

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

OCTOBER 2026

Responsible parties cooperating to keep Sully-Miller property as open space

By Tina Richards

The future of the beleaguered Sully-Miller acreage in East Orange is now, more than ever, moving away from unwanted development or stockpiles of construction waste and inching toward the promise of permanent open space.

An agreement between the City of Orange, property owner Milan Capital and land reclamation company Landify, approved by the city council Aug. 25, transfers ownership of the land to Landify. After bringing the former dumpsite to a state suitable for recreation or park use, Landify will deed it to the city.

The agreement is the culmination of months of complex negotiations between the city, Milan and Landify, with input from the Orange Park Association. The Sully-Miller property, now officially called Rio Santiago, falls within the boundaries of Orange Park Acres. That community, along with East Orange neighbors has, for two decades, fought inappropriate development on for the site and alerted state agencies to contaminants in the debris stockpiled on the property.

An uneasy undertaking

The negotiations to develop a suitable outcome for the

See "Sully-Miller" continued on page 4

Misleading message from Measure I "no's"

The *Foothills Sentry's* stance on the City of Orange Measure I (one percent sales tax) is being misrepresented by a flyer distributed by the No More Taxes Orange Measure I Committee. The flyer prominently displays the 'Vote No' on Measure I, suggesting that the Sentry opposes the tax measure. The purveyors of this flyer did not have Sentry permission to use its copyrighted masthead, and the Sentry is not advocating a "no" vote on the measure. The flyer also features two stories that appeared in the Sentry that are unrelated to the ballot measure and reprinted without permission. The Sentry has asked the committee — Fred Whitaker, Mike Alvarez and Kelly Lawler — to stop using the Sentry masthead.



Photo by Tony Richards

Orange officials, from left, Councilmembers Jon Dumitru, Denis Bilodeau and Kathy Tavoularis, Mayor Dan Slater, Councilmember Ana Gutierrez, Contenders Boardshop owner Marc Conner and Councilmember Arianna Barrios, broke ground for the Grijalva Skatepark, Aug. 27. See story, page 3

Community group holds its own informational meeting on the status of the Orange mall re-visioning plan

The North Tustin Street Preservation Group (NTSPG) invited Village at Orange neighbors to learn more about the City of Orange's much delayed specific plan for the property and how they could respond to it. Over 200 people attended the Sept. 2 meeting at St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

Back on Feb. 26, this neighborhood was invited by the city to a community open house at St. Paul's, which was facilitated by PlaceWorks. PlaceWorks was hired by Orange in 2025 to develop a specific plan for the mall and facilitate public engagement.

The company launched community outreach efforts with an "open house" at St. Paul's in late 2025. Attendees were invited to view display boards illustrating various land use ideas for the 63-acre commercial-retail site. Viewers were asked to place colored dots

on the boards that best indicated their preferences for the mall site.

One way

No presentation by city staff or PlaceWorks occurred, nor was there any opportunity for the public to speak. There were no chairs for attendees to use as they were directed to walk around the room from station to station.

The goal of the NTSPG Sept. 2 meeting was to fill in what was missing at the February meeting, provide information on the Re-visioning Specific Plan gleaned from public records, and identify effective community response. The bulk of the meeting was dedicated to an open mic opportunity for anyone wanting to speak.

NTSPG organizers wanted people

See "Orange mall" continued on page 5



The neighborhood meeting addressing concerns about the Orange mall redevelopment attracted about 200 concerned citizens.

NEWS INSIDE

NOT SO FAST

Orange reduces speed limits on surface streets based on traffic and engineering surveys.

See page 7

THE FIX ISN'T IN

Former mayor explains why Orange gains little as a charter city, but extends politicians' prerogatives.

See Guest Commentary, page 9

WRITE ON

With election looming, readers weigh pros and cons of candidates and local issues.

See letters, page 10-12, 18

OFF AND RUNNING

Candidates for Orange public office offer insight into who they are, and why voters should give them a bump in the ballot box.

See page 16

SAVOR THE FLAVOR

Orange International Street Fair takes over Old Towne with vittles, vendors and good vibrations.

See photos, page 19

FOLLOW US at Foothills Sentry



Canyon Beat	Page 8
Guest Commentaries	Page 9-10
Letters	Page 10-12
Service Directory	Pages 10-12

Orange considers 13 year financial and sustainability strategy

By Carrie Graham

The City of Orange is again placing a measure on the ballot to increase city sales tax in the hopes of helping close a \$27 million deficit while it works to implement a plan to heal Orange’s financial ills over the next 13 years.

If approved, Measure I would increase city sales tax by 1%, raising Orange’s tax from 7.75% to 8.75% and sunset in 13 years. Combined with a second measure on the ballot that aims to increase taxes hotel guests pay, the two measures are projected to generate an additional \$40 million annually for the city’s coffers.

The previous sales tax increase proposal in 2024, Measure Z, would have raised the tax by half a percent for 10 years, but failed by just under 1% of the vote.

Spending prioritized

In a presentation delivered to the city council by City Manager Jarad Hildenbrand, Sept. 8, priorities for spending the theoretical revenue fall under four categories. Although the measure is expected to generate roughly \$584 million over its lifespan, Hildenbrand stressed that the goal is financial feasibility and flexibility rather than set numbers.

“It is not a spending target, and it’s not an appropriation,” he said of the \$584 million. “It will change, costs will change, the economy will change, our liabilities and service demands will change. So the model establishes the scale of the opportunity, and lets us test whether the framework is financially feasible in the annual budget determinations.”

The priorities for spending are, in order, to strengthen the city’s finances, preserve public safety and enhance city services, repair and invest in infrastructure and grow the local economy.

Plans to strengthen the city’s finances include paying down debts, building up general fund reserves to handle future unforeseen circumstances, and stabilizing pension and workers’ compensation funds.

Fill public safety positions

To preserve public safety and enhance city services, the city hopes to use the revenue to fill currently vacant police, fire and EMS positions, replace outdated equipment, and improve response times. The city has also been delaying a number of infrastructure projects like sidewalk replacements, repairs to aging buildings, and updates to playgrounds. It plans to begin addressing those projects based on need, and ideally to beautify the city as a whole.

Lastly, to grow Orange’s economy, the city plans to make the process for new businesses interested in locating here clearer, faster and more coordinated. While many residents are already feeling cash-strapped, and may be hesitant to increase their spending by even another penny per dollar, the tax

increase does not apply to several day-to-day expenses, like groceries, rent/mortgages, utilities, medical, dental and professional services, and prescription medications.

Both sides now

Aside from spending the revenue itself, several council members asked that a more in-depth view of the city’s needs be added as its own priority, rather than just a factor of each of the others.

“I think it (organizational assessments) should be highlighted as something that we should prioritize as a change agent for the city, because these things are highly important,” Councilmember Arianna Barrios pointed out. “If we’re not only committed to being fiscally sound but also fiscally different, at the end of 13 years we’ll have these lovely reserves sitting there, but we will just spend them down again. Twenty years from now, we’ll be right back here because we will not have fundamentally changed the way we do business.”

Councilmembers also noted that while the spending model was a good start if the measure passes, absent was any conversation about what happens if it does not.

“Maybe I’m raining on the parade,”

Councilman Jon Dumitru asserted, “but if the sales tax fails, what potentially could be cut? What will service levels be like in the city?”

“What projects will be either canceled or delayed significantly? This is a good blueprint if it passes, but I think that to have a complete picture. I think we need the corresponding conversation as well.”

Councilwoman Ana Gutierrez agreed. “All I kept thinking as I was reading it,” she said, “is, this is just so ‘if, if, if.’ I don’t hear the opposite side of ‘what if not,’ so those are two scenarios that I would like to see as well.”

While his colleagues voiced their concerns, Mayor Dan Slater took a more hopeful tone. “I’m an optimist,” he said. “I think the voters of Orange are going to approve the sales tax measure. However, I’m sure that you have a contingency plan in the event that it will not. And I do agree that we need to get on that as soon as possible, should we need to, but hopefully we won’t.”

Following council discussion, staff was directed to return with a corresponding plan outlining additional reductions in the event the sales tax measure does not pass.

Elks are All-American



Elks Terrie Schatz and Marilyn Dinger display the All-American award.

To celebrate the Orange Elks winning the All-American Lodge Contest for the 10th time in the last 12 years, the lodge held a celebration dinner, put together by the kitchen crew.

The term “All-American,” in Elkdom, and in our society means that you are the best that you can be. The lodge earned this award because of its officers, committee chairmen, members, spouses and friend’s hard work.

The Orange Elks won the award by supporting the programs of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, working closely with our community partners, and conducting successful programs.

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Court issues \$101,800 in penalties against Barke

Orange County Superior Court Judge H. Shaina Colover issued a Final Statement of Decision on Sept. 3, finding that Orange County Board of Education Member Mari Barke recklessly failed to report millions of dollars in assets and income.

Finding that “substantial civil penalties are warranted for each violation to effectuate the purposes of the [California Political Reform Act] and deter future violations,” the Court ordered Barke to pay \$101,800 in civil penalties, plus attorneys’ fees and costs.

The Court’s final Statement of Decision increased the award by \$20,000 over the earlier tentative award of \$81,800. As it stands now, the award appears to be the third largest award of liability in California history for failure to comply with economic interest disclosures.

With the anticipated attorneys’ fees, it is expected that this will be the largest ever award under the Political Reform Act or local ethics laws related to failure to comply with economic disclosures and conflicts of interest.



The Emblem Club #418 hosted a Sunday Funday at the Orange Elks Lodge, Sept. 20. Proceeds from the fundraiser will provide a Thanksgiving dinner for veteran families. From left, Emblem members Vickie Chaisson, Diana Ramirez and Amelia Castro.

Orange skatepark takes a step closer to reality



The skatepark is designed for a range of skill levels, and includes features for different skating styles.

Ground was broken for the long-awaited Grijalva Skatepark at a ceremony, Aug. 27.

The facility will be built on 11,000 sq. ft. in Grijalva Park. It features a clover-shaped bowl, quarter pipes, rails and street-style elements, as well as area lighting, shaded spectator seating, landscaping, paved ADA-accessible routes, and restrooms.

While a skatepark was considered as a possibility in the Grijalva Park Master Plan (circa 2005), it was pushed to fruition by local skateboarders under the leadership of Marc Conner, owner of the Contenders Boardshop. Conner lobbied the city council for the park for several years, put a percentage of his sales aside to help fund it, and encouraged customers to donate. They raised \$20,000.

In November 2022, the Orange City Council allocated \$175 million in park development fees for skatepark construction. Those fees, paid by the Irvine Company as part of a planned housing project, must be spent on parks; they cannot be transferred into the general fund for any other purpose.

A design contract was awarded to Grindline Skateparks Inc. in fall 2023. A conceptual design incorporating stakeholder and community feedback was approved two years later. Construction bids were received this January and a contract awarded to DD Systems/California Skateparks in April.

Construction is slated to be finished in summer 2027.

The skatepark was designed to accommodate a range of ages and skill levels, and includes features for different styles of skating. The facility is also intended to accommodate a variety of non-motorized wheeled activities, including skateboards, scooters, BMX bikes and roller skates.

BALLOT GUIDE

Orange Unified School Board

Vote by November 3rd

RE-ELECT

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✓

Sara Pelly

Current OUSD Board Clerk

TRUSTEE AREA 4

✓

Kris Erickson

Past OUSD Board President

TRUSTEE AREA 5

✓

Dr. Stephen Glass

Current OUSD Board President

TRUSTEE AREA 7

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"Sully-Miller"
continued from page 1

Rio Santiago acreage were complicated by state housing mandates that hobble local jurisdictions; contaminants on the property subject to the oversight of the Local Enforcement Agency (LEA) and Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board; community expectations, zoning restrictions and allowances, associated costs and responsibilities.

Under the agreement presented to the city council, Landify will take ownership of the property from Milan and re-contour the land using clean fill dirt and inert debris brought in from construction sites. Builders will pay Landify to deposit their excavated soil on the site, which is how the company will make money. Landify is responsible for fill, grading and site preparation. Once Landify fulfills its obligations and the city's closing conditions are satisfied, the 67-acre property will be transferred to Orange.

Those closing conditions include geotechnical testing, completion and certification of required grading, satisfaction of representations and warranties, an environmental liability agreement, required environmental insurance and a permanent open space restriction.

The agreement, however, does not guarantee a successful outcome. The scope and timing of Landify's work is contingent on environmental

testing and regulatory review of the contaminants known to populate portions of the site. That review is still underway by LEA, and the results could impact the feasibility of Landify's commitment.

Yes we can

Landify principals remain confident they can meet conditions and mitigation required by the environmental agency. Company Vice President Steve Brown assured the council, "We are an environmental company. There are regulatory things to go through. We have other projects going through the same thing. We are also a business. Our next project depends on our last project. The city and other agencies will monitor what is happening. We have to be good corporate citizens, or we won't be in business."

Despite the ifs, ands, or buts of the agreement, it stands as a good faith step taken to overcome two decades of animosity, controversy, false starts and referendums. The property was, for 75 years, a sand and gravel mining operation. The owner, Sully-Miller, sought to divest itself of the property once it was mined out. In 2003, the Fieldstone Company submitted a proposal to build 189 homes. The city council initially approved it, but neighbors launched a referendum to halt the development. Seeing the community's resolve, the council reversed its approval.

Current property owner Milan

Capital sought approvals to build 395 units in 2009. The community expressed considerable opposition, noting the property was next to a methane gas field, in a flood plain and a high fire zone, would produce excessive traffic and noise, and was contrary to a number of specific plans that had, since the 1970s, defined the area as a creekside greenbelt, parkland or open space. The council rejected that proposal in 2014.

On the rebound

Milan tried again in 2019 with a 129-unit project. The city council approved it, and residents fought back with another referendum. That referendum made it to the ballot and voters rejected the project. The property owner then transformed the site into a repository for construction waste. There was little oversight and no records kept. The once street-level property grew into a series of three-to-four-story mounds of dirt containing largely unknown material. Residents took photos of illegal dumping and eventually got the attention of LEA, who shut down the stockpiling operation and initiated testing for hazardous material.

Last year, Milan, taking advantage of California's builder-friendly legislation, filed two applications for housing projects on its properties. Orange and Milan subsequently negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding

involving three principle matters: the company's previously entitled Mabury Ranch 22-home tract north of Santiago Creek, a proposed 30-unit residential project at the horse arena site in Orange Park Acres, and a pathway for the approximately 67.7-acre Sully-Miller property to be prepared by Landify and ultimately conveyed to the city.

In January of this year, the city accepted 30 acres surrounding the project site, which includes existing conservation easements.

A renewed interest

That land, along with 14 acres along Santiago Creek that the city acquired in 2024, represents what the city calls its "long-standing commitment" to open space, trails, natural resources and parkland. The city's acceptance of the 67 acres will further its opportunities for habitat protection, passive recreation and open space planning.

The ultimate use of the reclaimed property has not been determined. Landify is not responsible for the city's final restoration, trails, equestrian or other recreation facilities. The final outcome will be determined through community planning, resident input, budgeting and city council approvals.

Noting that the process will take several years or more, Mayor Dan Slater called the council's approval of the agreement an "important step starting a long journey." The agreement was approved by unanimous vote.

DAN SLATER

for Mayor of ORANGE



MayorDanSlater.com

1537 E. Chapman Ave. Orange CA 92866

Paid for by Slater for Orange Mayor 2026, ID#1438598.

Proven Results for Orange

LET'S FINISH THE JOB!

✓

1. Continue to reduce crime

Provide improved technology amid budget challenges and with fewer officers – crime is already down 35% since elected in 2022.

✓

2. Finalize restoration of Sully-Miller property to permanent open space

Remove the unsightly mounds of debris along Santiago Canyon Road.

✓

3. Continue to reduce homelessness

Provide services for those who accept aid, but zero tolerance for those who refuse help or break the law.

✓

4. Continue to restore Santiago Creek into natural open space

Created Santiago Creek Commission and added 45 acres of permanent open space – so far.

✓

5. Continue to enforce laws to protect quality of life in Orange

Strong enforcement of existing laws to fight blight, graffiti, and the proliferation of massage and smoke shops.

✓

6. Continue the progress to restore financial stability to Orange

Spending has been slashed by \$37.5 million, and the city government workforce reduced by 10%, while ensuring citizen oversight of government spending and budgeting that respects taxpayers.

✓

7. Continue to bring a business approach to city hall

Provide real oversight and scrutiny of government spending. A business-friendly environment at city hall has brought new businesses and a stronger sales tax revenue base to Orange.

Orange’s Future Is in Our Hands



I am not a fan of taxes.

I’ve owned and operated my own small business in Orange for more than 40 years, and I shudder at the amount of taxes I’ve paid. I’ve often wondered where my taxes go: Am I helping maintain a national park, building a bridge somewhere, or paying for a bomb?

Measure I would establish a temporary one-cent local sales tax for 13 years and every cent will remain in Orange, for local use. The City estimates it would initially generate approximately \$37 million annually.

Orange is at a financial crossroads. We have to ask ourselves: What kind of city do we want to be? A city living “paycheck to paycheck,” or one capable of providing the services and quality of life Orange residents expect?

I often hear: “Cut the waste.”

I agree. Government should constantly look for waste and inefficiency. City Hall should never stop asking whether there is a better, faster or less expensive way to provide a service. Every program, position and dollar should be scrutinized.

But what exactly are we calling waste?

Are our libraries waste? Our parks? Street and sidewalk maintenance? Police officers? Firefighters and paramedics? These are services Orange residents use and rely upon daily.

Over the past two budget cycles, the City has eliminated or frozen more than 50 full-time positions, reduced service levels and deferred capital investments and maintenance. Staffing is now near a 20-year low. Those actions have helped, but efficiency alone does not eliminate our structural financial challenge.

Public safety is especially important because local control matters. Orange has its own Police and Fire departments, and decisions about staffing, priorities and service levels are made here, with direct accountability to our community.

I want public safety decisions made in Orange, by Orange, for Orange.

That does not mean we stop demanding efficiency and accountability from our departments. It means recognizing the value of local control and having police officers, firefighters and paramedics focused on Orange.

To those who think we need to cut the salaries of Orange police and fire personnel: Our police and fire departments are already being paid well below the local median, so we are constantly “bleeding” police officers (especially younger ones with families who would like to buy a home) to nearby cities and the county. These are officers who Orange taxpayers have paid to train. Already, we are down 15 police officers, and although crime is down 35% over the last 4 years, parking and traffic enforcement have had to take a lower priority over more serious calls for service.

Another financial pressure is what I have long called the “elephant in the room:” pensions. The City does not simply decide what its annual CalPERS bill will be. Required employer contributions are determined through CalPERS’ actuarial valuation process under state law. Orange can plan responsibly, make additional payments and manage its obligations, but significant portions of that annual cost are determined outside the City’s budget process – by Sacramento.

The good news: Orange is finally seeing new businesses and investment blossom along Chapman, Katella and Tustin. We need to keep attracting businesses, encouraging private investment and making it easier to do business in Orange. But growth in sales and property tax revenue takes time.

Additional revenue cannot become an excuse to return to business as usual.

City Hall must continue changing. We need to examine staffing, programs, processes and how services are delivered. We should modernize permitting, use technology where appropriate, improve productivity, rebuild reserves, address long-term liabilities and strengthen our local economy.

The City has developed a preliminary 13-Year Financial Sustainability and Investment Strategy built around four priorities: strengthening Orange’s finances; protecting public safety and essential services; repairing, maintaining and beautifying Orange; and growing Orange’s economy. It is a strategy, not a fixed 13-year budget. Measure I would also establish a 12-member Independent Oversight Committee to publicly review revenues, expenditures, annual audits and expenditure plans, and make recommendations to the City Council. Individual spending decisions would continue through the City’s public budget process.

Orange’s future depends on protecting the services, neighborhoods, local character and community spirit that make our city so special. Measure I is temporary. That matters. If approved, those 13 years will be used to continue strengthening Orange’s finances while continuing the harder work of reforming City Hall and expanding the economic base that supports City services.

I love Orange, and if you’ve taken the time to read this, I know you do too. As Mayor, I have been clear about where I stand on Measure I. I support it, and I will vote “yes” on November 3. I hope you will join me, and ensure Orange remains the city we’re so proud to call home.

Mayor Dan Slater



Paid for by Slater for
Orange Mayor 2026
ID#1438598

Dinosaurs run through Tustin for 35 years



Dino Dash runners line up at the starting line for last year’s race.

By Guy Ball

The Dino Dash returns to the streets of Tustin on Nov. 1 with the thunderous roar of over 7,000 participants, racing to help raise hundreds of thousands of dollars to support Tustin students.

The Dino Dash is the signature fundraiser of the Tustin Public Schools Foundation, a nonprofit that raises money, builds programs and brings the community together for Tustin Unified students. This year marks the 35th anniversary of the Dino Dash, and the theme, “Roaring into 35,” captures both the legacy of the event and the excitement of what’s ahead.

The Dinosaur Dash is a community run, walk and bike event. There’s something for everyone--a 2K fun run, chip-timed 5K and 10K runs, and bike tours for all riding levels (including a 15K and a family-friendly 5K).

And before and after the races, a free family Expo will offer activities, school fundraising booths and exhibitors.

Back in 1991, the inaugural Dino Dash was held with 1,000 participants and just two race options: a 2K and 5K run/walk. Two hundred volunteers supported the race, and it raised \$10,000.

Today, the Dino Dash is one of the largest community events in Tustin.

Last year, more than 7,600 people participated in the expanded line-up of events, which raised \$415,000. It now takes over 520 volunteers to support the Dash.

Every dollar raised supports TUSD students. Ten dollars from every registration goes directly to the schools. In 2025, almost \$79,000 was distributed through registration alone.

Community members may also donate a “runnership,” which allows any student the opportunity to participate in the Dino Dash regardless of finances. Last year, the community donated 466 runnerships.

The additional funds raised through the Dino Dash support the Foundation’s grant program, which provides teachers and staff with up to \$2,000 to bring innovative ideas and programs into their classrooms.

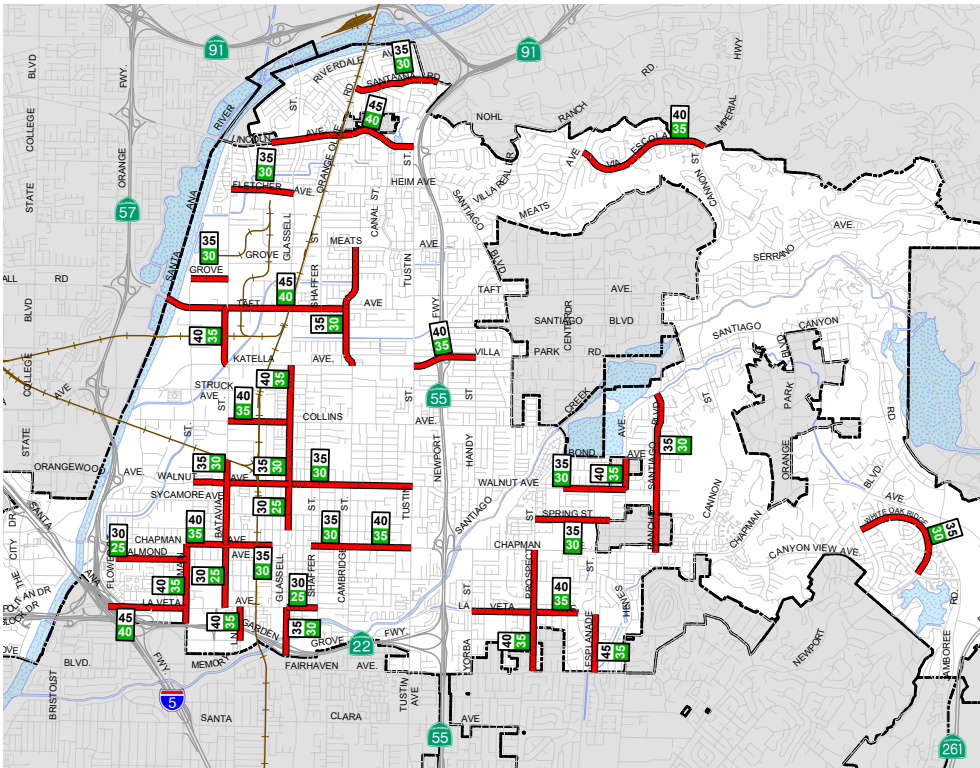
According to Kate Kersten, this year’s Dino Dash chairwoman, “Beyond fundraising, the Dino Dash is a celebration of our community. The event brings together over 10,000 people at The Market Place for a morning filled with energy, excitement and connection.”

Full information on race options, route map, registration, volunteering, or even donating, is posted on their website, tpsf.net/dinodash.



The Orange Elks paid tribute to firefighters who lost their lives during the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001. The Walk to Remember consisted of the 2,200 steps the New York City firefighters climbed as they tried to rescue people before the buildings collapsed. A total of 343 Flags of Honor were placed representing the FDNY firefighters who made the ultimate sacrifice. From left are Stephanie Fitzpatrick, Jay Warner, Heidi Falcon. Ann Wells and Tina Burton.

Speed limits decreased on many Orange streets



Streets in red will have speed limits reduced by 5 mph. Esplanade, between Fairhaven and La Veta, will slow down by 10 mph.

By Carrie Graham

A number of Orange streets, including Tustin, Lincoln and Katella Streets and Chapman Avenue will see speed limits reduced in segments across the city.

The reductions come after AGA Engineers, Inc. was contracted in February of this year to conduct traffic and engineering surveys on 186 street segments throughout Orange. Of the 186 segments, 46 were recommended for speed reductions, with the greatest reduction, by 10 mph on Esplanade Street between Fairhaven and La Veta Avenues.

The remaining 45 segments, including Walnut Avenue from Main to Tustin Street, Lincoln Avenue from the western city limits to Tustin Street, Chapman Avenue from Main to Tustin Street, and Prospect Street from Fairhaven to Chapman Avenue, will have their limits reduced by 5 mph.

Per state law, cities must reassess certain areas of road at least once every 10 years. Until 2026, Orange

did these assessments on a rolling basis to stagger the workload for city staff. Going forward, they will now do all 186 segments at the same time, hoping to increase efficiency.

The surveys utilize radar guns to check the average speed of motorists on a given segment of roadway. A new limit is proposed based on the average speed 85% of drivers meet or stay below. Certain speed limits, like 65 mph on most freeways and 25 mph in school zones are fixed and don't require a survey to maintain.

With the recent passage of Assembly Bill 382, school zones statewide are expected to begin shifting down to 20 mph, with the change a requirement by January, 2031.

Most of the segments affected are in residential areas, near schools or in higher-collision areas. The remaining 140 segments will retain their current speed limits. New signage with the updated limits will be posted when the changes are enacted.

Old Town Tustin Art Walk returns

By Guy Ball

The annual Old Town Tustin Art Walk and Artisan Market returns Saturday, Oct. 17, for its 19th year, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The event will close down El Camino Real from 6th Street to 3rd Street, along with a section of Main Street from C Street to Prospect.

The free community event will feature art exhibits and vendors, live music, wine and beer tasting for adults, and an Old Town Walking Tour.

For children, there will be a Kids Art Village sponsored by the OC

Public Library, offering an array of sponsors with kid-friendly activities.

Restaurants in the area will be open.

Public parking is available at the upper parking structure at Stevens Square; water facility lot (corner of Main and Prospect); Civic Center, 300 Centennial Way; and Tustin Area Senior Center, 200 South C St.

The Art Walk is sponsored by the city's Park and Recreation Department. Contact (714) 573-3326 or visit tustincta.org/artwalk. Artist and vendor applications are still accepted, if space is available, until Oct. 6.



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Christmas IN THE CANYONS

EVENT DETAILS

DATE:
Sunday, November 22nd

TIME:
11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

LOCATION:
Ginacci Vineyard and Farms
16162 Jackson Ranch Rd.
Silverado, CA

Celebrate the Season. Support Local. Make Memories.



Weather or not

Santa Anas vs. El Niño

The latest blockbuster monster-action-adventure feature is arriving, starring climate change, big weather, infrastructure prep, defensible space, sandbags, emergency generators, Radio Net, Watch Duty, bottled water, caring for neighbors, and go-bags at the ready. Rated E for Everyone, it stars Team Rubicon, already doing river and stream clean-up after months of Edison pole replacement and tree trimming. Joanne Hubble invites you to a Town Hall Meeting “National Weather Service El Niño Presentation” Thursday, Oct. 22 at the Library of the Canyons at 6:30 p.m.

Preliminary indicators point to extreme rainfall this winter after whatever wildfire and wind damage occurs in fall or, who knows, December or even January. Hubble, whose reliable newsletter to residents reports traffic, weather and emergency events, introduces Felix Castro, Warning Coordination Meteorologist Manager from the National Weather Service to explain

anticipated El Niño conditions and impacts. Dan Vozenilek from AT&T Wireless Services explains what happens during power outages.

OC Public Works briefs on its storm season prep, what services it provides, and what erosion control supplies will be available.

Finally, the Modjeska Lot at the canyon entrance will be open on Saturday, 10/24, 8 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. for residents to pick up sandbags, rice bales and wattles to get a head start or sneak preview.

Inter-Canyon League

September’s ICL meeting began with History Committee member Scott Breeden sharing exactly the variety of archival documents to be featured at the Oct. 3 “Canyon Life: How We Got Here” event. They and Scott told the story of Silverado’s short, if modestly productive, mining history including Silverado Mining Company employment ads for “Mucker and General Work.” Compensation \$4.50 and \$1.25 board, with the helpful advice to “Take Blankets.”

Bruce Newell of Station 16 reminded all that the coming Zero

Zone plan, when adopted and enforced, features a generous three-year timeline for removing plants and trees, with five years to address fences and outbuildings. Compliance suggestions include replacing planted areas with hardscape or gravel under eaves and roofline. All of it, says Newell, is “Worth knowing about . . . and worth doing.” Lora Meadows shared her positive experience with a Fair Plan inspector who approved changes she’d made to her property.

Rich Pfeiffer shared his deep dive into research after experiencing a stroke, noting the extended time it took for the contracted ambulance to reach his Silverado home. No need to become an expert on emergency services, but posting your contact info and prescriptions on your fridge is smart, as affirmed by Captain Newell, who indicated most ambulance service takes about 15 minutes.

SMRPD

David Chapman, reported earlier as default “elected” member to one four-year SMRPD board of directors seat, declined to provide required financial information to OC VOTE. Supervisors will likely appoint the now vacant position.

“Let books be”

Library of the Canyons celebrates the American Library Association’s annual Banned Books Week Oct. 4-10, displaying books targeted as naughty, provocative or overly empathetic to historically marginalized fellow Americans. Check one out or request OCPL purchase copies of books you’d like to see in circulation and not, say, on a bonfire.

Owl are welcome

You could be at your local branch library quite a lot this month, for the Saturday, Oct. 3 ICL Friends of the Library event “How We Got Here” 2-3:30 p.m., a multi-media adventure story introducing the

extensive and conscientiously curated History Committee archives. Free, with refreshments. Or the Wednesday, Oct. 7 Book Group discussion (5 p.m.) of “The Martian” by Andy Weir. Or the Saturday, Oct. 24 11 a.m. Irvine Ranch Conservancy program featuring staff from the OC Bird of Prey Center and a real-life owl ambassador.

Public service announcements

Lately “bipartisan,” Representative Young Kim removed Trump references from her website. Still, her campaign signs, some likely left over from the primary, read both “Lower Gas Prices” and “Trump Republican.” She’s in a tight race with Trumpster Ken Calvert. From the House floor, Kim recently summed up the spirit, if not the actual positions, of a political movement she apparently still finds relevant to inform constituents of:

“Today’s proponents of socialism have made their goals clear. Read them for yourself on its DSA website: Abolish the U.S. Senate, replace the presidency, dismantle the Supreme Court, and rewrite our Constitution.” See dsausa.org. Will “bipartisan” redbaiting help a female Korean American long-ago “centrist” against a white mega-MAGA male? (It’s still Orange County, Jake.)

O say, can you CEQA?

Activists at Saddleback Canyons Conservancy argue Prop 45 (also on the ballot) threatens their work. It would, they say, “gut the environmental and public involvement protections afforded by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) . . . under assault again by corporate profiteers who want to exclude the public from the planning process and have us ignore potential impacts from their large, polluting projects like data centers, landfill gas facilities, freeway expansions, and even forest clearcuts.” They point to CEQA as essential to fighting Saddleback Meadows.



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No on Measure K

By Carolyn Cavecche

There are two city measures on the ballot this November that seem to be getting a lot of attention, and it would be easy to not give the third ballot measure a second glance. However, Measure K, the Charter City Measure, if passed, will shape the future of Orange and set up the city's political power structure for many years to come and not in a good way.

In California, there are two types of cities: General Law Cities and Charter Cities. Proponents of Measure K will state that "this is all about local control," that as a charter city, Orange will be able to have increased autonomy from the State of California.

What they don't explain, is that over the years the state and the courts have limited the value of becoming a charter city. Charter cities have control over a very short list of what is known as "municipal issues." That list does include the ability to set terms of office for council members. That is why we have this measure on the ballot in November.

Measure K's title should be "The Term Limit Extension Measure." It is a power grab by some of the current city council to reset and extend their terms in office. Not only does Measure K allow sitting

council members and the mayor to effectively start over and get a free pass on years already served, but it also increases the amount of time a person can sit on the city council.

Measure K increases total time in office as a council member by 50%, from eight to 12 years.

It also increases the total time one can be mayor, from six to eight years. Right now, we vote for our mayor every two years, keeping them accountable to the residents of Orange. Measure K doubles that time between elections to four years.

If Measure K is approved, we could see outcomes where this city council remains in power until 2040.

And if one of those council members runs and becomes mayor, they could be sitting on the dais until 2048. Take a moment to let that date sink in. 2048. Is this the city council we want in control until then?

The arguments in favor of Measure K remind me of a con game using misdirection: "Look at all these 'great' reasons to vote yes," but upon closer inspection it's obvious the game is rigged.

Great reasons refuted

Lifetime term limits: Orange voters can impose lifetime term limits without becoming a charter city, just ask Villa Park. Plus, Orange's lifetime ban doesn't start

until anyone that has ever served gets their own reset and starts over.

Open Space: When the council voted to place the charter on the ballot, they didn't even bother to list the properties to be included in the proposed Open Space Reserve. When I wrote this column a few weeks ago, there still wasn't a list; most likely, because what will be included is already designated open space. Because Orange's park acreage is already at a deficit, per the Quimby Act, California won't allow any park land to be rezoned without replacement. Another misdirection to sway your vote.

Private property: Orange already protects private property from being seized to give to another private property owner. I introduced this, and the council voted on it back in the early 2000s.

Balanced budget: State law already requires that the city council pass a balanced budget and have it audited. We don't need

to become a charter city for this.

And by the way, Measure K has nothing to do with protecting your home equity. This is just a ridiculous scare tactic to get your vote.

Measure K was placed on the ballot by a tight 4-3 vote of the city council and was written without any input from a dedicated, independent citizens' charter commission. Having the independent oversight of a citizens' commission would have at least ensured that the rules were written by residents of Orange, free from any conflicts of interest.

Our city has so many more important issues to deal with right now, our council should be focused on those, not trying to extend their time in office.

Vote No on Measure K.

Carolyn Cavecche is a former City of Orange mayor and former CEO and president of the Orange County Taxpayers Association

Holy Family presents holiday boutique

Holy Family Catholic School will hold a holiday boutique at the parish center, Oct. 9-11.

The boutique features over 40 vendors offering home decor, wood crafts, candles, pet items, toys, jewelry and holiday cards. Visitors may also buy bake sale items,

participate in a basket raffle and order poinsettias for later delivery.

The Holy Family parish center is located at 530 S. Glassell St. The boutique is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Oct. 9; 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Oct. 10; and 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Oct. 11.



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Guest Commentaries

The \$1.7 million question RSCCD Trustees need to answer

By Barry Resnick

Any public agency that chooses to spend \$1.7 million more for a service than what a comparable alternative would charge, warrants a thorough review. Taxpayers should expect that scrutiny, not a rush to secure the votes needed for approval.

On Sept. 1, the Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD) Board of Trustees scheduled a special meeting with a 24-hour notice to approve the renewal of its employee health insurance coverage with the Alliance of Schools for Cooperative Insurance Programs (ASCIP).

A competing proposal offered

nearly identical coverage for approximately \$1.7 million less, while reducing employee deductibles by 60%.

Instead, the board chose the more expensive ASCIP option.

ASCIP is a joint-powers authority that provides insurance and risk-management services to educational institutions. ASCIP's financial relationship with RSCCD has raised questions in the past.

In 2024, it came to light that ASCIP had been holding funds belonging to RSCCD that had not been disclosed to the trustees or the district's auditor.

At the insistence of Trustee Phil Yarbrough, the district ultimately recovered more than \$8 million

that had been held by ASCIP in its own account. A subsequent audit indicated that ASCIP had held district money dating back to at least 2009. That history makes the board's decision to continue paying substantially more for coverage through ASCIP particularly difficult to understand.

Five trustees, David Crockett, John Hanna, Zeke Hernandez, Tina Arias Miller and Daisy Tong approved the ASCIP coverage without publicly questioning the \$1.7 million cost difference or explaining why the district should pay substantially more for comparable coverage.

Trustee Phil Yarbrough voted against the renewal, while Cecilia Iglesias abstained.

This is not the kind of financial oversight taxpayers should expect from elected officials entrusted with millions of dollars in public money. The urgency surrounding the meeting, the lack of substantive discussion about a \$1.7 million cost difference or scrutiny of the district's long-standing relationship with ASCIP, raises more questions than answers.

The RSCCD trustees gave their answer.

Now they owe taxpayers an explanation.

Dr. Barry Resnick retired as a professor of counseling from the RSCCD in 2022, having served for 42 years.

LETTERS
to the EDITOR



Ballot palette

Dear Editor:

I'm writing to express concern about the City of Orange council race, particularly District 1. We have a candidate, AJ Ricci, whose family owns well over 40 commercial and residential properties in Orange. The majority of their properties

are in District 1. If Ricci were to be elected, how would he be able to represent us if he's forced to recuse himself every time a conflict of interest comes up involving one or more of these properties?

Mitch Faris
Orange

Dear Editor:

I urge all Orange voters to support Arianna Barrios for mayor. Arianna was born in Orange and is a graduate of OUSD schools, truly a hometown girl. She has

served on the city council since 2020, has been a tireless volunteer for numerous local groups, and a mentor to many.

If you have ever attended or watched a city council meeting, you have witnessed her intelligence and fact-seeking questioning of city staff and members of the council to get at the core of what is being discussed.

Arianna will lead Orange out of the fiscal quagmire we are facing by using her business acumen and fearless leadership skills. Our current mayor, known across our

city as a very nice guy, just doesn't have what it takes to get this city back on the right track.

Arianna has continued her family's legacy of public service and will lead Orange into a new era of stability -- building a better community for all of us.

Jana Anderson
Orange

Dear Editor:

Can we just take a moment to appreciate the organization and efficiency that has returned to our

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school board meetings? For the last two years, our board meetings regularly ended by 10 p.m. and included polished district presentations posted ahead of time with the agenda, lively board discussions and a public that gets speaking time before bedtime.

Additionally, over the past year alone, the board has held five separate study sessions focusing on such school resources as facilities improvements, community schools, learning environments and deferred maintenance needs.

They've also held a session specifically on good governance and another on summer programs.

The board has balanced the monthly business cadence in regular meetings with efficiency, focusing on major action items and high impact information sessions alongside celebrations of our students, staff and community, as well as normal business matters approved by consent.

By adding these additional working sessions, the board can dig deep into special topics without interruption of the daily needs of the district or the pressure of the clock. This represents an additional time commitment from the board and district staff that is not required of them, but it makes our schools better.

Scott Resnick
OUSD Parent
Orange

Dear Editor:

As a parent to multiple OUSD students, I've always tried to teach my children to learn from their mistakes and, hopefully, not repeat them. In this time of divisive politics I am hopeful that November will show we have truly learned our lesson.

In 2022, our community quickly learned that the Orange Unified School Board had been taken over by divisive and partisan people. They inexplicably fired a wonderful superintendent, costing us hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars -- and it got worse from there. They attracted verbally abusive outside groups to our board meetings, where students, parents and teachers were threatened. We made the evening news many times, but never in a good way.

Luckily our community banded together to recall two board members in 2024 and we were able to stabilize our district with a caring and competent board.

Unfortunately, the same kinds of groups are targeting OUSD again with four new politicians: Crystal Miles, Ivan Kokos, Chip Ahlswede and Jack Chang.

They have been endorsed by, and campaigned with, Sonja Shaw and Mari Barke. Shaw (now running for state superintendent) is known for her anti-LGBTQ crusades, and yelling at parents, teachers and clergy at her board meetings. Barke (OC Department of Education) recently got caught lying on her

financial disclosures, hiding millions of dollars of income from voters.

Crystal Miles still follows the outside agitators that harassed our students, teachers, families and board members in 2023. How can our families feel safe when these four are endorsed by people like Sonja Shaw, Mari Barke and their verbally abusive friends?

Ivan Kokos was recently endorsed by Gracey Van Der Mark. She is a politician known for her book banning and attempts to close the public libraries in Huntington Beach. Why would anyone accept an endorsement from someone like Gracey Van Der Mark?

Chip Ahlswede is a political operative, lobbyist and has chosen to align with these same people. We must ask ourselves why the vice-president for the Apartment Owners Association suddenly wants to be active in our district?

Jack Chang is a complete unknown, but his choice to align with this ticket is very concerning.

All of the above, combined with their questionable campaign statements, leads me to believe these four are not equipped to lead OUSD.

I hope our community learned from our mistake in 2022 and won't repeat it. Let's come together, again, and re-elect our current board members. We cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of our past.

Soren Williams
Anaheim

Dear Editor:

It's election time again, and with that comes the usual games politicians play. Here in Orange Unified School District, we have four trustees that are up for re-election: Andrea Yamasaki, Sara Pelly, Kris Erickson and Dr. Stephen Glass.

For the past two years (since the 2024 recall) we have had a school board that is student-focused and pushes the district to continue making positive progress.

Now along comes opponents who are cut from the same cloth and backed by the same group of developers and anti-public education activists as those we ousted in 2024.

Ivan Kokos, Crystal Miles, Jack Chang and Chip Ahlswede continue to hand out propaganda, launching a smear campaign against our district, and thereby our students and teachers. They are a veritable clown car of anti-public education activists who brought the traveling circus with them to OUSD in 2023 with the intention of creating chaos.

Are these the type of people we want making decisions about public education? I don't think so.

Michelle Weisenberg
Orange

Measure K is not OK

Dear Editor:

In 1996, I authored the ballot argument instituting term limits for the Orange City Council. That

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 measure was approved overwhelmingly by 82% of Orange voters. I do not believe that the residents of Orange now want longer terms for our city council, a 50% increase, and we definitely do not want the proposed charter to enable the current council to get a reset, with years already served ignored. Members of the city council need to honor the term limits they were elected under, and if Measure K (charter city) passes that will not happen. Another less-talked-about issue with becoming a charter city is that any changes or amendments added to the charter need to be brought before the voters, a costly addition to our budget at a time the city is struggling financially.

I do not believe the City of Orange would benefit from becoming a charter city, and I strongly recommend a “no” vote on Measure K.

Mike Spurgeon
Former Orange mayor pro tem

Dear Editor:
Measure K is an un-needed and problematic measure that is being pushed for all the wrong reasons. General law cities, such as Orange, through city council action can already do ALL of the stated goals of preserving our character, provide tools to operate efficiently, manage public resources and address our future.

Those are basic functions and responsibilities of a General Law

City Council - they just need to work together to make them happen. Measure K is simply an effort to change and extend term limits for current council members dressed up in aspirational deeds. Members pushing Measure K should work together with their peers, city management, city staff, and residents to put the future of Orange first and foremost, instead of their council longevity.

Section 503 is the impetus of this self-serving waste of taxpayer dollars on Measure K. Balanced budget? Already required. Annual fiscal audit? Already required. Fiscal priorities for the General Fund? The basic responsibility of a city council.

Section 700 of the proposed charter on not using the term appointed if so appointed? An end run around not being an incumbent. State law eroded the benefits of a charter years ago. It is meaningless now. A charter opens up special interest opportunities to harm our city through future measures which will create fiscal havoc. Don't be fooled by Measure K nor its supporters. As a former Orange Planning Commissioner and 20-plus year city management professional, I urge all to vote “no” on Measure K.

Ken Domer
Orange

Keep out truckin’

Dear Editor:
I am writing to provide a brief

update following my September letter regarding the proposed 24-hour trucking warehouse at 2411 N. Glassell in North Orange.

Residents have continued to speak out about the project. At the Sept. 22 city council meeting, approximately 20 neighbors addressed the council to share their concerns and opposition to the proposal, including the impacts they believe it would have on our neighborhood.

The project had previously been expected to go before the Planning Commission in September, but the hearing was postponed. Neighbors have since been informed that the project is tentatively scheduled to be heard by the Planning

Commission in November.
For families living near the site, the concerns I shared previously remain unchanged: around-the-clock truck activity, additional traffic and diesel exhaust, increased noise, and the project’s proximity to homes and Fletcher Elementary.
Our neighbors will continue to make sure that those deciding the future of this project understand what it would mean for the community that already calls this part of Orange home.
Thank you for continuing to help keep Orange residents informed.

Atlatcatl Chiguila
Orange



If it is the third Thursday of the month, the Orange Elks will be raising and lowering a flag in the Plaza. In August, the flag was raised to celebrate the U.S. Coast Guard's 236th birthday, Aug. 4. The Coast Guard is dedicated to safeguarding U.S. waterways, enforcing maritime law, and performing search and rescue missions.

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The Assistance League of Orange Board of Directors for 2026-27, wearing attire befitting the year's theme of "We are Wild about Assistance League of Orange," are, standing from left: Char Vaughn, parliamentarian; Jill Housky, strategic planning; Melodee Fahy, 2nd vice president, philanthropic chair; Claire Kocek, treasurer; Karen O'Keefe, director at large; Wendi Forrest, director at large; Janet Cairney, director at large; Cresence Boland, 3rd vice president, resource development chair; Andie Mills, marketing communications; Linda Fisher, director at large; Nikki Tischbern, chapter liaison to Orange Blossoms; front, Alice Prothero, president elect; Renee Canuso, president; Robin Aldrich, 1st vice president, membership chair; Noosheen Kateb, chapter liaison to Assisteens; not shown is Carolyn Seeley, secretary.

OTPA to host candidate forum

The Old Towne Preservation Association (OTPA) will host a forum featuring candidates for City of Orange mayor and district council members, Oct. 6, at the American Legion Post 132. OTPA invites the public to find out where candidates stand on the Mills Act, preserving

Old Towne's character, the sales tax increase, city budget, student housing and homelessness. Following a formal Q&A, attendees are invited to meet the candidates personally. The Post is located at 143 Lemon St. The forum commences at 6 p.m.

Flags honor veterans



Bill Talbert

Flags Over Orange was created by the Orange Elks to provide a flag for a military, police, fire, veteran, senior or disabled person that could use a helping hand mounting one.



Guadalupe Lozano, Jr.

The Orange Elks will install a flag kit that consists of flag and pole, and a solar light to keep the flag properly displayed and illuminated overnight. Elk JC Cortez and the Orange Elks Flags Over Orange committee install the flags.

JC while shopping ran into Bill Talbert, who was wearing a U.S. Air Force cap. They began talking, and JC learned about Talbert's military service. His specialty had been to inspect, maintain, repair and overhaul aircraft propeller systems.

Flags Over Orange honored Guadalupe Lozano, Jr, a United States Army veteran. JC Cortez and the Elks Flags Over Orange committee recently visited six veterans to install their flags.

RE-ELECT

Kris

for Orange Unified School Board

ERICKSON

OFFICIALLY ENDORSED by OUSD Classroom & Retired Teachers

Championed High School Modernization Project (Measure S)

Approved Counselors for Every Elementary School

Pushed for Better District Communication

OUSD Trustee, OUSD Graduate, OUSD Mom, OUSD Volunteer

FROM OUSD, FOR OUSD

Paid for by Erickson for OUSD School Board FPPC #1404220

Tustin kids are getting free books, thanks to a local bookstore's foundation

Starting this fall, children across Tustin are finding extra mail waiting for them each month: a free book with their name on it.

Arvida Book Co., founded and run by Sam Robertson, has signed on as the city's first Local Program Partner for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, bringing the world-renowned early literacy program to Tustin for the first time.

Every child enrolled in the program, from birth to age five, will receive one high-quality, age-appropriate book delivered to their home each month, free of charge. The goal is simple but far-reaching: build a love of reading early, strengthen kindergarten readiness, and give every family in Tustin a home library of their own.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, children under five make

up about 6.6% of Tustin's roughly 77,843 residents, which puts an estimated 5,138 young children in the city eligible for the program once it is fully underway. The program is open to any child who lives in the City of Tustin or North Tustin.

The launch has already drawn strong community and civic support, including backing from Orange County Supervisors Vicente Sarmiento and Don Wagner, along with grant funding from the Tustin Community Foundation. Tustin City Councilmember Lee Fink has been assisting in gaining funding and promoting the program.

Families can pre-register now at ImaginationLibrary.com. The "Check Availability" page will allow interested families to sign up via email.

Madame Helena Modjeska: Her Life & Legacy



Rob Brown at Helena Modjeska's home

By Guy Ball

Historical researcher Rob Brown will discuss “Madame Helena Modjeska: Her Life & Legacy,” at the next Orange County Historical Society meeting on Oct. 8.

Brown will explore Modjeska's remarkable story, from her birth in Poland and rise to stardom on the European stage, to her immigration to the U.S., and the events that brought her to make her home in Santiago Canyon.

The program will also examine Modjeska's pioneering role in the rise of the modern female celebrity, including the use of her name and image in commercial branding, and her influence on American acting and theater. Attendees will also have a rare opportunity to

view items from Brown's personal collection of Modjeska memorabilia and collectibles.

Rob Brown was born and raised in Orange County. After moving to Modjeska Canyon in 2016, he developed a deep interest in Orange County's pioneer history and the story of the canyon's namesake. In 2021, he began volunteering at the Helena Modjeska Historic House and Gardens, where he leads tours.

Rob is a member of the Tustin, Saddleback, and Orange County Historical Societies and serves on the board of the Helena Modjeska Foundation.

The meeting will start at 7:30 p.m., at Trinity Episcopal Church, 2400 N. Canal St. Attendance is free for OCHS members or a \$5 donation for non-members.

Animals to be blessed

The OPA Men's Group announces the second annual "Blessing of the Animals" event in Orange Park Acres on Saturday, Oct. 3 from 8 a.m. until noon.

Everyone is encouraged to bring their beloved companions, faithful servants and precious pets for a special blessing by OPA resident, Pastor Ron Spence. The OPA men will be welcoming animal friends at the front gate of the home of

Michael and Michelle Schmidt at 10815 Meads, and Ron will bless the animals as they arrive.

A prayer card and commemorative medal will be given to each pet. If you have a less social animal, Pastor Ron will come to your car to bless them. He may even be persuaded to visit barns and paddocks. For more information, please contact opamensgroup@gmail.com.



SILVERADO

Country Fair

★ 2026 ★

★ OCT. 10TH ★

Andrew Upton 10:30
Bucket Drum Circle 11:30
Iron Hollow 1:00
Victoria Bailey 2:45
Road Kill Kings 4:30
The Story Tellers 6:30
SHAKY FEELIN 8:30

★ LIVE MUSIC ★

FOOD ★ CRAFTS

10AM TO 10PM

AMERICAN TRADITION

\$10 ★ \$5

ADULTS KIDS

KIDS UNDER 3 FREE

★ OCT. 11TH ★

Brass Connection 10:30
Bucket Drum Circle 11:30
Franklin Puppeteers 12:00
Passing Fancies 1:00
The Poppies 3:45
Ted Z & the Wranglers 5:30
CUBENSIS 7:30

★ FAMILY FUN ★

BEER WINE SALOON

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NCL Orange/Villa Park chapter announces annual Fashion Show



Members of the National Charity League, Inc., Orange/Villa Park Chapter Class of 2028, who have collectively contributed 5,088 hours of volunteer service to the community are, bottom row, from left: Lauren Wolfe, Ava Rodriguez, Julia Salyards, Maryse Labatia, Anika Banez, Kourtney Chan, Sophie Chan; middle row, from left: Lexi Haro, Ava Haddad, Reese Bettenhausen, Tayrn Litfin, Victoria Gonzalez, Avery McCuiston, Kate O'Hare; Top row, from left: Sophia Huynh, Flynn Kremer, Addison Clark, Sydney Wener, Lily Mastroianni, Alyssa Saenz and Jordyn Fung.

The National Charity League, Inc. (NCL), Orange/Villa Park Chapter, will present its annual Fashion Show Nov. 15. The show is the group's signature fundraising event that brings together mothers, daughters, families and community supporters in celebration of fashion, leadership and philanthropy. Hosted by the chapter's 11th-grade members, the Fashion Show features the daughters as runway models. Proceeds from the event benefit the chapter's approved

philanthropy partners and help fund their ongoing needs. The Fashion Show is an important part of the Orange/Villa Park Chapter's commitment to developing young women who understand the value of giving back. Throughout their six-year NCL experience, mothers and daughters participate together in hands-on community service, leadership development and cultural experiences. The chapter currently includes approximately

Former SCC president sues college district

The former President of Santiago Community College (SCC), Jeannie Kim, has filed suit against the Rancho Santiago Community College District for her mistreatment in the workplace based upon acts of discrimination and retaliation for her whistle-blowing complaints about fraudulent enrollment numbers, which were used to obtain funding for the district's two colleges. Kim made efforts to clean up and remove the false enrollment numbers reported for SCC, which led to reduced government funding. Meanwhile, the suit alleges, the chancellor was negotiating pay raises with full knowledge of the shortfall issue he was creating by his actions. Santa Ana College (SAC) was taking no action to reduce the fraudulent enrollment numbers and was still receiving government funds based upon those numbers,

about which Kim again complained. The Chancellor failed to require SAC to do what SCC was doing to correct fraudulent enrollment numbers and pretended the increased numbers were accurate. Kim had sought protection from the Board of Trustees for the adverse actions being taken against her by the chancellor, as the chancellor was resistant to her claims and the evidence gathered that false enrollment numbers were being used at SAC. The Board of Trustees did not act to correct the fraudulent enrollment issue and failed to protect Kim. Upon Kim's return from a short medical leave, she was prevented from performing her duties as president, barred from the campus and had all of her access to SCC removed. No legitimate reason was provided to her as to why she was barred. Kim has in the interim filed a governmental claim.

240 mother-daughter members in grades seven through 12, who contribute volunteer hours each year to more than 20 charities and nonprofit organizations throughout Orange County. Following the event, the 11th-grade members help determine how funds raised will be distributed based on the needs of the chapter's philanthropy partners. They then have the opportunity to personally deliver donations to the organizations they are supporting.

The Fashion Show begins at 11 a.m. at the Waterfront Beach Resort in Huntington Beach. For tickets and information, contact californiaglow.givesmart.com. NCL, Inc., Orange/Villa Park Chapter is part of National Charity League, a mother-daughter organization dedicated to community service, leadership development and cultural experiences. The chapter has been serving the Orange/Villa Park community since 2006.





★ ★ ★

2026 ORANGE FIELD of VALOR

In support of our local veterans, active duty military, and their families.

← November 7 - 12 →

Handy Park in Orange

Opening Ceremonies on November 7th at 11:30 AM

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Meet the candidates: Orange Mayor



Arianna Barrios

Fiscal Discipline, Accountability, and Fairness are hallmarks of my leadership and what our City needs to become the best version of itself. Orange residents deserve a leader who will fight for them and put their quality of life ahead of corporate deals, predatory developers, and special interests. Drawing on years of management experience crafting and implementing best practices,

I have developed a comprehensive plan to fundamentally transform operations at City Hall to ensure that our local government works for everyone, not just the feared or the favored. Until we restore fiscal credibility and institute modern, disciplined governance in the City of Orange, residents are rightly weary when we ask them to close our funding gaps. I championed the Sales Tax

to provide Orange the runway it needs to right the ship, but that runway will mean nothing if there is not accountability and a complete reimagining of city operations. As Mayor, I offer residents new leadership that will reform city government and allow Orange to realize its full potential. Read my plan to get Orange back on track at www.votebarrios.com/issues.



Dan Slater

My family history in Orange goes back to the 1800's. I have fond childhood memories of flying kites where Santiago Hills is. Since elected mayor almost 4 years ago, I've poured my heart and soul into fixing our city's problems. Some of the many successes: Crime is down 35%. Illegal street vendors were eliminated. Homelessness has decreased. The proliferation of massage parlors and smoke shops

is being addressed. Our city is neater and cleaner. One of the accomplishments I'm most proud of is creating a Santiago Creek Commission and preserving our "Central Park." Forty-five acres of permanent open space have been preserved along Santiago Creek, and with plans to finally clean up Sully-Miller, we'll soon add 67 more. Lastly, we're on track to return

Orange to financial stability: we've cut \$37.5 million from the budget, reduced employees by 10% and are attracting new businesses to bring in much needed sales tax revenue. There's still more to do. I'm humbly asking you to return me to the mayor's office for one last 2-year term – to finish the job! Mayordanslater.com

Meet the candidates: City Council District 1



AJ Ricci

I'm AJ Ricci, and I am your qualified candidate for City Council. I want the people of Orange to know they have the opportunity to vote for someone that takes a common-sense approach to solving issues, and takes into account the short and long term effects of those decisions. Someone who treats a city's budget with the same care as they would their personal finances.

Someone on council that sees the big picture for our city as a whole. Lastly, someone who understands what it takes to get things done in the interest of the residents. I've served in public safety, my background is in finances, and have been in the community to see what its residents want to see the city become. This is what Orange needs right now. I'm proud

to have the endorsements of Orange County Sheriff Don Barnes, California Assembly Member Philip Chen, County Supervisor Don Wagner, The California Women's Leadership PAC, and many of the Orange City Council Members and Local Commissioners. I respectfully ask for your vote. Let's get back to basics. voter Ricci.com



Brandy Romero

Orange is where my husband and I are raising our two children, where I own a small business in the Plaza, and where I've worked to make a difference in our community. As Chair of Orange's Parks Commission, I've learned that good government means listening, finding solutions and following through. When the City cancelled Treats in the Streets, I helped lead the effort that raised more than \$40,000 to save this Orange

tradition. I also secured a donation of Starlink equipment for our Fire Department to strengthen emergency communications. On City Council, I'll focus on the basics residents expect: safe neighborhoods, well-maintained streets and parks, strong police and fire services, support for local businesses, and responsible management of taxpayer dollars. I'll push for greater transparency at City Hall and make sure residents

have a voice in decisions affecting their neighborhoods. I'll also work to protect Orange's historic character while supporting thoughtful, compatible development. I'm running to bring practical leadership, accountability and follow-through to City Hall—and to keep Orange a community we're proud to call home. I'd be honored to have your vote.



Ernie Glasgow

I have been proud to call Orange home for more than 50 years. My desire is to serve and lead our community while helping ensure that Orange is on a strong and fiscally responsible path for the future. My three years of service on the Traffic Commission, followed by eight years on the Planning Commission, gave me valuable

insight into how our city operates and, just as importantly, the opportunity to listen to and consider the needs of residents throughout Orange. Orange is a diverse community made up of people from different neighborhoods, backgrounds, generations, and perspectives. I believe effective leadership means listening to all of our residents,

respecting those differences, and making thoughtful decisions that serve the community as a whole. I would bring that same independent perspective, commitment to fiscal responsibility, and dedication to representing all of Orange to the City Council.



Jonathan St. Clair

Jonathan St. Clair has called Orange home since 2001, and for the past 25 years he has built his life, career and family in the city. He and his wife, who owns a local business, are raising their two children in the Orange Unified School District, and Jonathan coaches South Sunrise Little League. A seasoned businessman, Jonathan brings decades of experience managing resources, running organizations,

and delivering results. He applies that same discipline and accountability to his community work. Jonathan co-founded the Jasper Ray Foundation for Drowning Prevention and Child Safety, an Orange-based nonprofit that raised funds for swim lessons and water safety education. He also serves on the board of the National Drowning Prevention Alliance, where he recently organized and

presented at the organization's annual international water safety conference. He is a proud member of Elks Lodge #1475 in Orange. Now running for Orange City Council in District 1, Jonathan wants a more responsive City Hall, smarter growth, and safer streets, and he is already listening to residents before making promises. www.jonathanfororange.com.

Orange considers annexing county islands, but not right away

By Tina Richards

The City of Orange is exploring the feasibility of annexing several county islands within its boundaries over the next several years.

The move would eliminate city/county jurisdictional boundaries; allow for more consistent police, fire, code enforcement, planning and public works services; improve coordination of infrastructure maintenance and capital improvements; provide consistency in land-use planning; enhance emergency response; increase representation on the city council; and incorporate neighborhoods that already identify with the City of Orange.

There are currently six county islands at issue, representing 850 acres and 5,000 residents. Following the council's Aug. 25 meeting discussion on the individual islands and public comments from residents of Orange Park Acres who opposed annexation, four islands remain under consideration and two eliminated. El Modena, North El Modena, Olive Heights and the Bond Pits are still candidates. The county portion of Orange Park Acres and the Lincoln-Glassell island north of West Lincoln Avenue and adjacent to the Santa Ana River are shelved. The 103-acre Lincoln-Glassell island is owned entirely by R.J. Noble Company and considered by both the city and property owner to be of no benefit to Orange and best left to the county.

OPA is off the list

While portions of Orange Park Acres are already part of the City of Orange, 394 acres fall under county auspices, and that's the way residents like it.

Opponents of annexation note that the county has fewer restrictions on animal keeping, non-conforming structures, RV and horse trailer storage and maintenance of "wild" areas. Before any thought is given to annexing OPA, residents speaking at the council meeting demanded that neighbors be consulted and remain a major player in any ensuing discussion.

By law, the annexation procedure for islands greater than 150 acres must include protest proceedings. If 25% to just under 50% of registered voters in the area object, an election must be held. If more than 50% protest, the annexation is terminated.

Mayor Dan Slater assured OPA county residents that the city has no intention of changing anything in that community, that it would preserve its lifestyle and rural character. For now, the OPA island is off the table.

One speaker representing Olive Heights voiced the same objections to annexation as the OPA residents. It's a semi-rural area, with a unique character distinct from Orange, and residents prefer to stay in the county. It, however, remains a candidate. The area generates sales tax, has

an infrastructure in place and is isolated from such county services as the Sheriff's Department, the Fire Authority, waste removal and code enforcement. "It's the poster child for government inefficiency," Slater said, adding that if annexed the city would respect its character.

El Modena, a defining candidate

Councilmember Ana Gutierrez, herself a resident of the city-governed El Modena, has long advocated annexing the county part of it to make the community whole. "It's near and dear to my heart," she advised. "El Modena has its own identity, the city and county portions are the same, but they've been cut in half. Many residents already feel like they are part of the city. We need to be able to help people. Continuity is important."

"El Modena is the reason we need to do this," Slater noted. "It's been a problem for the city, with active gangs and graffiti. The goal is to make El Modena special, with its own design standards and its culture recognized."

The Bond Pits, 187 acres with zero residents, is owned primarily by the Orange County Water District. Councilman Denis Bilodeau, who is also president of OCWD, reported he would "not be opposed to annexing that site." A semi-natural area serving as a groundwater replenishment basin, it is also home to wildlife and native plants. "It's quite beautiful," Bilodeau said. "It's stunning."

Is back burner better?

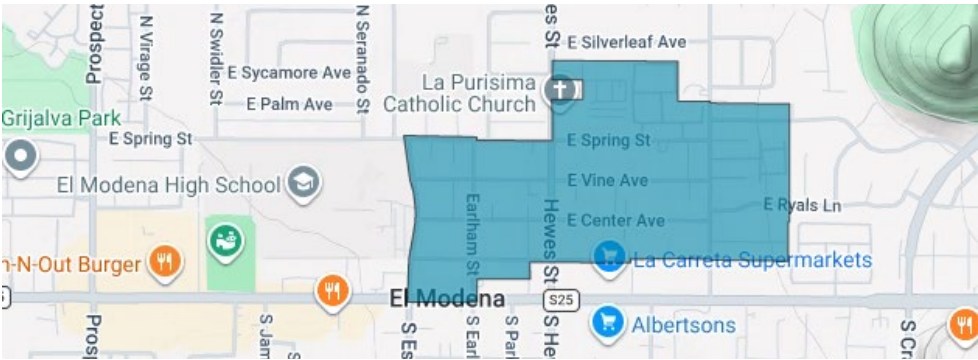
The council members agreed that residents should be included in any annexation discussion. They did not, however, agree that now is the time to consider it.

"It's fiscally irresponsible to do this now," Jon Dumitru advised. "We can't meet the RHNA (Regional Housing Needs Allocation) we have now. We don't want to absorb more housing requirements from the county. We don't have enough police on our streets; we don't have enough code enforcement."

John Gyllenhammer noted that the city needed to know specifically what expenses it would incur from each island before annexing them. Would the tax benefits be worth the expense?

Arianna Barrios recommended putting the discussion off until at least January. "It's short-sighted not to consider Lincoln-Glassell," she stressed. "Anaheim's OCvibe is just across the river; we should consider the opportunities that could give us. We don't know. This is going to take a lot of staff time. We need to think bigger."

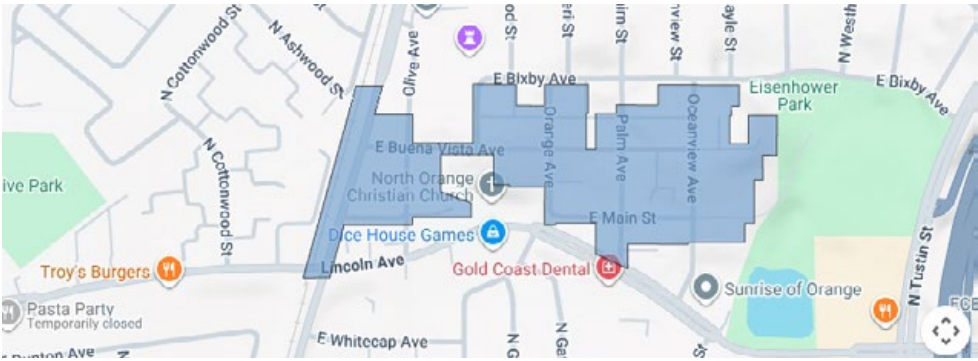
Slater motioned to ask staff to delve more deeply into the processes, costs and parameters of annexing the four islands over the next six months and return to the council with more information in February. Kathy Tavoularis seconded the motion. The vote was 5-2 in favor, with Dumitru and Barrios opposed.



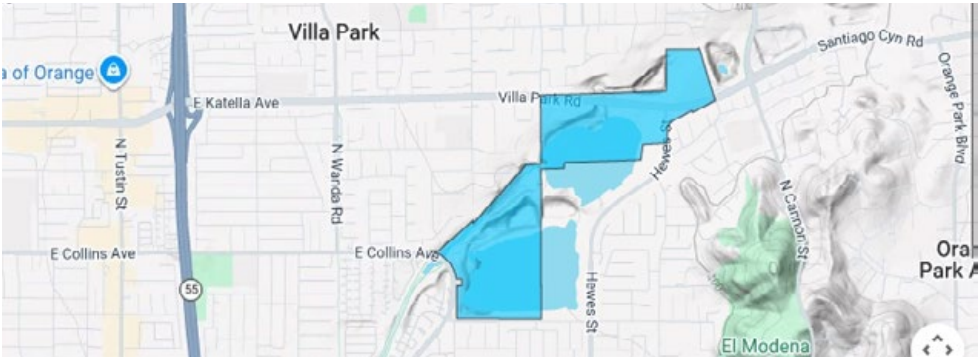
El Modena



North El Modena



Olive Heights



Santiago Creek, Bond Street Pits

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Last minute letters

Just the facts

Dear Editor:

I want to thank the Sentry for its coverage of the challenge made to the ballot statements of three candidates running for Orange Unified School Board. As the petitioner for that case, I think it's outrageous that it was something that I had to do as a concerned citizen. We shouldn't have to file lawsuits to keep people from lying about our local school district, the very school district that they are seeking to lead.

I also want to give our community an update on where the judge upheld our concerns and what the actual rulings were. With that said, overall I'm happy with the results of the lawsuit.

Candidate Jack Chang had to delete an entire sentence where he claimed OUSD test scores were dropping, when in fact they have been going up steadily since testing resumed after 2020. He also had to change the wrong statistic about test scores. Who gets that wrong? Apparently candidate Crystal Miles, who also had an incorrect test score in her ballot statement, lower

than the actual, of course. She also had a statistic about district rankings lacking verifiable merit. Both conceded these statements were false and agreed to correct the test scores and delete the other sentences.

The judge stipulated to the changes I demanded and that they had agreed to. Again, this was a waste of time, money and energy, all because people asking for our votes didn't share the truth in a document that will go to every voter in Orange Unified.

After a court hearing, candidate Ivan Kokos was required to make small changes to his ballot statement that signified a larger change to his statement. Kokos has repeatedly tried to paint a picture that Orange Unified is in financial distress. Orange Unified has one of the strongest financial positions in the county, among the highest bond ratings in the state and holds significant reserves that will help the district weather uncertain financial times in the future.

While the judge did agree deficits had occurred (there have been intentional one-time investments made via money saved over years),

he also acknowledged OUSD likely had one of the stronger financial positions in the county. As for the language regarding "unsustainable spending," the judge was very clear on this: Kokos is entitled to his opinion. The judge actually said this twice in one sentence, as it is a First Amendment right. The judge then made Kokos change the language to reflect that it was HIS opinion, not a fact. I agree, under the First Amendment he is entitled to voice his opinion. It doesn't make it true.

That distinction matters. Everyone is entitled to advocate for different priorities, criticize district spending and argue changes should be made. That is democracy. Voters, however, deserve to know when they are being presented with a factual claim and when they are being presented with a candidate's interpretation of those facts.

Most alarming is that all four candidates continue to hand out material that contain these false claims. They also falsely claim they are "supported" by teachers, when, in fact, the current board members have the teachers' endorsement. Orange Unified deserves school board members who are not

politically ambitious and willing to make false claims to achieve their goal. We need people with ethics and concrete plans to improve the district. I see neither in these people.

These candidates are attempting to unseat qualified, student-centered, civic-minded leaders with a long history of involvement and volunteerism in our schools.

At stake here is more than one election or one lawsuit. We are choosing the people who will oversee the education of thousands of students and make decisions involving hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars.

I care deeply about this district and its future. I do not expect every candidate, nor every voter, to agree on every issue. Healthy disagreement is an essential part of democracy, but disagreement should begin with a shared commitment to the truth. Our community deserves better. Our students deserve better. And, voters deserve ballot statements they can trust.

Darshan Smaaladen
Orange

District disrespected

Dear Editor:

The City of Orange gives out proclamations at nearly every meeting. It's one of those feel good, community-building exercises that elected officials everywhere do to recognize service, honor federal holidays, celebrate achievement, or solemnly mark a passing. The Sept. 22 council meeting should have been no different.

Since being elected to council, each year I have requested a proclamation to honor the start of Hispanic Heritage Month, and, as is my prerogative, spotlight an individual from our community of Hispanic heritage who has provided outstanding service within our city.

Several weeks prior, I requested such a recognition for Maribel Reyes Hernandez who had recently retired from the El Modena Family Resource Center where she spent 20-plus years as the director, helping children and seniors, mothers and families, El Modena neighbors, OUSD students, and Orange residents. She built a network of support that included Orange Rotary Clubs, Orange churches and nonprofits

throughout the city. Her work provided volunteer opportunities, food assistance, parenting classes, senior services, homework support and so much more. The recognition was well deserved and appropriate.

Three hours before the council meeting agenda was to be published, I received a message from the city manager's secretary informing me that the Hispanic Heritage Month proclamation was not approved for the agenda and moved to the next meeting.

I was in utter disbelief. Everything was in motion; Hernandez, her family, local and state electeds were expected to attend. When I inquired, I was told the item had been removed by the mayor. I was confused; the mayor has consistently allowed any council member to place items on the agenda. There was nothing controversial about the individual I'd chosen, nor the center she served over the years.

What possible reason was there to silence my voice without even speaking to me? The excuses were feeble. In the mayor's own words, "I'm not familiar with the person you wanted to honor so I passed it along to Mayor Pro Tem Bilodeau

for approval." The mayor did not contact ME for clarification. Instead he asked Bilodeau to review and approve a proclamation I have given for the last six years. Bilodeau, who also did not contact me, said "no."

Their reasons were laughable. "She isn't a resident of Orange." "We have plenty of Hispanic leaders in Orange who deserve recognition."

Following intense discussions, the city manager and city clerk declared the city had no policy that precluded my choice, and the original agenda was published.

A mere six hours before the meeting, I was called and told five of my colleagues gave notice they would not sign a proclamation with Hernandez's name on it, and this included the mayor. Instead, Hernandez received a Certificate of Recognition signed only by me.

Few things have been more painful to me. But they weren't done. The council chambers was standing room only with so many community members there to pay their respects, including other elected officials and their representatives. The council sat stonefaced and silent. They declined to stand with

residents paying tribute. They declined to take photos, as we have done for others.

Instead, they put politics and bigotry on full display.

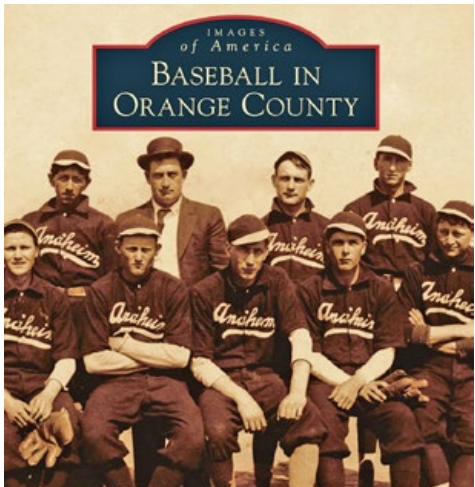
Ana Gutierrez
Orange City Council, District 5

Editor's note: Mayor Dan Slater and Mayor Pro Tem Denis Bilodeau responded to Gutierrez's account of events on Sept. 22.

"I did not support Maribel because she does not live in Orange. We have so many fine examples of Hispanic leaders and contributors in our own city. Also, four other council members agreed with me (some for additional reasons). Should we choose a Citizen of the Year from another city? Therefore, it was decided to proceed with a proclamation recognizing Hispanic Heritage Month (which was signed by all council members) and Councilmember Ana Gutierrez did her own recognition for Maribel – a win/win." – Dan Slater

"I'm not sure what Ana Gutierrez is referring to. Ms. Hernandez was honored for her work and I wish her all the best." – Denis Bilodeau

A journey through baseball history



By Guy Ball

Step into the dugout of America's pastime with historical author Chris Epting for an evening of untold baseball history – with a special focus on Orange County's heritage as he speaks at the Tustin Area Museum on Oct. 7.

Some 90 years ago, a patch near the intersection of Brea Boulevard and Lambert Road was a crude baseball diamond known locally as "Brea Bowl."

"A lot of people don't know that Hall of Famer's Babe Ruth and Walter Johnson played right here on Halloween in 1924," notes Epting.

The California Angels played their first game in Orange County in 1966.

Ruth led a team of his Babe Ruth All-Stars here as part of a postseason storming tour. The players changed uniforms at a nearby auto repair shop.

A prolific writer, Epting has written over 50 books, including many local history books on a variety

of themes. He has also penned a variety of biographies on unique personalities.

Chris will have copies of his new book, "Baseball in Orange County" available for purchase and to sign.

This Night at the Museum meeting will be held from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Tustin Area Museum, 395 El Camino Real. Tickets are \$20 per person; \$15 each for members.

For more information and tickets, visit TustinHistory.com or call the museum at (714) 731-5701.

The usual flair defines Orange International Street Fair

Visitors to the Orange International Street Fair, held Sept. 4-6, survived the 100-degree-plus heat, with a

slight raincloud break on Sunday, to eat, drink and be culinary on the streets of Old Towne Orange.



And there was, indeed, dancing in the streets.



Live music was featured on the main stage and smaller venues set up throughout the fair's footprint. From top, Solution, Rhythmo Mariachi, Groovetown.





Ben Prescott

Realtor

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