rr.com.

VPWL to award holiday homes

The Villa Park Women’s League is celebrating the magic of the season with the annual Holiday Home Lighting & Décor Awards.

Between Dec. 10–15, VPWL’s judging committee will tour the community in search of the most fabulous, festive and beautifully decorated homes. Homes will be recognized in such categories as Traditions, Winners and New This Year. They will also be featured in the January 2026 issue of the Foothills Sentry, Villa Park the Magazine, as well as our Instagram and Facebook pages.

Residents are encouraged to light up early, spread the holiday magic, and make Villa Park glow.

Orange lights up

The traditional Christmas Market and Tree Lighting Program will be held in the Orange Plaza on Sunday, Dec. 7. Market hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; the Christmas program, featuring a 250-voice choir with a 50-piece orchestra, will perform from 5:15 to 7 p.m.

Christmas Tree Lighting and Holiday Stroll in Old Town Tustin



By Guy Ball

Santa Claus is coming to town at the historic locale of Old Town Tustin on Friday, Dec. 5 for the city’s Christmas Tree Lighting and Holiday Stroll.

The free community celebration will be held at El Camino Real and 3rd Street featuring stage performances, music, children’s activities (including face painting), vendors, and, of

course, photos with Santa.

The City’s Park and Recreation Department will be featuring a new snow village with five sled lanes and a tot snow area for ages 3 and under.

The event occurs between 6 and 8:30 p.m. with a Dreamers (Vendor) Market starting at 5 p.m.

The event is free, but visitors are encouraged to bring unused toys and new pajamas being collected to help children in need.

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Orange Emblem Club #418 donated 600 Drug Awareness "Just Say No" coloring books and crayons to first graders in Orange Unified School District Title I schools in honor of National Red Ribbon Week. From left, club member Jay Chaisson, volunteer Bernie Budzyn, club members Irene Jones and Vicki Chaisson package the books and crayons for distribution.



Orange Emblem Club #418 and Garden Grove Emblem Club #279 held a joint Holiday Boutique and Craft Sale at the Garden Grove Lodge. Proceeds from the event were shared by both clubs to be disbursed to their favorite charities.



Cheryl Isaac's greeting cards and needlepoint at the Holiday Boutique

Orange Council approves street art program

Hoping to bring some color to Orange city streets, the city council gave a nod to the makeover of city-owned signal control boxes.

The Orange "Adopt a Box" Utility Box Art Program aims to transform traffic signal control boxes into vibrant public art-work. The program, unanimously approved by the city council on Oct. 28, will ask local residents and businesses to sponsor a box for about \$3,000.

That money pays for the vinyl wrap that will cover the box and anticipated maintenance, and will allow space for company or donor acknowledgement. Sponsors also have the option to request a specific box, provided it is one of the roughly 120 that are city owned.

Though specifics haven't been finalized yet, Councilman Jon Dumitru suggested working with OUSD to host a student art contest for some of the first spots. It could, he said, be offered in connection with an art contest already under consideration for the celebration of the nation's 250th birthday next year. "Just think how proud these kids will be," he said, "when they drive down the street and they say, 'hey, that's my drawing on the box.'"

Looking for love



Handsome Harold



Sweet Muffin

Just in time for the holidays! Meet Harold, an 11-year-old, 14-lb. Havanese mix. He is a gentleman to have in the home, and is fond of every person and dog he meets. He's the type of guy who will sit on the porch with you while you sip your morning coffee, or share the sofa while you binge-watch your favorite TV show — granted, he won't be able to hear it because he's deaf. He just loves hanging out with his human, and is an easy-going dog, who still has that pep in his step!

Muffin is 6 years old, an 11-lb. chihuahua/cocker spaniel mix. We can't imagine why no one claimed her after she was picked

up as a stray, because she is such a delight of a dog. She is well-behaved in a home setting, and has an easy-going demeanor. Muffin gets along with other dogs and is sweet and docile when meeting new people. She is house-trained and does great on walks and on the leash. She is a cuddler who would love to sleep next to you every night!

To meet these and other adoptable dogs, contact Mutts in Need at muttsinneed.org. And if you cannot adopt, please consider donating or fostering — rescues rely on volunteers and the generosity of donors to care for and aid more pets.

COMMUNITY SPORTS

BY CLIFF ROBBINS, CHAD CLINE AND DIANE TORRANCE

El Modena and Canyon High Schools hold NCAA signing party

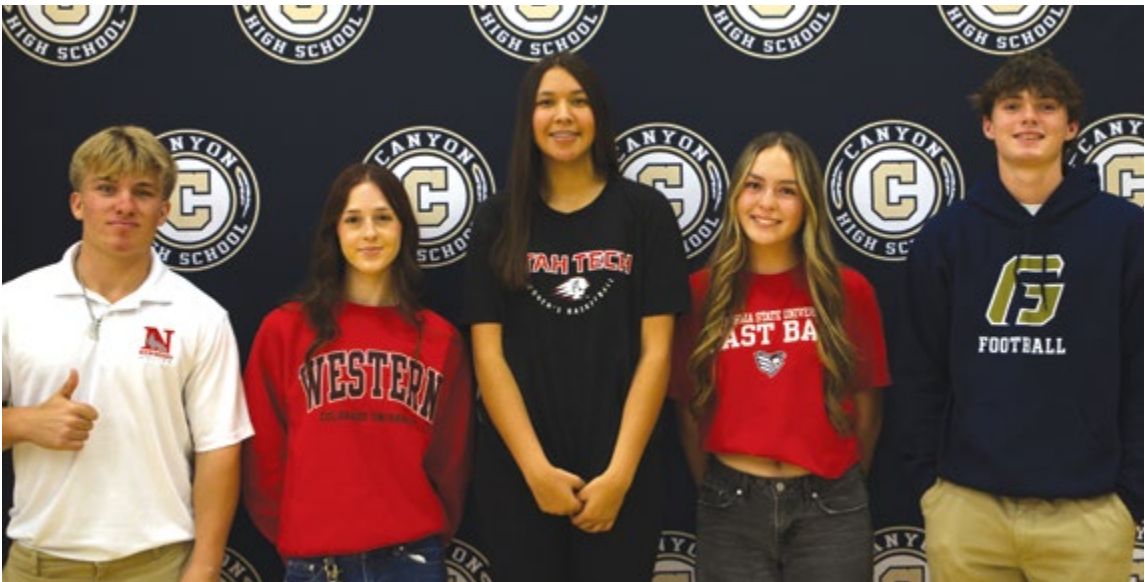
El Modena and Canyon High School had five athletes each sign their Letter of Intent to continue their education and sport.

The student-athletes from El Modena High School are: Kylie Tafua, softball, University of Oregon; Jocelyn Alatorre, softball, University of Kansas; Kylie Campana, softball, St. Joseph's University, New York; Ashley Driskill, softball, University of San Diego; and Logan Honikel, baseball, University of Kansas.

From Canyon High School, the signees are: John Walker, lacrosse, Newberry College; Tessa Fortenbaugh, wrestling, Western Colorado University; Kyara Vargas, basketball, Utah Tech University; Kelsey Perez, softball, Cal State University East Bay; Kellen Rommelfanger, football, George Fox University.



Kylie Tafua



Signing their Letter of Intent from Canyon High School are, left to right, John Walker, Tessa Fortenbaugh, Kyara Vargas, Kelsey Perez and Kellen Rommelfanger.



Jocelyn Alatorre



Kylie Campana



Ashley Driskill



Logan Honikel



Halle Calderon, El Modena High quarterback, stretches for the first down in the CIF playoff game against Mission Viejo. Mission Viejo ended El Modena's season, 13-6.



Ella Feldhaus, quarterback for Canyon High School, turns the corner and prepares to pitch the ball.



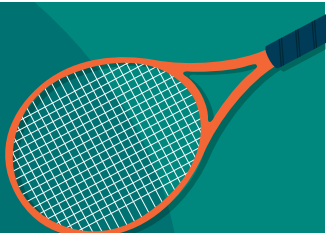
Maddie Romo from El Modena High sprints around the corner against Mission Viejo in the CIF girls flag football playoff game.



Amalia Subia, left, and Faith Montes De Oca from El Modena High, stop the Mission Viejo runner for no gain.



Ella Feldhaus (14) and Katelyn Cott from Canyon High School stops the Santa Margarita runner in the CIF-SS playoff game. Canyon's season was cut short losing 13-6.



COMMUNITY SPORTS

BY CLIFF ROBBINS, CHAD CLINE AND DIANE TORRANCE



ElMo's Priscilla Miranda sets up for a return against Saugus High School in the CIF-SS team tennis playoffs.



El Modena High's Dahlia Davis returns a serve in the CIF-SS tennis playoffs.

Team Bohannon captures third place in Classic Marlin Tournament

Orange residents Dan Bohannon and teammate Mike Davis captured third place in the Pro Angler Classic Marlin Tournament held in Cabo San Lucas. Bringing to gaff a big bull dorado made the difference in points.



Belinda Ramirez from El Modena High School was perfect (9-0) in the CIF-SS tennis playoffs.



Dan Bohannon (left) and angler Mike Davis showcase their 55-lb. dorado to capture third place in the Pro Angler Classic Marlin Tournament.



Mallory Grimes from Foothill High School played the net to block the shot.



Marisa Hilde from Foothill High School stretches to save the serve in the CIF-SS volleyball playoffs.



Foothill High's Haley Langdon (7) and Peyton Harrison team up to stuff the shot attempt in the CIF-SS volleyball finals.



June Stringham, left, steps in front of Sophia Keefe for the set up. Foothill lost to Cypress, 3-0, in the finals and entered the CIF-SS volleyball playoffs.



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