

FOOTHILLS SENTRY

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

A Monthly Community Newspaper

FEBRUARY 2025



Photo by Andrew Tonkovich

In response to the immediate fire danger brought about by drought-dry brush and gale force Santa Ana winds, the Cleveland National Forest, Trabuco District (Modjeska, Silverado) is closed to the public until further notice.

Safe and sane fireworks sales coming to Orange

By Tina Richards

In response to voter approval of a ballot measure allowing the sale of safe and sane fireworks in Orange, the Orange City Council passed an ordinance, Jan. 14, enabling nonprofits to set up firework concession stands within city limits.

Under the ordinance, eight sales permits will be granted to nonprofits selected by lottery. Applications will be accepted in March, and the lottery will be conducted during a subsequent council meeting.

Sales, and use, of safe and sane fireworks will be prohibited east of Hewes Street and east of Cannon Street, as that portion of the city is a high-risk fire zone. Sales will be allowed beginning July 1 and ending July 4. The council agreed that during the first few years of the program, maps designating where fireworks are legal and where they are not must be posted at every sales booth.

Nonprofits will gain

The council also agreed to revisit the number of permits that might be issued in future years. Several council members thought eight was not enough, and recommended increasing that number to 10 or 15. The higher number will be considered after the sales volume for this year is considered.

Not everyone was happy with the ordinance. "It's an unnecessary risk," resident Curt Peterson

told the council. "It's dangerous and reckless. We're setting ourselves up for something terrible. You're literally playing with fire."

"I have to worry about 9,000 pounds of animals [horses] to evacuate," Dru Whitefeather of Orange Park Acres said. "Cannon is not a good boundary. It is too close to parks and open space. I'd like to see signs posted where fireworks are illegal, and fines for illegal use included in the ordinance."

Safe and sane

Ironically, the approval of the fireworks ordinance followed an earlier council discussion with Fire Chief Sean DeMetropolis about lessons learned from the Pacific Palisades and Eaton Fires, protections and preparations for wildfires in East Orange and the level of water pressure available in city hydrants.

During the ordinance discussion, it was noted that fires are started by illegal fireworks, not those considered safe and sane. "I want to be convinced that there will be enforcement," Mayor Dan Slater told City Manager Tom Kisela. "We have to get rid of illegal fireworks."

Kisela reported that, based on statistics from previous years, the police are doing a good job. "There were seven arrests last year and multiple confrontations. But, we have to see the illegal ac-

See "Fireworks" continued on page 5

City of Orange considers forensic audit options

By Tina Richards

Acknowledging the narrow defeat of Proposition Z, the half-cent city sales tax, Councilwoman Ana Gutierrez suggested to her colleagues that it is time for the city to conduct an audit of its financial history so the public would understand what caused the current deficit, and be assured that it would not happen again.

"We need to reflect, do a deep dive and learn from our mistakes," she said during the Jan. 14 council meeting. "I'd like to know what a city-wide audit would look like. What are our options? We need to know the data to move on."

This isn't the first time a forensic audit of city finances was brought up. Arianna Barrios had suggested it when the gravity of the budget deficit came to light last year. A number of residents had also asked for an audit over multiple council meetings. It

was resisted at that time because the council did not want to spend limited funds on an audit, and its attention was focused on cuts, not cause.

Spending outpaced revenue

An ad hoc budget committee was created at that time to review the current budget, as well as past practices. It revealed that for roughly the last 15 years, the city had been deferring costs and not boosting economic development.

"How much would an audit cost?" Kathy Tavoularis asked in response to Gutierrez's request. "Don't we have mandatory audits? I think we all know how we got here."

City Manager Tom Kisela reported that, anecdotally, a typical audit costs a quarter of a million dollars and takes about a year to

See "Audit" continued on page 5

Kylie Seppala crowned Miss Orange 2025



Kylie Seppala is crowned Miss Orange 2025 by her predecessor, Elizabeth Raburn, Miss Orange 2024.

Kylie Seppala, sponsored by Burris Law, was crowned Miss Orange 2025 at the Orange Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Pageant, held Jan. 18 at Chapman University. Lisbet Wences, sponsored by Orange North Rotary, was first runner-up; second runner-up was Sienna Harvey, sponsored by Lionheart Pride.

Kylie is currently a student at Chapman University, majoring in psychology, with a minor in English, anticipating a 2026 graduation. She received a Presidential Scholarship at Chapman, and is a Chapman tour guide, a resident advisor and cheerleader.

She graduated from El Modena High in 2022. While there, she

was a member and Captain of Varsity Pom, volunteered as an Assisten with the Assistees Auxiliary, Assistance League of Orange, and was a former Girl Scout.

As Miss Orange, she hopes to work with OUSD schools to implement a mental health awareness campaign to not only encourage treatment, but also to help erase any remaining stigma surrounding seeking mental health treatment.

For her talent, Kylie performed a contemporary dance. She receives an educational scholarship in the amount of \$4,000, in addition to all the opportunities she will have, including riding in the May Parade.

NEWS INSIDE

ISLANDS IN THE STREAM

Orange is taking preliminary steps to annex the county islands that fall within city limits.

See Orange, page 2

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

Good faith discussions about the fate of the dumpsite in East Orange have not included who's going to clean it up.

See Talks, page 3

BURNING QUESTIONS

Residents react to heightened fire danger and wonder if new housing in a fire zone is a good idea.

See Letters, page 4

GUARDIANS OF THE LOCAL GALAXY

The Old Towne Preservation Association's yearly meeting renewed its commitment to protecting Orange's historic district.

See Annual, page 7

NOT CAST IN CONCRETE

A water resources act passed by Congress will save Santiago Creek trees, plants and wildlife from a 1985 plan to channelize it.

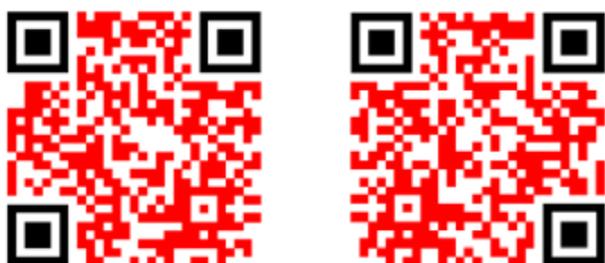
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COMMUNITY EVENTS



Advertisement

Orange will explore annexation of El Modena county island

The Orange City Council agreed, Jan. 14, to explore the financial implications of annexing the El Modena county island into the city.

The possible annexation was introduced by Councilwoman Ana Gutierrez, who represents that area. She noted that the city's Strategic Plan includes annexing county islands as a goal and, because the process is expected to take two to three years, it should begin now.

Gutierrez specifically referred to El Modena, but noted that the county portion of Orange Park Acres is another candidate for annexation. She asked staff to work with LAFCO (Local Agency Formation Commission) to look into the costs, and what county contributions could be expected. She also noted that she had introduced annexation of El Modena in 2020, and that a subsequent study (2021) used data from 2016 and 2017.

That, she said, needs to be updated.

Ask first

Councilman Jon Dumitru agreed that the City of Orange needs to be whole, but that El Modena residents should be surveyed before the city gets too far along in the process. "If we find out 70% of the property owners are against it," he explained, "then it stops right there. If 70% are in favor, then we move on."

Denis Bilodeau added that any annexation over 75 acres is subject to protest by residents. The El Modena island, at 150 acres, could be protested if residents aren't in favor of it. He agreed that local opinion should be sought early on.

Gutierrez offered that many El Modena residents are not even aware that they do not live in the city. When made aware, they express the preference for a city, not county, connection. She added that LAFCO will communicate with residents.

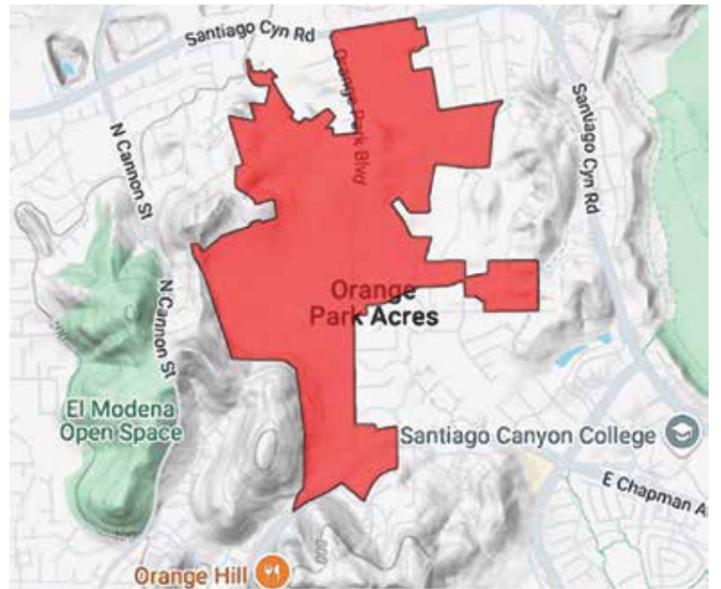
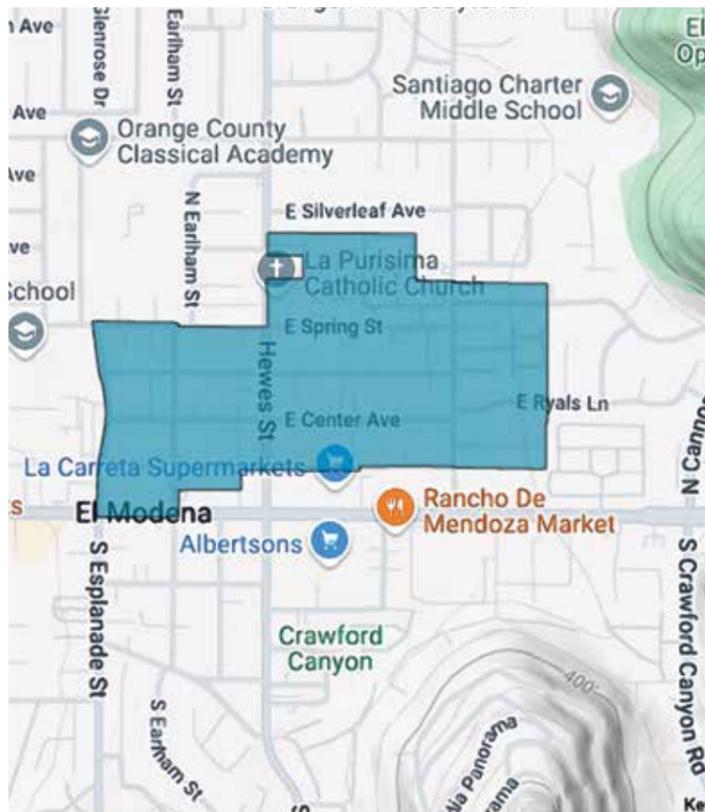
Dumitru said that he didn't want to leave resident outreach up to LAFCO, that the city should do "everything it can to be transparent."

Half and half

Third generation El Modena resident Sammy Rodriguez provided a brief history of the process that annexed half of the barrio into the city in the 1960s. There were no streets, no infrastructure at the time, and both the county and the city recognized that it would be too expensive for one entity to upgrade the entire area -- so they split it in half. "That worked back then," Rodriguez said, "but 60 years later, the whole barrio needs to be part of Orange."

Mayor Dan Slater related that, "county islands are the height of government inefficiency," and that they will all be part of the city at some point. "We need to start the process," he said. "We can decide later whether to survey the community or not. El Modena needs to be part of Orange."

"We've already started working on it," City Manager Tom Kisela advised. "We've already been talking to LAFCO."



While the El Modena barrio, above, was the primary focus of the city's annexation discussion, North El Modena, above right, and Orange Park Acres, below right, are also candidates for transfer from county jurisdiction to Orange. The process is expected to be long and laborious, but the city has already talked to LAFCO, the agency responsible for such boundary changes about next steps.

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Talks continue on fate of Sully-Miller dumpsite

By Tina Richards

A discussion of the future of Milan Capital's dumpsite on former Sully-Miller acreage between the property owner's agent, an Orange City Council ad hoc committee and vigilant residents, Jan. 15, indicated that very little has changed or been accom-

plished since an earlier meeting on that topic last April. The Sully-Miller site public discussions were made possible by an agreement between Milan and the City of Orange last year. Milan had expressed a willingness to consider an open space/park/recreational option for the site, and agreed to negotiate with

the city for a non-residential outcome for the property. In return, the city agreed to stop the clock on applications Milan filed in late 2023 to build on sites zoned for housing. The hold on those two applications gave both parties breathing room to explore "mutually acceptable" uses for the Sully-Miller acreage.

The sticking point in the negotiations is that Milan allowed the site to become a stockpile for construction waste and other unknown debris. Some of the large waste piles are contaminated and must be either removed completely or remediated. Milan had, in 2022, been directed by the county Local Enforcement Agency (LEA), a subset of the Health Department, to test the soil for contaminants.

Those tests were completed in June and findings were released for one mound, Stockpile H, last fall. The company that conducted the tests and analysis, Leighton Engineering, reported that most of the samples were clean, but others did not meet "regulatory standards." It also noted that some samples reflected levels of arsenic exceeding "acceptable background concentrations."

All talk, no action

LEA advised Milan to come up with a plan and timeline for removing the entire stockpile. Milan balked. It suggested that the Department of Toxic Substance Control would be a better monitor for the site than LEA. LEA, in turn, handed it off to the State Water Resources Control Board. The Water Board is considered a better overseer because it has more resources than LEA, plus the dumpsite borders Santiago Creek and sits atop the ancient creek bed, which contains ground water.

The new lead agency is the only discernible change in the contamination/cleanup activity for the site, and its only impact on the negotiations is another delay. A Leighton geologist reported that the data from the site borings has been turned over to the Water Board, and it might take six months for that agency to conduct its own analysis. Asked when the public could expect to see data from the rest of the stockpiles, he said Leighton was planning to meet with the Water Board to "define expectations," but he could not speak to what the Water Board would do.

It appears that Milan is losing interest in developing the Sully-Miller property. The city sees it as an opportunity for a passive park. But nothing can go forward until the acreage is cleaned up. That hurdle hampers any realistic negotiations. City Manager Tom Kisela, Attorney Mike Vigliotti, Mayor Dan Slater and Councilwoman Ana Gutierrez listened, but said little. Likewise, Milan Consultant Frank Elfend said nothing definitive. It was the dozen community members who have been following the Sully-Miller saga for decades who commented, asked questions and expressed frustration.

One suggested that the unreleased test results "must be bad," otherwise Milan would be anxious to make them public. "If the soil isn't contaminated," he said, "why wouldn't you want everyone to know?"

Meeting attendees heard nothing from Elfend about whether the company intends to clean up

the site, whether it will accept responsibility for its illegal dumping operations or how it intends to navigate the path from contaminated landfill to public amenity.

The cart before the horse

Elfend did, however, invite Landify, a European-based firm that reclaims distressed properties and turns them into parks and recreation facilities, to make a presentation. Landify President Jonathan Bryden and Director Steve Brown explained how the company imports dirt excavated from construction sites to urban properties to create public spaces of value to the community. The pair displayed photos of several transformed sites in Paris, and noted they had a few projects going in California.

While Brown acknowledged that it was "too soon" to engage Landify for the Sully-Miller property, he said he likes to start early because these projects take a very long time. The company also acknowledged the community plans that govern this site.

Landify, however, does not do major mitigation. The consensus among the audience was that the presentation was thoughtful, but premature.

"It's early," Brown said. "We're just here to show you the possibilities." Mayor Slater added that Landify would be giving a presentation to the city council in the near future.

"So," an Orange Park Acres resident asked Elfend as the meeting wound down, "you're dealing in good faith here? We've dealt with you in good faith many times in the past, and we've always been disappointed."

Elfend assured him that this time the negotiations will continue until the landowner and city reach some kind of agreement on the fate of the Sully-Miller property.



The Milan mounds in East Orange.



Photo by Ken Kribel

No records were kept of the construction waste amassed on the site.



Over time, illegal dumping raised the site elevation from near street level to several stories tall

Local students make the grade

The University of Wisconsin-Madison has named Malia Mancini of North Tustin to the Dean's List for 2024-25. She is enrolled in the College of Letters and Science at that institution recognized students named to the Dean's List for the fall semester of the 2024-2025 academic year. Marquette University has given

Dean's List honors to Ryan Olsker of Orange and Mikayla Yang of Tustin. Olsker is pursuing a doctorate in physical therapy. Yang, a bachelor of arts in advertising.

Gianna Gugliotta of Orange was named to the fall President's List at MidAmerica Nazarene University in Olathe Kansas.

Orange Elks aid Pasadena Elks

The Pasadena Elks Lodge reached out for help in the wake of the Eaton Fire that displaced thousands of people.

Exemplifying its motto of "Elks Care, Elks Share," the Orange Elks Lodge stepped up, and collected socks, underwear and sandals, and used cash donations to purchase additional items. Elks community partner, American Legion Post #132 added donations.

Orange Elks member Jennifer Weerheim transported the donations to Pasadena. The donations included 30 pairs of sandals, which are used when showering in the high school gyms and fitness centers that have opened their doors.



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LETTERS to the EDITOR



Where there's smoke

Dear Editor:

We were all deeply horrified by the news of the devastating wildfires in Los Angeles. The stories of residents trapped in bumper-to-bumper traffic, forced to abandon their cars and flee for safety, were heartbreaking. The destruction left in the wake of these fires—lives lost and thousands of homes and businesses destroyed—is a tragedy that we must learn from.

As a resident of Santiago Hills in Orange, I have vivid, traumatic memories of the Canyon Fire in 2017. Our neighborhood was evacuated, and my husband and I gathered a few belongings, along with our infant son, and tried to leave. Traffic was at a standstill as a DC-10 air tanker dropped fire retardant just a few hundred yards from our cars, while flames, driven by the Santa Ana winds, approached Peters Canyon. We were fortunate to evacuate safely, and the firefighters were able to save Santiago Hills.

Now, the area burned by the Canyon Fire 2 is where The Irvine Company plans to build the Orange Heights community -- 1,180 multi-million-dollar homes packed into 400 acres of currently open space.

I urge you to imagine what might happen in the event of another wildfire, with a mandatory evacuation of our neighborhood, now including all these new homes. Thousands of added residents, all trying to evacuate south on Jamboree. It would

be a life-threatening situation. How could we escape in a timely manner to avoid the flames? It is reckless and irresponsible for The Irvine Company to build in such a high-risk fire zone.

We must act now, as a community, to prepare for the inevitable future wildfire. It's not a matter of *if*, but *when*, the fires will come again. The recent fires in Los Angeles remind us of the urgency to act. We should learn from the devastation, and apply these lessons locally.

For the safety of our community, I strongly believe that these homes should not be built. Instead, the land should be preserved as a wildlife corridor between the Santa Ana Mountains and Peters Canyon, protecting vital open space and offering protection for wildlife and our neighborhood.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing issue.

Kimberly DeLehman
Orange

Dear Editor:

I live across the street from Peters Canyon Regional Park in Orange. I also lived here during the 2017 fires that almost burned my condominium complex down. The fires were raging through Peters Canyon, and ready to jump across the street (about 200 feet), which would have set my condo complex on fire. We were evacuated.

With all the vehicles and people trying to leave at the same time, there were tremendous traffic jams trying to get out. I was worried the fire would overtake us. If that had been the case, we would not have had much of an escape route. If Orange Heights is built, there will be many more people and vehicles trying to escape, which would make the traffic congestion so much worse. I imagine it would be virtually impossible to escape.

As bad as it was where I live, it would be much, much worse in the Orange Heights housing area, due to the fact that it is in a corridor where the fire will surely travel. As it turned out, the wind shifted at the last minute and the fire did not jump the street, so our condos were safe. That would not be the case for the to-be-developed area of Orange Heights. I am thoroughly against any such development for the safety of the people and structures in this area.

Since these fires occur in this area approximately every seven to 12 years, why anybody would want to live in a virtually guaranteed fire area is beyond me. I surely wouldn't want to be burned out and have to rebuild my house once a decade.

Steffan Miller
Orange

Dear Editor:

I was in Huntington Beach on a clear, sunny day in 2017, when I received an urgent call from my neighbor—fire was fast approaching our East Orange neighborhood. I rushed up the 261-Toll Road, and as I exited in the middle of the proposed Orange Heights development, a wall of flames was coming at me. In a matter of minutes, the entire Orange Heights area would be

burned. A deputy sheriff directed me to turn back down the toll road. When I exited the toll road, I became ensnared in total traffic gridlock. For over an hour, I inched along what should have taken me five minutes, praying fervently that the flames would not overtake us.

This was the 2017 Canyon Fire 2. If Orange Heights had been developed, 1,180 homes would have burned, and an additional 2,000 cars could have been added to the gridlock. If it had been a severe Santa Ana winds event, sparks could have ignited houses on the evacuation route.

The Orange Heights development was approved many years ago. Regulations and the climate have both changed since that time. In the current moment, it is hotter and drier and these areas are highly likely to burn in the coming years.

Please, no Orange Heights. The risks are simply too great.

Vicki Hernandez
Orange

Dear Editor:

The fires raging through Los Angeles are a terrifying reminder. When our city decision makers consider where to build new houses, they absolutely must account for the ever-increasing wildfire risks Southern California is facing. The proposed Orange Heights development at the edge of East Orange is in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. In fact, this exact property already burned once, less than 10 years ago. The 2017 Canyon Fire 2 destroyed or damaged 75 structures and caused nearly \$39 million in property loss.

The area is already burdened by severe traffic congestion. Evacuees from past fires have experienced hours-long traffic jams as they tried to flee. Adding a thousand more families would make evacuation in the next wildfire even more risky.

A recent court decision has paused the Orange Heights development – for now. I urge our city leaders to reconsider the project and find a more suitable location to build these houses. Given our emerging understanding of increasing wildfire frequency and size, the proposed site is simply too risky to develop.

John Hill
Orange

Dear Editor:

The proposed Orange Heights development of 1,180 homes between Irvine Regional Park and Peters Canyon Regional Park is in a high fire severity zone. Multiple fires have burned on, or close, to this location.

The project's 2005 Environmental Impact Report is outdated and does not address current fire risks. The State of California recently updated its wildfire regulations for the wildland-urban interface. The project should be analyzed under those new regulations.

History has shown that development in wildfire-prone areas increases ignition risk. Studies show that approximately 97% of wildfires have been caused by people, including fire from power lines, car sparks and fireworks, as well as from arson. Rapid winds also quickly spread wildfire.

The recent 2024 Airport Fire in the Santa Ana Mountains was accidentally ignited by OC Public

Works during an excessive heat advisory. The fire burned almost 24,000 acres and displaced countless wildlife, which effected endangered and vulnerable species like the Least Bell's Vireo and mountain lions. Mountain lions are "specially protected" in California following passage of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1990.

Despite this designation, the 2005 EIR does not account for the development's impact on mountain lions and other vulnerable species. The recent sighting of a mountain lion in Tustin, Uno, the pregnant mountain lion killed by a vehicular collision on Santiago Canyon Road last year, and the recent killing of a mountain lion in San Juan Capistrano from a vehicle collision, indicate a food shortage. One cause is from fires.

Building near wildlands not only increases harm to wildlife, but also harm to humans. Climate change is producing such hazardous conditions as extended droughts and severe heat waves that have desiccated the region producing dry brush and grass fuel for fires.

Building in wildfire-prone areas and near wildlands increases human-wildlife conflicts. Infill development and better land planning can increase safety for wildlife and humans.

Shari Dalal
Tustin

Dear Editor:

Orange Heights puts residents in harm's way.

In light of the catastrophic wildfires in LA and our similar wildfire history in Orange, the last thing we need to worry about is a new development of 1,180 single family homes irresponsibly located in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone between Irvine Park and Peters Canyon.

As we learned through personal experience, wildfire movement is dependent upon severe weather conditions, which allow fires to travel great distances with, or without, development buffers.

In 2017, the Canyon Fire 2 traveled over multiple suburban neighborhoods from Anaheim Hills to Tustin, hopping fire breaks, roads and the 241. Over 9,215 acres were burned, including Irvine Regional Park, the Orange Heights proposed development site and Peters Canyon Regional Park. It destroyed 25 structures and damaged 55 others. In total, about 16,570 people were ordered to evacuate their homes in Anaheim, Orange and Tustin. Suppression costs exceeded \$13 million, and property loss was estimated at nearly \$39 million.

My friends just lost their house in a suburban neighborhood in Altadena that was "buffered" from the nearest undeveloped "brush" area by at least nine residential blocks and an irrigated turf park over a mile away. Why would we want to put an entirely new development in harm's way -- at the expense of new residents, current residents and wildlife?

The beautiful biological corridor that connects Irvine Park and Peters Canyon at the rural gateway to the Santa Ana Mountains needs to be preserved as undeveloped open space, so when the next fire happens, no new residents are at risk of losing their property or their lives. Most of us appreciate the remaining undeveloped open space in the

foothills of East Orange. We accept the risk that wildfires have always been a part of this landscape since before recorded history.

The Irvine Company is exploiting us for profit. Their proposed development will leave us with significant long-term costs associated with wildfire response, police and public infrastructure maintenance, along with more traffic congestion and air, water, light and noise pollution. Urban sprawl increases wildfire ignitions and city budget deficits and threatens our safety and quality of life.

Joel Robinson
Orange

Dear Editor:

Fire is at the forefront of everyone's minds these days. When I moved to California, I was terrified by wildfire, so I decided to understand how fire works here. What I've learned really opened my eyes as to how necessary and useful fire is in this landscape, and how it is so destructive now, largely because we haven't practiced land management the way the native Californians did.

Seeing the incredible loss and destruction from the Los Angeles fires, and hearing about the gridlock as people tried to flee as the flames advanced on their homes, really makes me wonder how Orange County land managers can justify approving the Orange Heights development.

The site of the proposed project has burned before, and will inevitably burn again. People who move into those new houses would be at very high risk of losing their homes, and, possibly, their lives. The development also threatens people like me who already live nearby, and would have to evacuate along the same roads.

As wildfire risks keep increasing, our city, county and state decision makers have to start making better decisions.

M. Morelock
Orange

Dear Editor:

My husband and I have lived in East Orange since 1984, a mile from Peters Canyon Regional Park. The Irvine Company's plan to build 1,180 houses on the 400 acres between Irvine Park and Peters Canyon Park was conceived back in the early 2000s.

Conditions have changed considerably since then, such that development of this land is now dangerous and fiscally irresponsible, endangering the homes and the financial stability of the City of Orange. We now have a much-increased wildfire risk in our foothills compared to when the development was first approved by the City of Orange.

We lived in the area in 2017, when wildfire scorched the 400 acres considered for Orange Heights and burned Peters Canyon into a charred moonscape. We watched helicopters get water from Peters Canyon Lake and drop it on the fire where the Orange Heights development is proposed. We were evacuated from our home for half a day, as containment was unsure, and the fire could hop Canyon View, burn homes, and spread across Newport Avenue to more homes.

It is unwise for The Irvine Company to build on the 400 acres that already burned in

**FOOTHILLS
SENTRY**
The Best News In Town

Circulation ... 40,000

Publisher/Editor

Anita Bennyhoff
1969-2013

Editor

Tina Richards
editor@foothillssentry.com

Sports Editor

Cliff Robbins
sportseditor@att.net

Graphic Designer

Jef Maddock
graphics@foothillssentry.com

Advertising Sales

Andie Mills
advertising@foothillssentry.com
714-926-9299

Office Manager

Kathy Eidson
officemanager@foothillssentry.com

Published on the last Tuesday of each month and distributed to residences, businesses, libraries and civic centers.

Printing by
Advantage, Inc.

714-532-4406

Fax: 714-532-6755

foothillssentry.com

1107 E. Chapman Ave., #207

Orange, CA 92866

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the 2017 wildfire. When that wildfire occurred, we did not have the level of drought and unpredictable extreme weather conditions we have today. And with global warming, these issues will only increase, making the area higher risk. It's become extremely clear, from current wildfires, that tracts of homes do not stop the spread of a wildfire. They can become kindling that produces unstoppable embers in high winds, that could ignite homes for miles across East Orange — from Jamboree to Hewes, Portola to Cannon, Cowan Heights and beyond. This is a High-Risk Wildfire Area, and it must be maintained as open, defensible land.

We also care deeply about maintaining these 400 acres as a wildlife corridor for the mountain lions, coyotes, and endangered species that we see when we walk Peters Canyon. We already have had more coyote sightings in our neighborhood since the scraping of some of the hills by TIC.

We implore The Irvine Company to offer up this land for sale, to be maintained as public lands or donate the corridor for the safety of humans and animals

alike. And we urge our Orange City Council to fiscally protect the city and homeowners by opposing a development that would put East Orange in fire's way.

Susie Vanderlip
Orange

Crack the books

Dear Editor:

Measure Z was defeated by 28,792 voters and now demands answers on how the city got into the budget mismanagement problems. We are asking for a forensic audit to give voters transparency and oversight. We believe the city is delaying a forensic audit and has been covering up budget issues for decades.

There are examples of mismanagement of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) with regards to El Modena, where, despite the overwhelming commonsense evidence of a community underserved and in poverty, the City of Orange hides behind misleading federal data which overlaps adjacent wealthy areas

of unincorporated county land, which skews household income upward, making this community ineligible for federal dollars.

Reasonable questions on the creation of a map of eligible CDBG areas of the city by the public and by members of the city council were ignored and covered up. It took two years to provide a simple answer, that a municipal employee was responsible for the creation of the CDBG map. It has been demonstrated that over the last 30 years, any CDBG money that has been spend for El Modena has been spent only on handicap access ramps on the very edges of this community and thus are legally dubious regarding the city's compliance with federal law.

Since 2013, issues with enterprise funds within the Public Works budget, specifically restricted enterprise funds, have been brought to the attention of the city manager, several city council members and several mayors. Requests for information about the now defunct street sweeping enterprise fund and its subsequent final disbursement still have not been properly addressed. While publicly

available documents clearly demonstrate what was raised and what was legally spent, there was a significant surplus in this fund. Despite requests for information, there has not been a public release of withdrawals from the street sweeping enterprise fund account, nor has our request for information formally been responded to by the city.

Lastly, the renewal and revamping of the city's refuse service contract, merging refuse hauling and street sweeping services, flies in the face of an open and competitive bidding process. During the negotiations, either the city demanded or the contractor offered \$8,000,000 upfront and additional \$2,000,000 every year as a "fee" for asphalt repair throughout the city. Since the city does not charge "franchise fees," this fee for activities lies outside the scope of either street sweeping or refuse hauling.

The recent defeat of an additional sales tax demands that the city conduct a thorough and transparent forensic audit. It is not enough to discover any hidden funds or discover that public funds were misspent, it is important to determine that

money that is spent complies with local, state and federal laws.

John Nelson, Chairman
Committee for a Transparent City of Orange

Hard to say

Dear Editor:

In our 237 years of American presidencies, we've had a wide range of characters in the office. A few were unequivocally good and righteous in character; some were arguably self-serving and despicable in character. Most were somewhere in between. What we have not had, until now, is a convicted felon. How do we explain this to our children?

Mitchel Faris
Orange

Correction

OUSD Board Member Sara Pelly was incorrectly identified as former principal at Sycamore Elementary in the January issue of the Sentry. Pelly was a teacher at Crescent Primary and principal at Fletcher Mandarin Language and GATE Academy.



FCA 62th Annual Meeting

Monday, March 3, 2025 – Save The Date

Representatives from government agencies will be present to discuss your issues. This is your chance to get answers. Organizations invited include staff from Offices of Supervisors Don Wagner and Vicente Sarmiento, Congresswoman Young Kim, Assemblyman Philip Chen, OC Public Works, Orange County Fire Authority, Sheriff's Department, California Highway Patrol, and the East Orange County Water District.

There will be a Q&A panel of government agencies to take questions from the attendees.

Note: presentations begin at 6:45.

AGENDA

- 6:00pm Doors Open for Check-in
- 6:00pm Representatives from Government Agencies Available
- 6:00pm Pizza Available
- 6:45pm Presentations Begin
 - Update on Racquet Club Lawsuits
 - Congresswoman Young Kim (invited)
 - Supervisor Don Wagner (confirmed)
 - Supervisor Sarmiento (invited)
- 8:00pm Door Prize Drawings
- 8:15pm Q&A Panel
- 9:00pm Meeting Adjourned



"Audit"
continued from page 1

complete. He also said that the city does an audit every year, and that it just completed one that will be brought to the council.

Instead of a financial audit, Denis Bilodeau suggested, maybe we need an operational examination of our organization. There's no missing money, but we should be finding more efficiencies.

Arianna Barrios agreed, and called for a management assessment. She referred to a recent library audit that found the operational budget to be "way out of whack." "We need to do the same thing with every department to make sure we're operating to the best of our ability for our residents," she said. "We need to lay it all bare; we need to get to a better place."

Looking for what?

John Gyllenhammer noted that a financial audit might be necessary if there were malfeasance, but as a member of the council budget committee, his examination of the city's financial history produced nothing suspect. "I'm not seeing any smoke in terms of somebody doing something wrong," he said, "but there is a need for us to proceed organizationally, to make sure all departments are running efficiently."

"I'm not seeing any evidence of any money being missing or stolen," Mayor Dan Slater acknowledged. "But there is a perception from the public that something is wrong. I'd like to kill the idea that something happened that was less than above board. The public needs assurance." He added that he would favor having "menu options" for an audit, whether it be citywide or department by department. "What would it cost to

look under the hood?"

Gutierrez emphasized that options are what she is looking for. She noted that she is not on the budget committee and doesn't know what other council members might. "I'm not saying anyone stole money. Maybe it was used inappropriately. That's what I'm looking for, that's what the public needs to see."

No smoking gun

From the vantage point of his seat on the budget committee, Gyllenhammer explained what he saw as the root of the city's budget woes. "I saw a decision made to absorb additional costs that continued at a certain rate when we didn't have the revenue stream to support it. There was a conscious decision by the then-council to spend without adequate advice as to how to sustain it. You can see the inflection point in spending relative to revenue. Whether it was inaccurate, out-of-date fees, or how we collect property taxes, spending outpaced revenue."

Kisela agreed to look at options for a financial audit and an organizational assessment. But, he warned, be careful what you wish for. "We did a similar audit of the police department 15 years ago," he advised, "and found that it was understaffed and underfunded."

Barrios made a final plea for an organizational study. She stressed that the council does not know what it is looking for, and that there are inefficiencies that don't show up in a financial audit. Citing the library review, she noted that it had practiced constant staffing, like the fire department. "Why were we doing that?" she asked. "And if 6 p.m. is the busiest hour at the library, why are we open until 8 or 9 p.m.? We don't know what we don't know. That's what we should be doing."

"Fireworks"
continued from page 1

tivity before we can stop it."

"I want to hear that you are handing out tickets left and right," Slater emphasized. "Tickets for possession, not just for firing them. I want people to get the message."

The vote to approve the ordinance was 5-2, with Arianna Barrios and Ana Gutierrez dissenting.

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"Fireworks"
continued from page 1



Fire and Eyes

Olea europaea

File under irony or only cause and effect: Last winter was our wettest in decades. Big rain stimulated tremendous growth, with 100-year-old olive trees in Modjeska, planted by Count Karol Bozenta Chłapowski, lately producing their fattest, shiniest fruit ever. This fall and winter there's been no rain to wash away the beautiful, if unharvested, fruit, now covering roads, filling rain gutters, or pressed into oil by vehicle traffic like some perverse parable of exaggerated abundance and loss.

What's a WERT?

No, not the opening line of a Dr. Seuss classic, but the California Watershed Emergency Response Team (WERT) report, which tells the tale of our past and future. As does the BAER story. Not Smokey, but Burn Area Emergency Response, assessing the impact of the Airport Fire, which burned 23,688 acres east and northeast of us. Recently released, both contain maps of the extent and location of burn damage, consider soil health and brush status, and offer risk assessments of likely flooding and debris flows. Cleveland National Forest (CNF), Trabuco District

Ranger Darrell Vance spoke at January's Inter-Canyon League meeting, offering summaries of each. The short version is that, based on the "Soil Burn Severity Map," watershed flow in our direction will likely miss Silverado this time, but hit Modjeska via Santiago Creek, as it has historically, impacting a dozen homes and the ENC Tucker Wildlife Sanctuary. Residents recall waist-high mud and debris flow, power outages, and structure damage as the result of rain after previous fires.

The WERT language says it all, including offering a possible disaster impact timeline:

"... there will be an initial flush of ash and debris, followed by erosion on slopes with the burned zone. Because of the rugged terrain and frequent storms, flash floods and debris flow are like to occur and be most intense with the first five years after fire."

It's unlikely that these reports will be Library Book Club picks (see below), so you might read them on your own.

Burn Area Emergency Response: go to Links for California under inciweb.wildfire.gov; Watershed Emergency Response Team: see Airport Fire WERT Final at rivcoready.org.

Mo Canyonites hope for county, CNF, and OC Parks

preparation in wildlands areas outside property owners' purview, including upstream mitigation. Happily, two weeks after the ICL meeting, Public Works crews cleared growth in Santiago Creek, welcome pre-flooding mediation meant to prevent bridges from becoming dams.

In related news, Silverado Fire Captain Steve Kerrigan reminds homeowners that Firesafe Council of East Orange County Canyons has posted our annual Fire Wise Renewal Certificate. Some insurance companies have discounted homeowner rates when provided this document. See fsceocc.org/fire-wise.

Everyone knows it's windy

Thanks to the faithful and intrepid volunteers who regularly patrol during Red Flag (high winds with low humidity) warnings. The most recent Santa Anas brought out new folks, with more than a dozen residents patrolling both canyons daily, Jan. 7 - Jan. 14, all day, until midnight or parking with Fire Watch signs and flashing red LED flares. You haven't really gotten to know and love your neighbors until you've done sentry duty at the mouth of Silverado or Modjeska, or surveilled for a few cold windy evenings. Illegal racers, spotter cars, suspicious activity? Bring 'em on. But the best part is meeting fellow volunteers doing a shift to protect us from arson, accidental fire or downed lines, motivated only by altruism, if also the opportunity to complete a New York Times crossword or pull in radio normally hard to get deeper in the canyons, say, a terrific music show out of KSPC 88.7 FM

hosted by the funny, smart, eclectic "DJ Cement." Her playlist included songs by The Flying Lizards, Josef K, Vomit Launch, The Fall and, yes, The Association, doing, no kidding, their 1968 pop hit "Windy."

"Who's trippin' down the streets of the city, smilin' at everybody she sees? Who's reachin' out to capture a moment? Everyone knows it's Windy."

Tucker Wildlife Sanctuary, a project of the Environmental Nature Center, needs your help. The 12-acre preserve took a hit from those high winds. Horticulture technician Janelle Loustauna invites volunteers willing to do simple groundwork, including weeding, debris removal, and watering. Contact Janelle@Encenter.org.

Crafty adults!

The Wednesday, Feb. 5, Library Book Club of the Canyons discusses Nina George's latest novel, "The Little Village of Book Lovers." March reading is "The Cemetery of Untold Stories" by magical realist Julia Alvarez. Copies available at the front desk.

Brainstorm now for the special Feb. 18 program, "Crafty Adults Shadow Box," your opportunity to create a three-dimensional scene using paper, wooden shapes, and other embellishments assembled in a framed box. Encapsulate a memory, honor a loved one, and unleash your inner artist! (Or recreate the BAER or WERT reports!) All supplies provided. Funded through a grant from the California Department of Aging and administered by the Orange County Office on Aging.

Tustin Senior Center presents talk on managing care for aging relatives

By Guy Ball

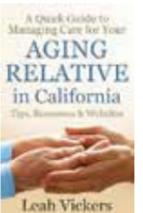
Author Leah Vickers shares her search, frustrations and successes looking for care for her aging mother, suffering dementia, at a meeting at the Tustin Senior Center, 200 South C Street, on Feb. 27 from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. The public is invited.

Vickers retired as regional sales manager for publishing projects around the globe. As her mother's condition worsened, she suffered from a form of dementia retiring fulltime care, Vickers spent countless hours on phone calls and websites with many different agencies to find her family's best caregiving options.

She ended up detailing her efforts in the book, "A Quick Guide to Managing Care for Your Aging Relative in California."

Her hope is that her insights can help save others from the frustration of finding and managing care. All book profits are donated to the Dementia Society of America in honor of her mother's giving spirit.

For more information, call the Senior Center at (714) 573-3340.



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Officers of the Orange Emblem Club #418 were installed, Jan. 12, by Supreme Emblem Club President Molly Velez from Fremont, Ohio. Officers for 2025-26 are, from left, Marshal Jan Genelle, Financial Secretary Laura Lockridge, Treasurer Kim Raya, Second Guard Carole Walters, President Laurie Padilla, Supreme President Molly Velez, Supreme Marshal Deb Blough-Schmid, Jr. Past President/Recording Secretary Kim Smith, Corresponding Secretary Wanda McWhirter and First Guard Deann Collins.

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Orange Police Chief Dan Adams retired December 30, but will continue as Interim Police Chief until the position can be permanently filled. Adams' employment will end no later than June 30. The city asked Adams to fill the interim position, as it requires a specialized skill set that must be fulfilled without interruption. Recruiting a replacement may take two to three months. Adams became the city's Police Chief on June 6, 2021. He served on the police department for nearly 35 years.



Photos by Tony Richards

From left, Communications Chair Shandra Wilson, at-large board member Ryan Cavalier, Renee Chavarria and at-large board member Sean Chavarria listen intently.



Brandy Romero, community involvement chair, left and Marva Hitchcock enjoy pre-meeting camaraderie.



Past OTPA President Sandy Quinn encourages the membership to accept board nominees for 2025, which they did.



OTPA (and City of Orange) Treasurer Garrett Smith and District 1 City Councilwoman Arianna Barrios

Annual OTPA meeting focuses on . . . preservation

The 39th annual general meeting of the Old Towne Preservation Association (OTPA) offered insights into the efforts made to ensure Orange’s historic district remains the “jewel” that it is today.

“We’re totally preservation minded,” President Rob Boice told the gathering. “Most of it is done behind the scenes. We closely monitor the city council, the Design Review Committee (DRC), Planning Commission and meet with staff to ensure Old Towne’s interests are represented.”

Boice noted that OTPA worked with the city on its objective design standards, created recently to comply with state law. The city had previously relied on a series of subjective design standards to guide development. The state, however, maintained that “subjective” standards gave cities too

much leeway to “get in the way of” building projects. Objective standards are less stringent, but provide legal guidelines that developers must follow.

OTPA reviewed the draft standards, offered improvements and suggestions. Boice reports that all of the association’s comments were included. “The city respects and listens to us,” he said. “We made the objective standards as tight as possible.”

A memorandum of understanding between OTPA and the Orange Legacy Alliance will enable a more citywide focus on preservation. That partnership will bolster Old Towne’s existing preservation “tools,” the Mills Act, DRC and the city’s preservation ordinance. An Old Towne committee is currently preparing a report for the city assessing the Mills Act and DRC. It is due in March.

Treasurer Garrett Smith reported that the organization’s finances are sound. It has \$134,000 in the bank and “made a little money” from Treats in the Streets, the October event that OTPA took over from the city. It was also noted that Old Towne generates some \$1.2 million in sales tax for the city every year.

While the City of Orange lost its historic preservation planner, it is seeking a replacement. Assistant Community Development Director Anna Pehoushek reported that the city has an on-call contractor for historic preservation, staff attends a summer program for preservation planning and prepares historic resource analyses that get “lots of review.”

In addition to its annual Halloween and Holiday house lighting contests, OTPA plans to host an Art of Wine event and home tour this year.



OTPA president Rob Boice stresses that it’s all about preservation. “Old Towne is too important to lose.”

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Orange Historical Society opens door to Masonic Lodge



The Orange Masonic Lodge, circa 1928.

The Orange Historical Society invites the public to the Orange Masonic Lodge for its Wednesday, March 26 meeting.

The Chase Bank, located in the Orange Plaza, is actually part of one large building owned by the Masonic Temple. The home of the former Campbell's Opera House, the upstairs portion of the building is rarely open to the public.

Visitors are welcome to join the gathering at 71 Plaza Square

for a program that will touch on the history of the 1912 building. Former Orange Grove Master Ralph Shelton will also share some background on the Masonic order, as well as talking about some of the early members of Orange Grove Lodge #293 and their place in Orange's history. Newly installed Master Cesar Bustos will also be on hand.

The meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. For more information, please visit historicalorange.org.

"Young Man of Broadway" to appear at March Celebrity Speaker Series



Tom Horvath

Broadway singer Tom Horvath will be the featured entertainer at the Crescendo Chapter's Celebrity Speaker Series on Thursday, March 20.

Known as the "Young Man of Broadway," Horvath arrives in a three-piece tuxedo ready to perform Phantom of the Opera as if on the New York stage. He has performed throughout Chicago, New York and is currently at Disneyland.

His voice ranges from deep baritone to rich tenor to bring out the best of Broadway, from "Memories" from "Cats," "Bring Him Home," from "Les Misérables," and "Impossible Dream"

from "Man of La Mancha." The performance begins at 10 a.m. at the Bowers Museum, 2002 N. Main Street. Tickets are \$45. Bowers members may buy a ticket for \$35. For information about tickets, contact Barbara Hagen at (714) 272-1134 or e-mail her at crescendoticketsbowers@gmail.com. Reserved tickets and additional tickets may be paid for at the door by using check, cash or credit card. Parking at the museum is \$6.99.

The Crescendo Chapter is part of the Guilds of Segerstrom, which raises funds to support the Center's community engagement and arts education programs.

Sam Robertson named one of most influential people in Orange County



Sam Robertson

Tustin businesswoman Sam Robertson was recently named one of OC's 125 Most Influential People in 2024. She is the owner of the Arvida Book Co., a new and used bookstore in Old Town Tustin. Husband Mike is a hard-working fixture in the store, but he says, Sam is the true visionary.

Even though small bookstores

have been closing, and the Arvida opened during the pandemic, Robertson has pushed through with community-friendly events to engage readers of all ages.

The store features over a dozen book clubs – for gardeners, cooks, fiction lovers – even one for walkers who use audiobooks. In addition, there are writing workshops

and talks by local authors. The store also supports local artists by carrying their hand-crafted gifts and artwork. A coffee cart invites community members to settle in, and a treehouse provides a cozy nook for young readers.

Robertson spearheaded, and is editor-in-chief, of The Arvida Review, a literary journal highlighting the voices of locals.

She is the president and founder of One Seed Community Garden, Tustin's first community garden. And, she made time to organize the successful Orange County Book Fair, held in Tustin, in 2024.

Despite being a busy mother of two young girls, 7 and 9, with a third on the way, Robertson also founded the Tustin Literary Arts Foundation – an organization promoting literary arts in and around Tustin. And, she reports, she is the proud owner of a never-ending pile of laundry and a sink full of dishes that never seem to disappear.



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'Experience you can Trust, Loyalty you can depend on'

Local youth aids animals



Blake Hartfelder with his foster dog Sky and a trunk full of collections to be delivered.

Blake Hartfelder has been unwavering in his mission to help animals.

Now a junior at Canyon High School, Blake has been collecting blankets and towels for shelter and rescue animals since he was 3, when he first began assisting his mother Eileen Hartfelder and brother Garrett with the project. The animals use the linens for birthing and warmth, curling up in them during the colder months so they do not freeze to death on cold, hard cement in the shelters.

During the last seven years, Blake has spearheaded the drive. He has collected well over 2,000 blankets and towels during that time, and coordinates 19 volunteers who collect blankets and make dog toys out of old T-shirts.

To assist during this exceptional time of need because of the fires, Blake has organized a special blanket drive for Saturday, Feb. 8 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Canyon High School parking lot, off Imperial. Towels, linens and blankets and gently used dog beds are welcome.

To donate or get involved, contact Blake at blankets4buddies@yahoo.com.



Young Blake, 3, right, with his brother Garrett delivering their trove of blankets.

Young Women of the Month named



Cecilia Duarte

Cecilia Duarte of Tustin High School has been named a January Young Woman of the Month by the Tustin Area Woman's Club.

Duarte is the Founder of the Hispanic Community Enhancement Club at Tustin High. One of the important aims of the organization is to assist individuals with the process of preparing for U.S. Citizenship exams and supporting the candidates and their families. She is also the Director General of the Novice Committees for the Model United Nations Secretariat Team and is an active National Honors Society member. Duarte plays the guitar, and has recently joined a band; she looks forward to upcoming performances. Cecilia has applied to UC Berkeley and plans to major in psychology.

Also named for January are Madison Heimann of Beckman High School and Rabina Kaur of Legacy High School.

Villa Park Women's League to feature magic

The Villa Park Women's League invites all members to the Thursday, Feb. 20 general meeting, themed "Paws & Prestidigitation: The Magic of Second Chances." Magician David Minkin will showcase his award-winning close-up, tableside magic.

The philanthropic focus of the meeting will be local animal rescue organizations selected by the membership; members may deliver items to Cecile Wight or bring blankets, food, bedding, bowls, supplies and crates to donate, purchase from an Amazon wishlist; or contribute funds.

The meeting will be held at the Trinity Episcopal Church Community Room, 240 N. Canal, beginning with a social hour at 6 p.m., followed by the 6:45 p.m. business meeting. For information about the organization and membership, see vpwl.org.

Chapman students hold gala to support the children of cancer patients



Participants in last year's summer camp rally around the unofficial slogan.

By Kaylee Scott

The Kesem Chapter of Chapman University is seeking sponsors for its "Make the Magic" fundraising gala, March 14, to provide activities for children of cancer patients.

Kesem is a national nonprofit that provides free summer camps and other year-round support services to children ages 6-18 who are impacted by a parent's or guardian's cancer. The Chapman Chapter is driven by college students who work with alumni and supporters to create experiences and connections wherein children

of cancer patients can heal and thrive. The students fundraise, find campers, plan camp, plan Make the Magic and recruit camp counselors. All volunteers are background checked and receive extensive training.

This year, Chapman is supporting 40 children. Make the Magic is the group's largest fundraising opportunity. It will be held at The Villa, 510 Katella Avenue, beginning at 6 p.m. on Friday, March 14. The evening will include compelling speakers, a silent auction, cocktail hour and dinner.

The Chapman Kesem chapter is seeking sponsors to support the

gala. Sponsorship levels have different inclusions, i.e., logos on social media and program, tickets to the event, shoutouts and honors. A matching donor offer has been committed to double the amount of sponsorship support. The chapter is also looking for physical donations for the silent auction, and urging community members to attend the event and support the cause. To purchase tickets or donate, see kesem.org/chapmanmtm25; use the code "EARLY!" before Feb. 14 for an early bird discount. For questions, email chapman.mt@kesem.org.

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REAL ESTATE
with David Silva




Fairhaven presents Love Songs of 20th Century

Fairhaven Memorial Park will offer a special evening candlelight concert of love songs, from Nat King Cole to John Legend, played by an ensemble of talented musicians from the Orange County Preservation Bands, including featured guest vocalist Debi Ebert.

The concert, to be held on Friday, Feb. 21 at 7 p.m. in Waverley Chapel, is free, but seating is limited. Registration is required; contact Cynthia.Adair@dignitymemorial.com or call (714) 922-2953.

Lower Santiago Creek gets Congressional attention



The Army Corps of engineers was going to turn the lower portion of Santiago Creek into a concrete channel.

Legislation passed in the waning days of the 118th Congress included language that will protect the southwestern end of Santiago Creek, now a riparian area and bird sanctuary, from being transformed into a concrete channel.

The Water Resources Development Act of 2024 specifically addresses several issues pertaining to the Santa Ana River and its feeder, Santiago Creek. The portions of the bill covering the local waterway were introduced by Congressman Lou Correa (CA-46) at the behest of citizens seeking to protect the natural segments of the creek in Santa Ana.

The efforts began more than a year ago when residents were invited to a meeting led by the Army Corps of Engineers concerning plans to replace the trees and plants that characterized that part of the creek with concrete. That work was the last phase of a multi-year project to increase water flow and reduce flooding along the Santa Ana River.

The work was approved by congress in 1985, and with no overriding direction, the Army Corps was prepared to complete the river project by channelizing the terminus of the creek that ran into it.

The Santa Ana residents who neighbored the creek were horrified, as were creek advocates in East Orange, who believed that efforts upstream to minimize flow would help downstream.

Residents were told that the Army Corps was bound by the 1985 legislation and that it would take an act of Congress to change it.

Lou Correa, who represents that portion of Santa Ana, lent a willing ear. It took over a year, but the Congressman succeeded in getting the creek project as well as a study on the proposed OC River Walk, into the bill.

Correa successfully modified the authorizing language in the original Santa Ana River project. It now prevents the Corps from doing work on Santiago Creek unless it is redesigned to minimize the impacts on existing trees. The redesign refers to the portion of the creek downstream of the I-5 Interstate Highway to the confluence with the Santa Ana River.

The OC River Walk is, at present, a vision to transform the Santa Ana River corridor into a primary connective open space uniting the Southern California region, as a destination for recreation and entertainment.

MARKET SNAPSHOT
ORANGE, CA
DECEMBER 2024
Single Family

\$1.43M Avg. Sales Price ↑ 9%	\$1.60M Avg. List Price ↑ 3%	45 No. of Prop. Sold ↓ 15%	58 Avg. Days on Market ↑ 61%	\$673 Avg. Sales Price per Sqft. ↑ 1%
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MARKET SNAPSHOT
VILLA PARK, CA
DECEMBER 2024
Single Family

\$1.97M Avg. Sales Price ↓ 16%	\$3.12M Avg. List Price - 0%	11 No. of Prop. Sold ↑ 136%	58 Avg. Days on Market ↑ 6%	\$699 Avg. Sales Price per Sqft. ↑ 4%
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DAVID SILVA
M: 714-227-3622 | Call #: 913-7642

MARKET SNAPSHOT
VILLA PARK, CA
DECEMBER 2024
Single Family

\$1.97M Avg. Sales Price ↓ 16%	\$3.12M Avg. List Price - 0%	11 No. of Prop. Sold ↑ 136%	58 Avg. Days on Market ↑ 6%	\$699 Avg. Sales Price per Sqft. ↑ 4%
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DAVID SILVA
M: 714-227-3622 | Call #: 913-7642

TAWC announces scholarships

The Tustin Area Woman's Club is offering \$1,000 scholarships to one graduating senior from each of the Tustin Unified School District high schools: Foothill, Tustin, Beckman, Legacy and Hillview.

The scholarship application period is now open, and will close March 10. Applications can be obtained by visiting the TAWC website at TustinAreaWomansClub.com, or by visiting one of the TUSD high school websites and searching scholarship applications.

TAWC is a 501(c)3 Community Service Organization, serving the Tustin Area since 1958. Anyone interested in finding out more about TAWC is encouraged to visit the website and/or attend a general meeting.

General Meetings take place at 11 a.m. on the second Wednesday of the month, at the Santa Ana Elks Lodge.

Sipping, snacking, shopping and strolling in Old Town Tustin



Stick & Stones will provide live music

By Guy Ball

Downtown Tustin is once again featuring a family-friendly afternoon filled with food tastings, wine, craft beer, live music, vendors, and a leisurely stroll among historic buildings.

The Tustin Community Foundation and the City of Tustin present their 11th annual Sip & Stroll, a walking taste tour of Tustin on Saturday, Feb. 22 from 1 to 4 p.m.

The main street of El Camino Real will be closed to vehicle traffic and open to pedestrians only. Over 30 local restaurants

will offer food and beverage samples for those who purchase tickets. Those over 21 will be able to sample alcohol from the various breweries and wine bars.

An accompanying Dreamers Market features a variety of craft and products to view and purchase.

Tickets are \$50 and \$60 if purchased in before Feb. 15. All proceeds go toward the Tustin Community Foundation annual grant fund and Dollars for Tustin scholarship programs.

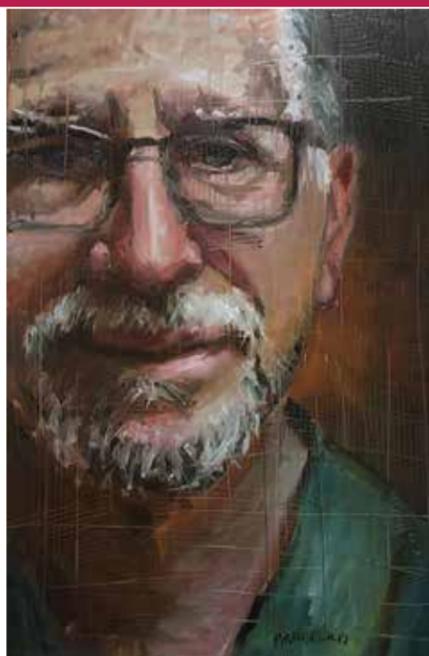
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OBITUARIES



**Kathryn L. Eidson
1955-2025**



Kathryn L. Eidson, *Foothills Sentry* office manager, distribution coordinator, web master and editor's confidant died Jan. 21. She was an instrumental member of the *Sentry* staff since 2013. When advertisers, readers and vendors called the office, they were always greeted with, "Foot-

hills *Sentry*, this is Kathy." She knew everyone's first name. She kept meticulous books, ensured that the office was always well stocked with needed supplies, kept the rolls of subscribers up to date, and hand delivered papers to community centers. She was the soul behind logistics and operations.

When the *Sentry* was boosting its online presence several years ago, Kathy taught herself how to maneuver through the website software and learned how to post the latest issues, articles and photos and generally keep it up to date.

Kathy also kept the skate club at Holiday Skate Center in Orange humming. She started volunteering at the center when her granddaughter Courtney was skating. She stayed on, long after Courtney retired from the rink. Kathy continued keeping the club's books, coordinating its participation in competitions in the U.S. and abroad. She was also

an artful seamstress and enjoyed making outfits for the skaters.

Kathy, born in Kansas on Oct. 18, 1955, was one of eight children. She married young (that's what you do in Kansas, she liked to say) and had a daughter Kimberly. She and Kimberly relocated to the City of Orange in the late 1980s, where she began a 30-plus-year courtship with Ken McElroy. They married last year during a whirlwind trip to Las Vegas.

Kathy's focus was always on other people and doing things for them, from the *Sentry* to the skate club to her neighborhood. She often made too much food for dinner so she could share the leftovers with friends and neighbors. She was always on call to take friends to doctor's appointments or just visit. She enjoyed her book club, meeting friends at Benjies and traveling when she could.

She is survived by her husband Ken, daughter Kimberly, granddaughter Courtney and siblings scattered across the country. She will be sorely missed by all who knew and loved her.

Kathy did not want a funeral or memorial service in the event of her passing. "If people want to see me, they can do it when I'm alive," she said. Good advice.

Central Dems to focus on poverty

The Central Orange County Democratic Club will welcome Devon Gray, President of End Poverty in California (EPIC), an advocacy organization, to its Wed., Feb. 26 meeting. Gray is an informative and inspirational leader who will offer a deeper understanding of poverty in the state and how to address it. Snacks and conversation at 6:30 p.m., general meeting starts at 7 p.m. Visit the club website calendar, Mobilize.us or the club Facebook link to RSVP.

Central OC Dems includes Tustin, Tustin Hills, Orange, Villa Park, and surrounding commu-

nities. Democrats from all communities in Orange County are welcome to join. Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month at St. Paul's Episcopal Church at 1221 W. St. in Tustin. Central OC Dems is not affiliated with St. Paul's.

Anyone wanting to connect with fellow Democrats, get informed, learn how to be an activist, help increase community involvement and hobnob with an affable group of friendly people, is welcome to join Central OC Dems. Questions can be sent to CentralOCDems@gmail.com or visit www.CentralOCDems.com.

Spring book sale at library

The Friends of the Orange Public Library (FOPL) announces its Spring Back of Books Sale, March 22.

Shoppers may fill a bag of books for \$5; bring your FOPL bag and fill it for \$4.

The sale will be held in the community room of the main library, 407 E. Chapman Avenue. Hours are 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.;

members only from 9 to 10 a.m.

As a result of the city's budget cuts, new hours for the Main Library are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday; Thursday-Saturday; 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Tuesday, Wednesday. History Center is open by appointment only.

El Modena and Taft Branch hours are 2 - 6 p.m., Monday - Thursday.

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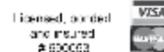
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Ashley loves the thrill of bird watching from her favorite perch by the window, and she can't resist the fun of rolling around in catnip. She's excellent with young kids, making her a wonderful addition to a family home.

While Ashley has been around other cats, she truly shines as the queen of her castle and would prefer to be the only cat in her forever home. She's ready to give her undivided love and attention to her human companions. If you're looking for a devoted, playful, and easygoing kitty, Ashley might just be the perfect match for you. She's ready to fill your life with joy and companionship.

Charlie, a Bombay, is described as an easy, mellow dude who loves to be held, picked up

and groomed. He is just over one year old, and has the softest, shiniest, most luxurious fur. He loves being petted, and will purr in contentment. He enjoys meeting new people and giving them welcoming head bumps.

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Not only handsome, Charlie is also smart, and would enjoy learning some special tricks – for treats, of course. This perfect little guy is just waiting for his forever home.

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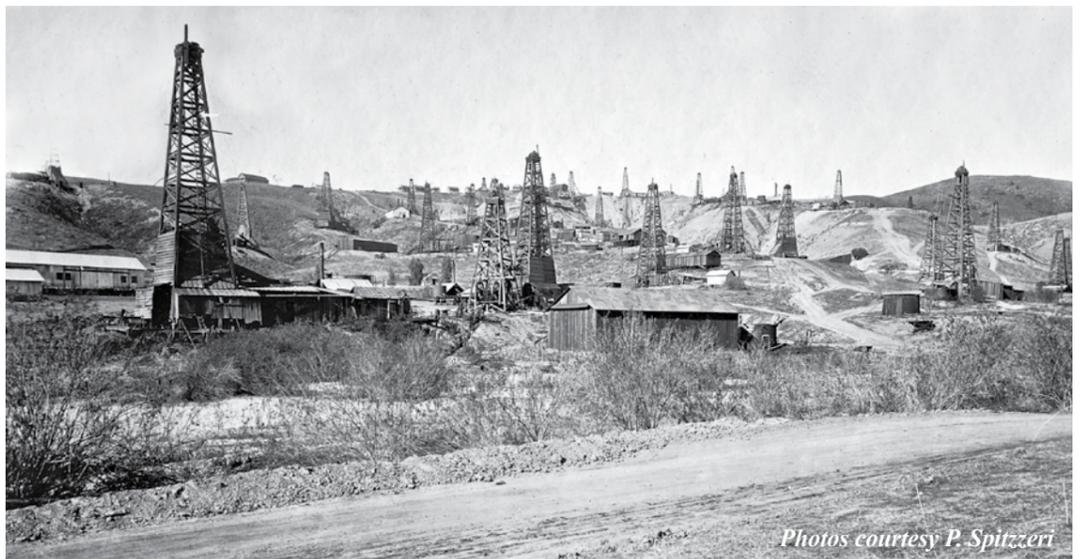
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Orange County's first oil fields topic of OC Historical Society meeting



Photos courtesy P. Spitzzeri

The Olinda oil fields, circa 1910s.



Olinda School, 1910s.

Lawless Southern California gets a new sheriff in town, in 1889



Sheriff Theo Lacy, 1890-94; 1899-1911



Sheriff James Musick, 1946-74

By Guy Ball

Historian Ray Grimes will share the history of the Orange County Sheriff's Department at a special "Night at the Museum" meeting on Friday, Feb. 28 at the Tustin Area Museum.

The Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSA) was formed on Aug. 1, 1889, when the state legislature created Orange County. At the time, early Southern California was notoriously lawless.

The entire sheriff's department consisted of Sheriff Richard Harris and Deputy James Buckley, with an operating budget of \$1,200 a year and a makeshift jail in the rented basement of a store in Santa Ana.

They served a sparsely populated county of 13,000 residents, scattered throughout isolated townships and settlements. The

problems faced by the first sheriff were typical for a frontier county—tracking down outlaws, controlling vagrancy, and attempting to maintain law and order across 782 square miles of farmland and undeveloped territory.

Today, Orange County has a population of over three million residents. OCSA has grown to over 4,000 employees, continues to serve unincorporated areas, providing police services to 13 contract cities, the Orange County Transportation Authority and John Wayne Airport.

The meeting will be held from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at 345 El Camino Real, Downtown Tustin. Tickets are \$20 per person, \$15 for members.

More information and tickets are available at TustinHistory.com or by calling the museum directly at (714) 731-5701.

By Guy Ball

Historian Paul R. Spitzzeri presents "What Do Brazil, Maui, and Orange County Have in Common: History of the Olinda Ranch and Oil Field," at the next monthly meeting of the Orange County Historical Society.

The meeting will be held on Thursday, Feb. 13, starting at 7:30 p.m., at Trinity Episcopal Church, 2400 N. Canal St., Orange. Attendance is free for OCHS members or a \$5 donation

for non-members.

In the 1880s, William H. Bailey bought land in what was still part of Los Angeles County (and is now part of Brea) and bestowed the name Olinda on his ranch. From there came a boomtown called Carlton and then Orange County's first oil field with the moniker best known today with Brea-Olinda High School. Spitzzeri will share the history of this northeastern corner of the county, including a display of artifacts.

Paul R. Spitzzeri is Museum Director at the Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum in the City of Industry. In addition to writing extensively about greater Los Angeles history, Paul, a resident of Carbon Canyon, has delved deeply into the history of the Canyon and environs over the last 20 years and maintains the Carbon Canyon Chronicle blog.

For more information about the Orange County Historical Society, local history, and future meetings, visit OrangeCountyHistory.org.

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The Orange Chamber of Commerce is seeking contestants for the Duke of Orange competition,

to be held Saturday, Feb. 15 at the Woman's Club Event Center, 121 S. Center.

Contestants, 21 years or older, who live, work or go to school in Orange, are eligible for the honor. Each contestant will perform a two-minute talent (talent is loosely defined.); answer an in-

terview question; play the airband instrument of your choice for 90 seconds.

The sponsorship fee is \$500; contact the Chamber at info@orangechamber.com.

To buy tickets for the festivities, see the Orange Chamber website, orangechamber.com.

COMMUNITY SPORTS

BY CLIFF ROBBINS AND CHAD CLINE



Maleah Paige from Foothill High drives the lane to score the basket.



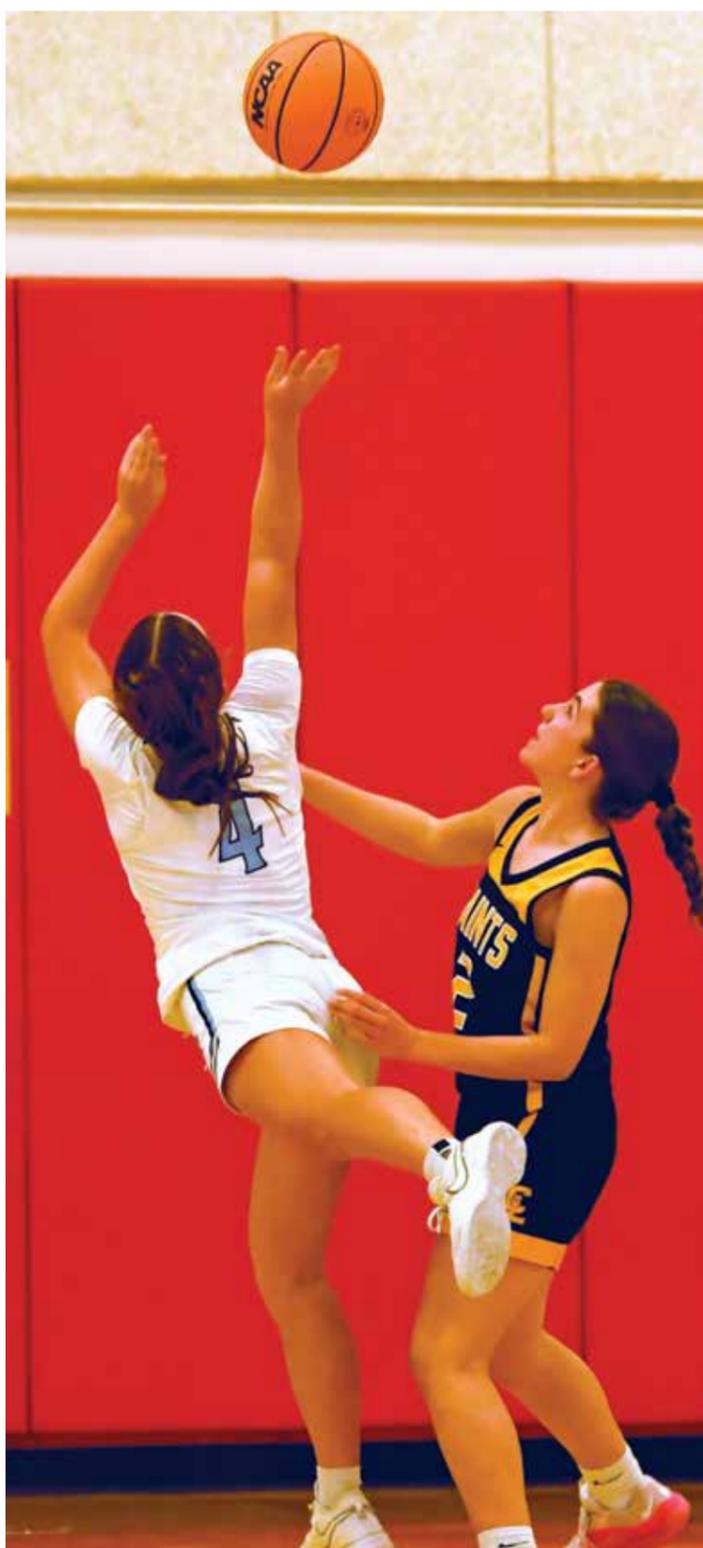
Loose ball up for grabs in the Foothill/El Modena game, and Maleah Paige (0), and Lynn Morishita (4) from Foothill and Mackenzie Brehm from El Modena all think they have it.



Camila Lubin (22) and Amalia Subia (1) from El Modena High School outjump Elize Mcaveney from Foothill High School.

Upcoming events

- Feb. 1** 65th North-South Prep Classic Football Game
7 p.m. at Orange Coast College
- Feb. 5** 39th Annual Girls and Women in Sports Day
- Feb. 24** Sally Reclusado Orange County Women in Sports Celebration
Eastside Christian Church in Anaheim, 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.; free to attend



Lauren Wolfe, VPHS, scores on the off-balance shot over the Crean High player.



Villa Park's Bailey Roczey (12) fights for control of the loose ball in the Crean High School game.



Lauren Wolfe (4) from Villa Park High secures the rebound against Crean.



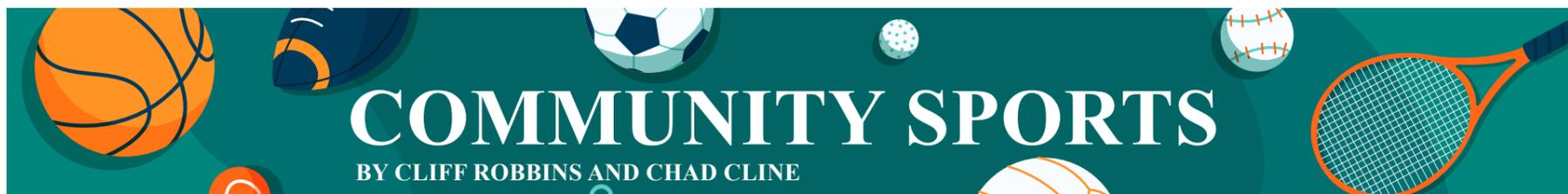
Olivia Sturdivant (in white) from Villa Park High takes the inbound pass against Crean High School.



SCC's Trevor Manning teams up with Connor McKee in the upset game against Fullerton College.



E.J. Bryson from Santiago Canyon College hauls in 5 rebounds against Fullerton JC. SCC won, 86-78.



COMMUNITY SPORTS

BY CLIFF ROBBINS AND CHAD CLINE



All hands on deck! The El Modena High defense, left to right, Samantha Simmons, Alina Casares and Karis Kehoe, held Tustin High to just one goal.



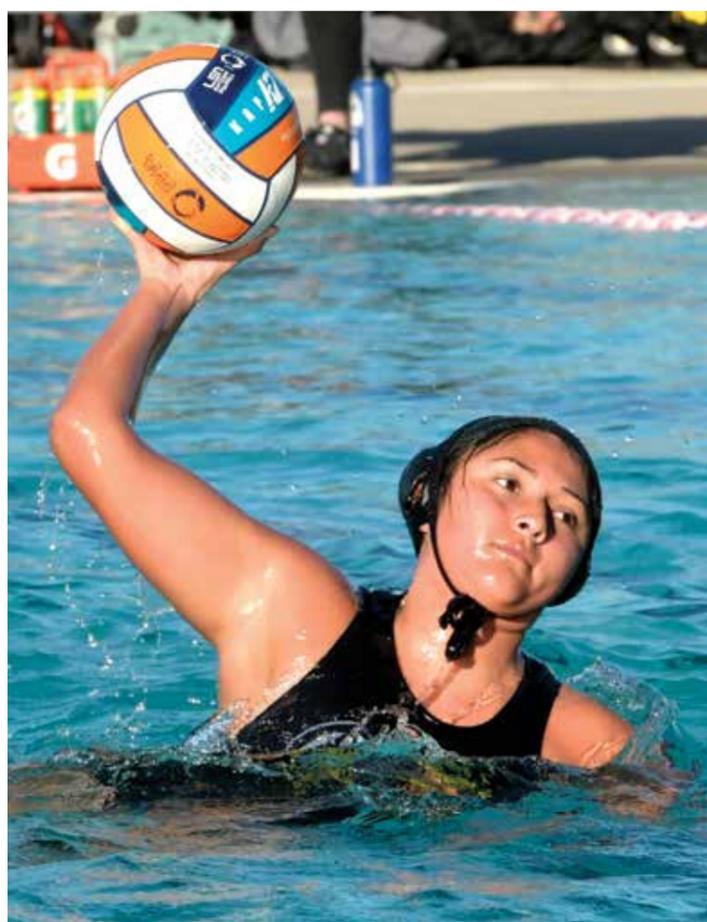
Orange High's Marlene Perez shoots a goal over the Loara High defender.



Zulema Andrade from El Modena High keeps the pressure on the Tustin Player. ElMo won the game, 13-2.



Ariana Kang, El Modena goalkeeper, blocks a shot in the Tustin game.



Daisy Iniestra, Orange High, advances the ball upcourt.



Kaylee Avalos Carmona from Orange High School takes aim at the goal.

65th Annual North-South Classic set for Feb. 1

The annual North-South All-Star Classic will be held on Saturday, Feb. 1 at Orange Coast College's Lebard Field. New this year: the first annual Girls Flag Football All-Star Classic will kick off at 4 p.m.; the Boys Football kickoff is slated for 7 p.m.

Giuliano Marcello, head coach at Beckman High School, was selected to coach the Boys South All-Stars. Coaching the North All-Stars is Zack LaMonda from El Dorado High School.

Nominated to play in this year's game for the North All-Stars: Dominic Ancich, Nate Lewis, Jacob Poff and EJ Sickles from Villa Park High; Nico Mancini and Gino Marchetti, Foothill High; Brodie Hitchens, Connor Smith and Grant Walker from El Modena High; Wallace Taula-Filemu, Orange Lutheran High; Montrevian Cushionberry, Eimesse Essis, Jayden Perez, Alex Peterson and Lawrence Schuster from Tustin High School.



COMMUNITY SPORTS

BY CLIFF ROBBINS AND CHAD CLINE

Stallings takes the helm at SCC

Santiago Canyon College selected one of its former standout players to guide the Hawks this season. Danielle Stallings was named head coach for the women's softball program.

Athletic Director Martin Stringer said Stallings had served as an outstanding assistant coach since July of 2022, acting as the team's pitching coach and strength and conditioning coach under former head coaches Lisa Camarco and Brandice Cutspec.

Stallings played for Santiago Canyon College in 2018, transferred to Stanislaus State, and later played for the University of Redlands Bulldogs. During her time with the Bulldogs, she was named the 2021 Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SCIAC) Pitcher of the Year, made the All-SCIAC First Team (2021), and the All-SCIAC Second Team (2022). She earned Division III Pitcher of the Year honors twice and was recognized as a National Fastpitch Coaches Association All-American Scholar Athlete in 2018.

Assisting Stallings is Rylie Seip from Canyon High School. Seip played at Santiago Canyon, where she was honored as All-American. Seip went on to play at Long Beach State.



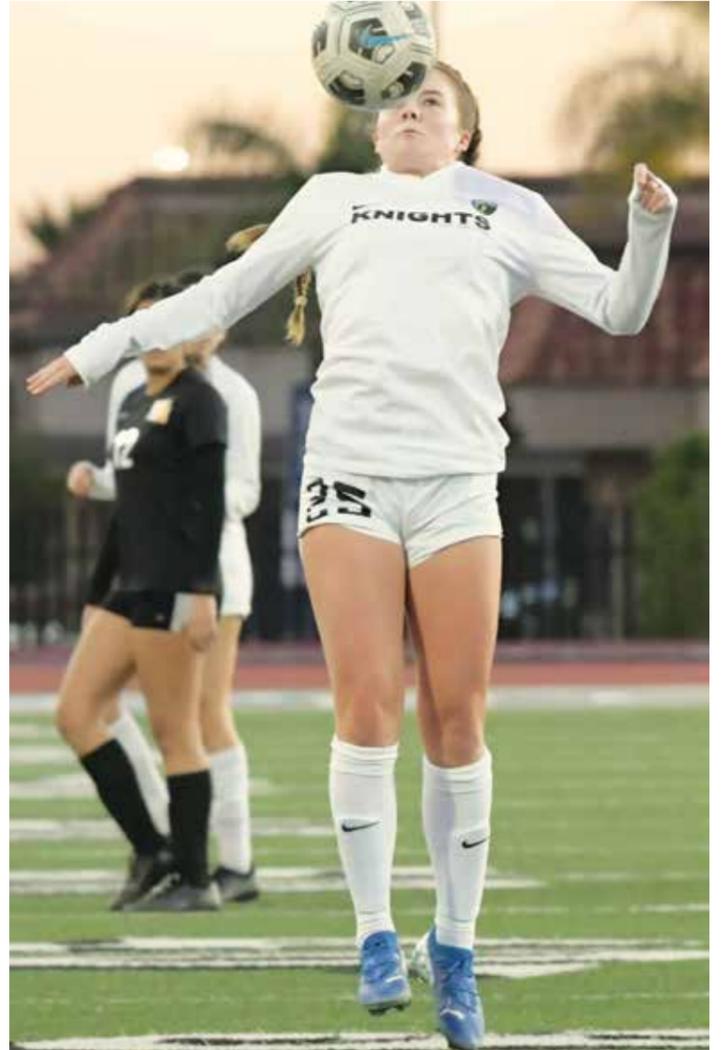
Head Coach Danielle Stallings



Coach Rylie Seip



Brady Campbell puts the ball into the back of the net, helping Foothill beat El Modena, 7-1.



Lilly Reed from Foothill High School stops the inbound pass against El Modena. Foothill won the game, 7-1.



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