

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

SEPTEMBER 2026

Neighbors say proposed truck terminal is too close to home



Photo by Tony Richards

Neighbors of a proposed round-the-clock trucking facility are urging Orange to consider its negative impacts before approving it.

Orange residents who live near the intersection of Glassell Street and Fletcher Avenue are rallying to ask the city not to approve a 36-dock truck terminal across the street from their homes that would operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Residents cite air pollution from idling diesel trucks, noise from continued semi-trailer traffic, safety concerns for children walking to Fletcher Elementary School, reduction in property values, and the overall damage to the quality of life they currently enjoy in their quiet neighborhood. They have been attending Planning Commission and city council meetings to voice their concerns ahead of any agendized approvals.

Rexford Industrial Realty is requesting approval from the City of Orange to construct and operate an industrial building

See "Neighbors" continued on page 2

Three OUSD board seat challengers charged with misleading ballot statements

By Tina Richards

Ballot statements prepared by three candidates running for the Orange Unified Board of Education are the subject of a lawsuit that labels them false and misleading.

Candidates Ivan Kokos (Area 1), Crystal Miles (Area 4) and Jack Chang (Area 7), are running against incumbents Andrea Yamasaki (Area 1), Sara Pelly (Area 4) and Stephen Glass (Area 7). Orange Unified constituent Darshan Smaaladen filed suit Aug. 13 providing the court with documentation supporting her assertion that portions of the statements are not true.

The statements the court is considering, from candidate Ivan Kokos: "I'm concerned about the Orange Unified School District's structural deficits:

its own projections call this unsustainable;" from Chang, "test scores in our district are dropping" and "only 40% of students are proficient at math;" and from Crystal Miles, "only 40.66% of our students are proficient in math and the Orange Unified School District ranks 13th out of 15 in overall quality."

Fact-finding

Smaaladen asserts, with supporting budget documents dating back to 2023, independent credit ratings, accepted definitions and the suggestion that Kokos may have "googled the wrong OUSD," that his statements are demonstrably false and misleading.

A structural deficit is one of

See "OUSD" continued on page 3

Citywide Orange Historic Resources Registry expected this month

A Historic Preservation Ordinance that will establish an Orange Historic Register for the recognition and management of citywide historic and cultural resources is anticipated to be adopted by the city council on Sept. 22.

The local register would automatically include those already designated as state and/or national resources. For context, a resource could be a building, site, district, sign, object, cultural landscape, natural feature or of an archaeological, tribal or cultural nature. The proposed ordinance does not add any new properties for

listing, rather it provides a clear path for owners outside any current historic district to have their properties designated if they desire to do so.

Orange is home to a broad range of significant historical resources that embody the shared cultural heritage and history as a city and diverse community. Protecting and managing the stewardship of those resources is essential to maintain and preserve the city's heritage.

The ordinance brings forth and implements a series of goals and policies for resource protection, which is a city

commitment long overdue from the city's General Plan. It is also an adopted commitment of the city's Strategic Plan.

The proposed ordinance brings clearer code definitions of what a resource is, gives direction for considering new landmarks and assigns final authority for listing anything on the Orange Historic Register with the city council.

The ordinance gives important technical responsibilities and oversight to a new Heritage Resources Commission (HRC) and staff, establishes the Orange

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NEWS INSIDE

ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL

OC Grand Jury investigation finds state housing mandates miss the mark and burden cities with unrealistic targets.

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NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

Orange constituent challenges a "No on Sales Tax" ballot statement "fact" that wasn't.

See Ballot, page 4

CANDID CANDIDATES

Incumbents and challengers running for OUSD trustee seats introduce themselves, in their own words, to voters.

See Meet, page 8 and 9

WORDS TO THE WISE

Readers share insights and shine spotlights on local conditions, contests and consequence.

See letters, page 10-12

IT'S A BIRD, IT'S A PLANE, IT'S ...

Upcoming presentation at Tustin History Museum surveys UFO sightings in Orange County.

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at 2401-2411 North Glassell St. The proposal would demolish the existing three buildings on the site, and redevelop the 12.1-acre site with a one-story 298,988-sq.-ft. industrial building. A total of 36 dock doors are indicated. Direct truck and automobile access to and from the site is from Glassell Street.

The property is designated as "Light Industrial" by the city's General Plan and zoned "Industrial Manufacturing."

The one element that does require additional city scrutiny and approval is a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week operating

schedule, which requires a Conditional Use Permit. Existing single-family residential neighborhoods lie north of Fletcher on both sides of Glassell, an active freight and Metrolink railroad line is to the east, and warehouses and light industrial businesses are to the west and south.

The city released a draft Mitigated Negative Declaration on April 16, 2026 for public comment. Many of the comments urged the city to require a full Environmental Impact Report for the trucking operation.

The project is anticipated to be reviewed by the Planning Commission on Sept. 10.



Aerial view of the proposed truck terminal site

OUSD schools get upgrades

By Hana Brake

While students have been enjoying summer break, construction and maintenance crews were hard at work preparing campuses for a successful new school year. Across the district, dozens of improvement projects are enhancing school safety, appearance and learning environments.

New electronic marquees were installed at Handy and Olive Elementary Schools, with seven more campuses scheduled to receive them. Roofing projects are also making significant progress, with work nearing completion at Canyon High School and continuing at Canyon Hills and Canyon Rim.

Fresh asphalt was laid at the West Orange and La Veta campuses, with Anaheim Hills Elementary next, followed by paving projects at California, Canyon Rim, Parkside and Richland. Slurry seal work is also underway at Olive.

Painting projects continue throughout Orange Unified, including exterior improvements at La Veta Elementary and Villa Park High School, as well as trim, fascia and doors at Cambridge, Sycamore, and Palmyra, with nine more campuses scheduled.

Some additional capital

improvements include the installation of modern teaching walls at California, La Veta, Handy, Palmyra and Cambridge; portable classroom additions and campus upgrades at Panorama and Villa Park Elementary; new tennis court fencing at Villa Park and El Modena High Schools. Shade structures will provide additional outdoor comfort for students at Running Springs and Taft Elementary Schools.

**Orange County Grand Jury explores
state housing mandates**

The Orange County Grand Jury investigated the state's one-size-fits-all housing mandates and found that, instead of achieving the desired targets, they have created unnecessary local government costs, confusion, inequity, and growing tension between state directives and local realities.

The Grand Jury Report, "California Housing Mandates: The Unintended Reshaping of Orange County Neighborhoods," drew from governmental and agency research, media, stakeholder interviews, site visits, surveys and public forums.

The findings were in line with what many Orange County cities, including Orange and Villa Park, are experiencing. That is, state-mandated housing targets (Regional Housing Needs Assessment) are derived from formulas that fail to account for land costs and availability, funding limitations, labor shortages, construction costs, infrastructure capacity and accurate population projections.

The report illustrates how housing mandates have eroded local land-use authority, and overridden community-based planning. It notes that the state's "streamlined project approvals" bypass public hearings and local design standards, shift liability to cities and prioritize building over neighborhood character. Several stakeholders said that the state's assignment of units to be built does not differentiate among jurisdictions with varying levels of infrastructure capacity, physical or environmental constraints, or distinct development patterns. The top-down framework creates

community frustration, and constituents' lack of confidence that their elected officials are representing their interests.

The report underscores the need for housing solutions that respect local conditions, restore meaningful public participation, and align development goals with infrastructure, funding, and community priorities. The Grand Jury noted that the Orange County Council of Governments (OCCOG) and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) could play a larger role in promoting equity, transparency and public understanding if city and county representatives participated proactively.

The Grand Jury asked Orange County cities to respond to its findings and recommendations. The City of Orange agreed with the thrust of the report, noting that it faced housing mandate challenges due to its desire to protect properties within its historic districts. The city also cited neighborhood housing demands and costs associated with the student population at Chapman University.

Villa Park also agreed with the findings and recommendations of the report, adding that the city was hit with a disproportionate housing allocation relative to the population and current residential parcels. It did, however, satisfy the state's requirements for this housing cycle. While noting that a small city staff precluded it from embracing many of the report's recommendations, it was already increasing its participation and commitment to SCAG and OCCOG.

Public invited to ballot measure review

A nonpartisan review of the state measures that will appear on the November ballot will be presented Wed., Oct. 7, from 7-8 p.m. at the Tustin Library.

A pro and con discussion of the propositions will be led by a voter services member of the OC League of Women Voters.

The free program is hosted by the Tustin/Santa Ana/Orange Branch of the American Association of University Women. The Tustin Library is located at 345 E. Main.

This event is not endorsed or sponsored by the City of Tustin.

Fire Museum renews lease

The California Fire Museum negotiated a one-year lease extension with the City of Orange for the former Fire Department headquarters at 176 S. Grand Ave. The museum features fire trucks and memorabilia depicting the history of the fire service in OC. A fire prevention exhibit for children illustrates the basics of fire safety at home. The museum is open on the second and fourth Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

"OUSD" continued from page 1

recurring revenue and expense imbalances. It does not include one-time expenses that create a deficit over a single year, which OUSD incurred in 2024-25. Subsequently, the district has been operating with a healthy reserve, received Positive Certifications from the county, and earned an AA+ rating from Fitch, an independent, nationally recognized credit rating agency. That rating, which has been upgraded twice since 2021, reflects the district's "financial resilience, supported by unrestricted reserves exceeding 25% of spending."

Orange Unified (OUSD) does not have a "structural deficit" and no one has called its spending "unsustainable." Oakland Unified (OUSD), on the other hand, has a well-documented structural deficit and unsustainable spending as the Kokos statement describes. "A voter reading the Kokos statement has no way of knowing it may actually describe a different, unrelated district," Smaaladen declared. "I believe he did a search on 'OUSD' and conflated the two districts."

While Chang's statement claims that OUSD test scores are

dropping, that is not supported by state or independently reported data.

Looking up, not down

The Education Scorecard, peer reviewed by researchers at Stanford and Harvard Universities, confirm that OUSD students are gaining academic skills at a rate placing the district in the top 14% nationwide; reading performance ranks in the top 20%, and math in the top third.

Both Chang and Miles referred to OUSD math proficiency at 40%. The lawsuit notes that the 40.66% figure refers to ELA (English Language Arts) and represents the students who did not meet ELA standards, not math outcomes. The correct math figure is 45.99%, reported by the California Department of Education for the 2024-25 testing cycle. That source also indicates OUSD math proficiency has risen every year since 2022.

The suit also suggests that Miles knew the correct math score when she filed her statement. She had posted on her Facebook page, twice, that 46% of OUSD students met or exceeded math standards. Those correct math score references, the suit alleges, were posted two days before she filed

her candidate statement.

Ranking rankles

Miles was also challenged on her statement, OUSD "ranks 13th out of 15 in overall quality." No source is cited for that ranking and what the "15" represents is unclear. Orange County has 28 school districts. Plaintiff Smaaladen did locate a dataset (Niche) that included 16 Orange County school districts. It cited OUSD as one of the "Best School Districts" (at #13) with a letter grade of A+ to A-.

Miles' statement, the plaintiff says, "creates the false impression that Orange Unified's position reflects a qualitative deficiency, when it sits squarely in the top tier of Orange County districts."

During a court hearing, Aug. 27 the candidates stipulated changes to the portions of their statements that were false.

Asked why she filed the lawsuit, Smaaladen said, "You can't blatantly lie and say things that are factually, undeniably untrue. The sad thing is, this happens all the time."

"Unless someone cares enough to take the time and has the money to pay for an attorney, these statements would be on the ballot, and people would believe them to be true. That's just not right."

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✓

3. Continue to reduce homelessness

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4. Continue to restore Santiago Creek into natural open space

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✓

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.

Ballot statement opposing Orange sales tax revised following a court challenge

By Tina Richards

A lawsuit challenging allegations made in the arguments opposing the ballot measure that would impose a one-percent sales tax in Orange was settled when the authors of the statement agreed to alter the offending language. Orange resident Reggie Mundekis filed the suit, July 16, when she found misstatements in the ballot argument drafted by tax opponents Fred Whitaker and Mike Alvarez. The plaintiff took issue with numbers cited by the authors to demonstrate that the city council is recklessly overpaying employees.

By the numbers

The original statement that was to be printed in the voter handbook read, "By 2025, 135 city employees were paid over \$250,000 annually in total compensation . . . There were only 77 employees when the city asked for the sales tax increase in 2024. The city council has learned nothing." This statement, the lawsuit claimed, is "misleading, and likely false." The authors cite [TransparentCalifornia.com](#) as the source for their 2025 compensation figures, yet that same source, the suit points out, reports a number higher than 77 for 2024. According to [TransparentCalifornia.com](#), more than 100 city employees received over \$250,000 in total compensation in 2024—not 77.

Selective sourcing

"By selecting the figure '77' from the very source that reflects more than 100 such employees

and juxtaposing it against the 2025 figure of '135,' the argument falsely suggests sudden, dramatic growth. That one-third understatement gives voters the false impression that the ranks of highly compensated employees exploded immediately after the city's prior tax measure." The suit also challenges the argument that: "From 2011–2014, the city had well under 700 employees, the budget was balanced, and we were safe." The "well under 700 employees" is false. According to [TransparentCalifornia.com](#)—which lists both full-time and part-time employees—the city had 894 employees in 2011, 890 in 2013, and 903 in 2014, far more than 700, not "well under" it.

Voluntary amendments

A court date was scheduled for Aug. 17, but Whitaker and Alvarez agreed to rewrite the sentences prior to that. The amended sentences read "There were only 77 such employees in 2023 when the City asked for the Sales Tax increase in 2024;" "From 2011–2014, the City cut and left positions vacant, the budget was balanced, and we were safe." The court issued a judgment, Aug. 7, indicating those stipulations be executed. The court date was vacated.

"Historic" continued from page 1

Historic Register, and codifies requirements and processes for resource designation and removal to the registry. The existing members of the Design Review Committee, already required by the municipal code to possess expertise in building and/or landscape architecture, planning, historic preservation, or our local heritage, would shift into the new role of the HRC. The city has an inventory of the resources already listed on the State and/or National Historic Register. Those known areas include the Plaza Historic District, Old Towne (Orange's first homes from 1880s to 1940), and three Eichler (mid-century-modern homes) residential tracts from the early 1960s.

The new register means assets with local importance could voluntarily apply for recognition as Orange's historic resources are found citywide. The listing process requires applicable documentation, a city application and fee, review by qualified staff and/or an independent expert, public participation, and consideration and recommendation by the Heritage Resources Commission, with the ultimate determination by city council. The Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval by a 7-0 vote to the city council on Aug. 17, with the Design Review Committee, Old Towne Preservation Association, Orange Legacy Alliance and preservation advocates providing input on the working draft and supporting the ordinance.

Orange volunteers hope to bring Veterans Day celebration back to the city

The Orange Parks & Events Foundation is working to bring a community Veterans Day celebration back to Orange this November, and is asking residents, businesses and organizations to help make it possible. The proposed Veterans Day Celebration will restore a tradition that has been absent from the community. "This is about making sure our veterans know that Orange remembers them, appreciates

them and honors their service," said Adam Litwin, co-founder of the Orange Parks & Events Foundation. "We want to bring back a meaningful Veterans Day tradition that we can be proud of, but we need the community's help to make it happen." The foundation is seeking partners, sponsors, donors, participating organizations and volunteers to help bring the celebration to life. Those interested in participating may contact [orangeparks.org](#).

Sigma Chi Omega welcomes new and continuing students

Chapman University's Sigma Chi Omega Associate Chapter is preparing for its fall recruitment period with four alcohol-free events in September. The chapter is focused on friendship, leadership, service, and philanthropy, and has continued strengthening its support for worthy causes, including the Huntsman Cancer Foundation. Sigma Chi welcomes Chapman students interested in meeting the chapter and learning more about its values and campus involvement. For information about the chapter, contact [proconsul.sigmachi.cu@gmail.com](#).



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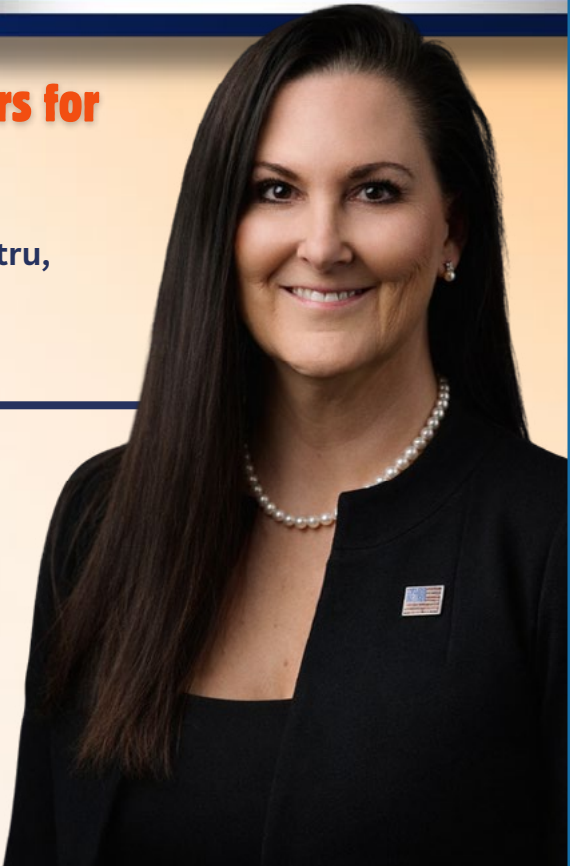
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Orange Unified School Board

Orange Unified gets strong marks for how it handles money

By Hana Brake

Orange Unified School District received positive news about its finances. Fitch Ratings, which reviews how well school districts manage money, gave Orange Unified two strong grades:

- AA+ for how well the district manages its overall finances
- AAA, the highest possible grade, for how well the district repays money borrowed for building and improving schools.

Both grades came with a stable outlook, meaning Fitch expects OUSD to continue doing well and does not anticipate any changes to these ratings in the near future.

Why this matters

When a school district needs funding to build or improve schools, it can borrow money, similar to a family taking out a loan and promising to pay it back. A strong rating like this tells the community that Orange Unified has a solid track record of managing its finances responsibly and can be trusted to repay what it borrows.

“Maintaining an AA+ credit rating and AAA rating on our general obligation bonds reflects the district’s continued commitment to responsible financial stewardship,” said Superintendent Rachel Monárrez. “Every dollar entrusted to Orange Unified represents an investment in our scholars and our schools. Strong financial practices allow us to protect that investment while continuing to prioritize excellence in the classroom.”

Board President Stephen Glass echoed that sentiment, “Responsible stewardship is foundational to our ability to provide a high-quality education for every scholar. This rating affirms the importance of thoughtful, disciplined financial decisions that keep our students at the center of our work.”

Catfish Fishing Derby coming to Irvine Lake

Supervisor Don Wagner, District 3, will host a shoreline Catfish Fishing Derby, Saturday, Sept. 12 at Irvine Lake.

Event registration commences at 5 a.m., with the derby running from 6 a.m. to 1 p.m. Awards will be presented at 1 p.m.

Parking is \$5 per vehicle. Please be prepared to walk from the lot to the lake. The event will feature food trucks, blind bogey drawings and prizes. Bait and tackle will be available for purchase.

Community youth hosted at county offices



Students from youth summer programs visited county offices to learn about leadership.

By Vicente Sarmiento
2nd District Supervisor

With the end of summer fast approaching, students are returning to school, in what is often a difficult time for students and parents alike. Over the last month, our office has had the opportunity to welcome students, share a little of the work we do and give these students a sense of how county government works.

I want to highlight three of the groups that joined us this summer, and thank the staff of the organizations and the volunteers and parents that made the visits possible. It's my hope that we can demystify government and inspire these young people to remain active in the community and civic life.

I was happy to host the VietRISE team and a group of students here at the county offices for a tour of our facilities and conversation. I was impressed by the enthusiasm

of the students and, as always, energized and inspired by them. I was able to share how our office serves Orange County residents and to encourage their continued efforts to serve and empower Vietnamese and immigrant communities.

We also hosted the 4th Annual Youth Civic Summer Program, hosted by Resilience OC in partnership with OCCHC's SteppingUP Program, which introduces Orange County youth to higher education, civic engagement and public service through college tours, workshops and conversations with community leaders and elected officials.

Students toured the historic Orange County Courthouse with OC Parks staff. They heard about the historical decisions that were made here. They also visit the county's art installation celebrating the United States 250-year anniversary.

During their visit, students were able to visit the Board of

Supervisors meeting chamber and other campus facilities. Students heard from staff about the services and departments county government is responsible for, as well as how ordinances and other laws are presented, debated and adopted by the county.

We also had the opportunity to host youth and their parents for a day of learning, leadership and empowerment.

It was terrific to speak with them, encourage them to pursue their dreams, and show them that they, too, belong in spaces of leadership and public service.

The visit was made possible by Qazizada Multicultural Therapy Clinic, which works with families and organizes these experiences to plant the seeds of confidence, civic engagement and possibility. The nonprofit organization offers affordable mental health services to families, children and refugees/immigrants.

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From ore to borer and morer

Extinguished service award

Sparks and frightening “zapping” sounds near the Silverado Market & Café and “Smashmouth” trail on Saturday morning, Aug. 8, alerted neighbors to a small fire at a utility pole. Frequent Silverado volunteer James Sharpe grabbed a full-sized (!) fire extinguisher from his truck and, with help from other locals, rushed to put out flames consuming brush. Kitchen-sized extinguishers and a garden hose did the job, with Station 14 arriving to clean up. This episode might inspire the purchase of a fire extinguisher, mounted for access. If already inside or outside your home, check the gauge. Canyonites need extinguishers, an emergency pack, a go-bag, and plans to alert neighbors and help evacuate with arrival of the inevitable wildfire.

Indirect democracy

After long consternation among election watchers, the November ballot for Silverado-Modjeska Recreation and Parks (SMRPD) Board directors will be short. With three candidate filings, the race for three

respective open four-year terms ended with OC Vote removing it from the ballot because David Chapman (Silverado), Heidi Grande (Silverado), and Tim Thompson (Modjeska), uncontested, won by default. Congratulations. Two candidates for the two-year position share statements:

Mark Levy (Modjeska): “I am interested in becoming a director to help locate and develop revenue sources to keep our district viable. I previously served on the board for 10 years. I believe that with my knowledge and experience, we will be able to finally develop consistent revenue sources to allow us to continue serving our recreation programs and the parks in our community.”

Kirsten Rieser (Silverado): “I’m running to make sure our community has enough representation. As a local real estate agent and former market owner, I want to keep our rural character intact and protect our property values. My goals are to improve wildfire safety, build new park programs for homeschooled kids, secure infrastructure funding, and launch a convenient online portal for facility rentals.”

We get mail

From the local staffer at our state senator’s office regarding his introduction of legislation establishing an International Peace Day: “I wanted to follow up regarding your question surrounding Senator Choi. As far as is known, Senator Choi has not publicly opposed or denounced a war.”

From U.S. Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA): “I support Senate Resolution 443, introduced by Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI), which would express concern with the spreading problem of book banning across the U.S. . . . currently awaiting consideration by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, of which I am a member.”

Gratifying

With the American Library Association’s (ALA) Banned Books Week arriving Oct. 3-10, it’s gratifying to read this message from Library of the Canyons Branch Manager Laura Blasingham to the Inter-Canyon League (ICL) Friends of the Library: “Thank you for your sponsorship

of the Library of the Canyons’ Summer Reading Program! Our participation levels broke records with 208 kids/teens and 65 adults participating. Thanks to you, we were able to offer five professional performers and grand prizes.”

More ICL

History Committee member Scott Breedon entertained and educated Inter-Canyon League (ICL) August meeting attendees with archival images documenting Silverado Elementary’s history, including a “Silverado Miners” T-shirt circa 1974, and a student “good ticket” report featuring, oddly, a bearded cartoon fellow panning for gold. The silver ore cart once displayed outside the school (now, Library of the Canyons) was relocated 10 years ago to Silverado’s Community Center.

President Geoff Sarkissian reported that vigorous planning continues for the annual Oct. 10-11 Silverado Country Fair, with all vendor booths claimed, kids programming organized in a newly dedicated kids (and families) area, and organizers hoping for the delay of planned county bridge repairs to allow Riviera parking.

Sarkissian floated ICL underwriting of targeted SMRPD projects, considering its budget crisis, including purchase of site-specific umbrellas, a new drinking fountain for Modjeska Park, and long-overdue acoustic treatment for Modjeska’s Community Center. Clearly, SMRPD needs support unavailable from the county. This month’s general meeting arrives early: Tuesday, Sept. 1.

“Canyon Life: How We Got Here”

Friends of the Library follows up its wildly successful Leo Hetzel celebration on Saturday, Oct. 3, 2-3:30 p.m. with a multi-media presentation by History Committee members Judy Myers, Scott Breeden and Melody McWilliams introducing the archives and highlighting key moments of canyon history in historic documents, film and song. Refreshments. Free.

Emergence

Licensed certified arborist Chris Burke of RPW Services shared a science update on

the Goldspotted Oak Borer (GSOB), that intrusive pest from southeastern Arizona. Writes Burke, “In its native environment, adult emergence generally occurs from May-September. However, in California’s coastal climate, emergence is believed to begin earlier due to milder, warmer winters. Recent preliminary observations also suggest that, in addition to earlier emergence, the flight period may be extended, with late-emerging beetles potentially active into October and November. If confirmed, this could mean that a single trunk spray application may degrade before the end of the flight season.”

For those betting on increased borer activity, a second spraying might indeed be considered. Rich Pfeiffer, after reminding Fire Watch members to replace their radio batteries, offered his own poignant testimonial: “I moved to these canyons, not for my modest home, but for the mighty oaks.”

Are you experienced?

The 2026 Silverado Summer Concert Series concludes on Saturday, Sept. 19 with homegrown canyon talent, leading with the Jeff Wilson Experience at 6 p.m., followed by Move Like Creatures, alternative, indie, punk, rock --- both back by popular demand.

Upstream

The 42nd annual California Coastal Cleanup Day is Saturday, Sept. 19 (9 a.m. – noon) with volunteers statewide removing trash from beaches and inland waterways to protect people and wildlife, and mitigating plastic pollution, including what we can pull from canyon rivers and streams. Isabell Kerins coordinates as Supervisorial District 3 OC Waste and Recycling commissioner, with Silverado point person Steve Kerrigan coordinating volunteer roadside trash pickup, and Fire Safe Council sponsoring a chipper at the Riviera. Drop off trash you’ve kept too long, or clean up somebody else’s mess, including metal, treated wood, construction and green waste, and even mattresses. Call Isabell to volunteer, (949) 887-1910.

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Publisher/Editor

Anita Bennyhoff

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Editor

Tina Richards

editor@foothillssentry.com

Graphic Designer

Jef Maddock

graphics@foothillssentry.com

Advertising Sales

Andie Mills

advertising@foothillssentry.com

714-926-9299

Office Manager

officemanager@foothillssentry.com

714-532-4406

foothillssentry.com

1107 E. Chapman Ave., #207

Orange, CA 92866

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A circular logo with an orange slice in the center and the words "INDIVISIBLE ORANGE" around the border.

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IndivisibleOrange.org

A cartoon illustration of a diverse group of people sitting around a table, engaged in a community meeting or discussion.

A QR code that likely links to the Indivisible Orange website.

Meet the candidates: OUSD Trustee Area 1



Ivan Kokos

My parents and I immigrated to the United States when I was a toddler, and I'm proud to be the first in my family to graduate from college. My wife and I chose to raise our family here, and our children have attended Orange Unified schools.

As a parent, I see both the dedication of our educators and the challenges facing our schools. Too many students need stronger support in reading, writing, and math. Teachers deserve the resources, respect, and competitive compensation necessary to help

every child thrive.

Strong public schools strengthen our communities, support local employers, protect property values, and help ensure that the next generation can care for and contribute to the place we all call home.

With professional experience managing \$2.5 billion in government loans, I understand responsible budgeting. Orange Unified's projected structural deficits require honest planning, transparency, and careful stewardship—not cuts that undermine classrooms or

educators.

A trustee, I will work collaboratively with teachers, families, staff, and community members to:

- Prioritize student learning and support services;
- Recruit and retain excellent educators;
- Direct resources to classrooms;
- Prepare graduates for college, careers, and civic life;
- Protect the District's long-term financial health.

I'm honored to have earned endorsements from local education and community leaders. I would be grateful for your vote.

Learn more: electivankokos.com



Andrea Yamasaki

Roll up your sleeves! That's what I've done in OUSD. More than 20,000 volunteer hours over nearly two decades, in classrooms, on committees, on boards, alongside parents and teachers who know OUSD best. It's why I'm honored to have the official endorsement of our classroom teachers, along with hundreds of parents, and community leaders.

As your current School Board Member and a parent whose three children spent their entire

K-12 years in OUSD, I've spent decades watching how school board decisions ripple through our school community. That's why I co-founded C.A.R.E., the grassroots coalition that passed Measure S, delivering massive improvements our high school students are enjoying today.

Our District finances are healthy, our budget is balanced, our credit rating is strong, and our reserves are solid enough to invest \$40 million into the infrastructure of

our elementary schools this year, while student test scores climb and graduation rates are among the best in the county.

Keep OUSD stable. Culture wars and special interests don't belong in the Boardroom.

Real service and real results. That's what proven leadership looks like, and it's what I'll keep bringing to the school board.

I'd be honored to have your vote. yamasaki4ousdschools.com

Meet the candidates: OUSD Trustee Area 4



Sara Pelly

I spent my 34-year career in K-12 public education, first as a classroom teacher and later as an elementary school principal. With extensive experience supporting students and teachers, and collaborating closely with parents, my decisions have always been student-focused, ensuring every child receives the strongest educational foundation possible. Building these relationships is exactly why I have the endorsement of all of my fellow Orange Unified school board members, our classroom teachers, and four out of five Villa Park City Council members, the city I have

called home for 23 years.

With nearly four decades of diverse experience, I know where to direct every dollar where it matters most — into the classroom. Taxpayers deserve to know how funds are used, and I am committed to fiscal responsibility and transparency.

During my tenure on the school board, I have worked to move OUSD toward excellence — approving \$40 million to improve our elementary

schools, voting to expand our career technical education programs, and hiring a superintendent committed to parent and community partnership. My vision is simple: a district where every student is empowered to succeed, teachers are supported, and parents are partners.

I would be honored to have your vote.

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Meet the candidates: OUSD Trustee Area 4, continued



Crystal Miles

I believe our schools should have one clear mission: give every student the education and opportunities they need to succeed. That starts with getting back to the basics and making academic achievement our priority. We need a strong focus on reading, writing, and math, while preparing students for college, careers, vocational programs, and life beyond the classroom. Parents are partners in their children's education and deserve a meaningful seat at the table.

Transparency, communication, and accountability should never be optional. I also believe we must protect girls in their locker rooms and sports and preserve the fairness and opportunities generations of women fought to achieve. Our classrooms should be focused on education, not political division. Schools should teach students how to think, not what to think, in an environment where every student feels welcome and respected.

As a parent, business owner, and current public servant, I believe in common sense, fiscal responsibility, transparency, and putting students first. That's why I will donate half of my trustee stipend back to our school sites and offer office hours so parents can have access to curriculum and more. Our teachers deserve support, our parents deserve a voice, and every student deserves an excellent education. Crystal Miles OUSD Area 4 Candidate electcrystalmiles.com

Meet the candidates: OUSD Trustee Area 5



Kristin "Kris" Erickson

Governing Board Member, Orange Unified School District, Trustee Area 5 Orange Unified has been my home for more than 50 years. My husband and I raised our children here, and we are all proud OUSD graduates. For me, this work isn't political, it's always been personal. Long before my 2018 election, I was deeply involved in OUSD: two decades in PTA, mentoring at-risk youth, coaching Mock Trial, serving as Charter Board President for

Santiago Middle School. In 2013, I co-founded C.A.R.E. and helped pass Measure S, securing the high school modernization our students benefit from today. I received the California PTA Golden Oak, their highest award for service to children. My commitment to our community continues through my Board service, my legal practice, and my role with local nonprofits. As Board President in 2025, I helped restore stability and refocus our Board on students,

where it belongs. The results are documented: rising test scores, a healthy district budget, expanded student services, and a \$40 million investment in elementary schools - built on responsible, transparent, student-centered budgeting. I'm officially endorsed by our classroom teachers, my fellow board members, and hundreds of parents and community members. I respectfully ask for your vote. Kris4OUSD.com



Christopher Ahlswede

Christopher "Chip" Ahlswede is running for the Orange Unified School District Board to help refocus the district on what matters most: educating students, keeping them safe, and preparing them for an increasingly challenging world. A lifelong Orange County resident, Chip and his wife raised their three sons in the community, and all three attended local OUSD schools. He has served on School Site Councils at both the elementary and middle school levels and has

been active with the high school football booster club. He is also a local businessman whose work focuses on making housing more affordable and attainable for working families. Chip believes OUSD can do better. He is concerned that district test scores rank near the bottom in Orange County, and that the current Board has too often allowed politics and internal conflict to distract from student achievement. He also believes parents and taxpayers

deserve greater accountability and transparency in how public dollars are managed. He believes we don't need to return to the chaos of the past to focus on a better future. Chip's priorities are straightforward: improve academic performance, restore fiscal accountability, stop the political distractions, keep our campuses safe, and give every OUSD student the best opportunity to succeed. Learn more at Chip4OUSD.com.

Meet the candidates: OUSD Trustee Area 7



Jack Chang

I would be a strong school board candidate because I believe our schools should be focused on providing students with an excellent education while respecting parents, protecting taxpayers, and maintaining accountability. Transparency would be one of my highest priorities. Parents, teachers, and community members deserve clear information about how decisions are made and how taxpayer dollars are spent. I believe parents should have a

meaningful voice in their children's education and that schools should work with families, not around them. I also believe in fiscal responsibility. When revenues fall short, families and businesses have to make difficult choices, and our schools should do the same. I would support identifying unnecessary spending, reducing costs where appropriate, and finding creative solutions to close budget gaps without compromising the quality of education. responsible leadership, sound fiscal stewardship, and genuine partnerships with families. As your trustee, I have worked to strengthen transparency, support stable district leadership, promote respectful and effective governance, and ensure taxpayer dollars are used responsibly. We have made important progress, as shown in our rising test scores, but our work is not finished. The next chapter is about YOU: our young people, our families, our

Finally, I believe we must protect opportunities for girls in school sports and ensure that female athletes have a fair and safe environment in which to compete. My goal would be simple: responsible leadership, strong academics, open communication, and schools that serve students, families, teachers, and the entire community. I would bring an independent voice, common-sense decision-making, and a commitment to putting students first. educators, and our community. It means maintaining safe, welcoming schools; strengthening academic achievement; supporting exceptional teachers and staff; and making decisions with openness, accountability, and integrity. I am proud of what we have accomplished together, and I remain optimistic about what lies ahead. I respectfully ask for your vote so, together, we can keep Orange Unified moving FORWARD.



Dr. Stephen R. D. Glass

As President of the Orange Unified School District Board of Education, my purpose is simple: keep students at the center of every decision and move our schools FORWARD. Orange is home. My wife and I chose Orange Unified schools for our children, and for nearly three decades, I have dedicated my professional life to public education—as a teacher, principal, district administrator, and university professor. I know strong schools are built through excellent teaching,

responsible leadership, sound fiscal stewardship, and genuine partnerships with families. As your trustee, I have worked to strengthen transparency, support stable district leadership, promote respectful and effective governance, and ensure taxpayer dollars are used responsibly. We have made important progress, as shown in our rising test scores, but our work is not finished. The next chapter is about YOU: our young people, our families, our

educators, and our community. It means maintaining safe, welcoming schools; strengthening academic achievement; supporting exceptional teachers and staff; and making decisions with openness, accountability, and integrity. I am proud of what we have accomplished together, and I remain optimistic about what lies ahead. I respectfully ask for your vote so, together, we can keep Orange Unified moving FORWARD.

Orange Elks Lodge #1475 supports Second Harvest Food Bank



Joseph Medina, left, and Chris Michaelis show the new barbecue donated to Second Harvest food Bank.

A call came in from Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County with an unexpected need. As the organization prepared for its annual all-staff appreciation lunch, a routine equipment check revealed that its barbecue grill had reached the end of its life.

Orange Elks member Joseph Medina learned about the situation and reached out to several of the lodge’s kitchen groups for help. The Tuesday Meal Deals and the 3Tue Kitchen Crew stepped up. Together, they located a quality barbecue at a

reasonable price and purchase it in time for the event.

To add a personal touch, Medina partnered with Slap Lab OC, a local print shop, to create a custom decal featuring the Second Harvest logo.

Chris Michaelis and Medina delivered the barbecue two days before the staff lunch, ensuring everything was in place for a successful event.

To learn more about Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County, including opportunities to donate or volunteer, visit feedoc.org.

LETTERS to the EDITOR



Semi conscious

Dear Editor:

I live on Hartman Street in Orange, a few blocks from a piece of land most of my neighbors have never had reason to think twice about: the old office campus at 2411 N. Glassell Street. That is about to change.

My family and I moved to this neighborhood because it is quiet and family friendly. Some of our neighbors have lived here for decades, back when it was rezoned from agricultural land. None of them could have imagined that decades later, that zoning change would lead to a 300,000-sq.-ft warehouse built this close to their homes.

Rexford Industrial wants to tear down the existing offices and build a 24-hour warehouse with 36 loading docks, running trucks in and out, around the clock. The nearest homes along Fletcher Avenue would sit about 54 feet from the building. Fletcher Elementary School, is roughly a quarter mile away.

What worries me most is what the city’s own environmental review actually analyzed, and what it did not. The health and noise modeling behind this project was based on a much smaller version of the warehouse: just five loading docks. But Rexford has since confirmed it plans to build 36 docks. It is a fundamentally different project than the one that was studied. Truck traffic, diesel exhaust and noise all scale with dock count, and none of that has been re-analyzed for what is actually being proposed.

It is also worth noting that Rexford does not plan to operate this facility. It will lease it, and no tenant has been identified. No one can promise how a future operator will run 36 loading docks, but a company does not lease a 36-dock warehouse intending to leave them idle. I have two young kids who love playing outside. I think about the diesel trucks rolling through at all hours. These are not abstract concerns. They are about my kids’ health and my family’s basic quality of life.

I am not opposed to this land being put to good use. A research and development office or life science building on this site could bring high income jobs and meaningful, lasting tax revenue to the city. A warehouse offers none of that. It brings minimal ongoing tax value beyond the initial bump in land value, and that gain is likely to be offset by declining property values for the homes nearby.

I am asking the city to take a hard look, and to require a full Environmental

Impact Report rather than the lighter weight review it is currently getting. The Planning Commission is expected to take this up on Sept. 10. I would urge anyone who lives nearby, or who cares about how this city plans for growth near its schools, to pay attention. And I ask that this letter be incorporated into the official record for this project.

Kevin Neu
Orange

Dear Editor:

A 24-hour trucking warehouse does not belong beside North Orange homes.

I am a District 3 homeowner and parent who has chosen to build a life in this part of Orange. My family values this neighborhood for the very reasons many of our neighbors do: it is residential, welcoming, connected, and the kind of place where we can put down roots and raise a family.

Rexford Industrial Realty, Inc.’s current proposal at 2411 N. Glassell threatens to change that. It is seeking to develop a nearly 300,000-sq.-ft. trucking warehouse immediately beside our residential neighborhood, and roughly a quarter mile from Fletcher Elementary School. The current plan would allow the facility to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

For those of us who live nearby, this is not simply a land-use decision on a planning map. It would become part of our everyday lives.

The proposal is expected to add hundreds of vehicle trips to surrounding streets each day, including more than 160 daily truck trips. That means additional diesel exhaust, truck noise, traffic, headlights and activity at hours when families are trying to sleep, get children ready for school, spend time outside, or simply enjoy their homes.

Our neighborhood is active in all the ways a neighborhood should be. Children play outside. Families take walks. People work in their yards, talk with neighbors and enjoy their front porches. Introducing a large-scale trucking operation with no meaningful overnight break would fundamentally change the environment surrounding our homes.

As a parent, I find that especially difficult to accept.

My family wants to stay here. We want our child to grow up in this neighborhood. We are being forced to consider whether living next to a continuously operating warehouse could affect our child’s health and the quality of life we hoped to have here.



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There is an important distinction between opposing development and opposing development that does not fit its surroundings. Orange can welcome development without asking an existing residential community to shoulder the noise, pollution and traffic created by an industrial operation running at all hours of the day and night.

A project of this scale should be judged not only by what can physically fit on a parcel, but by what is compatible with the people already living around it. I hope Orange residents and city leaders will look beyond the boundaries of the project site and consider the families who will live with its consequences every single day. In its current form, this project is simply the wrong fit for this neighborhood.

Atlacatl Chiguila
Orange

Dear Editor:

I have lived in the neighborhood north of Fletcher St. and east of Glassell for 40 years. Most of the time, prevailing afternoon and evening winds blow in from the ocean, flowing from south to north. We are fortunate to have these reliably fresh breezes cool down the air in this neighborhood.

For decades, various companies operated in the office buildings on the 12.5-acre property at 2411 N. Glassell Street. The owners planted so many pine trees and Egyptian palms around the office buildings and parking lot, that it resembles a park. But something happened recently that threatens to completely change our neighborhood. Rexford Industrial is a real estate developer that bought the land. It

wants to build a huge warehouse and truck terminal on the site. The proposed building will be more than 900 feet long, 45 feet tall, and it will have 36 loading docks where diesel trucks will continuously load and unload cargo all day and night, every day of the year.

The prevailing breezes will carry the diesel exhaust fumes and particulates from the loading docks northward across Fletcher St. and into our residential neighborhood, which includes almost 300 homes. Many more homes west of Glassell and north of Lincoln will also be impacted.

The people who live near the proposed warehouse should have input before such a large project can impact our lives so seriously. Many of our neighbors are asking the Orange City Council to require a full Environmental Impact Report to be written on the changes this huge structure will permanently have on our lives.

- Traffic and diesel exposure. The site design forces 100% of trucks to turn onto Fletcher and Glassell, concentrating hundreds of heavy diesel trucks per day at the Glassell/Fletcher intersection, less than 100 feet from homes, and only a quarter of a mile from Fletcher Elementary School.

- Air quality and health. Continuous diesel idling at the 36 loading docks and acceleration adjacent to residences will cause fumes and particulates from the diesel trucks to blow northward toward the houses located between Fletcher and Lincoln Ave. and further north. The unavoidable fumes will be breathed in by the people living in hundreds of houses north of Fletcher.

- Noise and 24/7 operations. The project requests no operational curfew, despite the fact that a nearby Rexford facility on Struck Ave./American Way

was conditioned with a 10 p.m. curfew. For these reasons, I hope the City of Orange will require a full Environmental Impact Report so that we have a clear picture of what the proposed warehouse will do to our nearby residential neighborhoods.

David Stevens
Orange

Dear Editor:

I'd like to share with you why neighbors are vehemently opposed to Rexford Industrial Realty Inc.'s trucking warehouse project.

I am a District 3 homeowner, live 80 feet from the site, and am personally invested and incredibly concerned about Rexford's proposal. I have a one-year-old daughter; my husband and I had planned to raise our family in our neighborhood, but this project is causing us to reconsider.

As I understand, Rexford has proposed to demolish the existing office park on the corner of Glassell and Fletcher and build a nearly 300,000-sq.-ft. warehouse with 36 trucking bays to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

My neighbors and I strongly oppose this project for many reasons:

The increased trucking activity would have a monumental impact on the North Orange community. The emissions these trucks spew, and their weight on our city roads, will cause innumerable harm. My neighbors and the children attending Fletcher Elementary will suffer from the worsened air quality. The increased trucking traffic will also make our roads and communities less safe and force us to endure noise and sleep disruption.

About 500 children attend Fletcher

Elementary School, just a quarter mile away from the project. Parents navigating to school will face countless large trucks driving through the school corridor. Fletcher may be our child's future elementary school, and we had planned to walk there each day. This future seems less desirable as we learn how many trucks will be coming in and out of the warehouse, idling and emitting toxic fumes.

Ultimately, this trucking warehouse does not belong next to a residential neighborhood. We will not accept concessions or conditions to this project. There is no precedent in the City of Orange that places trucking warehouses next to established and thriving residential neighborhoods. The city should not make our neighborhood the example of irresponsible development that will cause community members to suffer.

Rachel Rolnicki
Orange

District due diligence

Dear Editor:

An Orange Unified candidate's claim that enrollment decline in OUSD is due to "families leaving" paints a misleading picture. As an engineer, I went looking for the facts by using public data. My conclusion is that the enrollment decline we are seeing is largely driven by fewer births in district ZIP codes, not a mass exodus of students.

Birth records from the California Department of Public Health show about 700 fewer births in OUSD, when comparing 2007 (class of 2025) and 2020 (last year's kindergartners), about a 25% decline. Enrollment data from the California Department of Education

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show total OUSD enrollment declined about 600 students last year when accounting for the state's expansion of TK. This decline is consistent with, and slightly smaller than, the birth-rate shortfall between the two classes.

By this comparison, OUSD has not experienced a district-wide flight; in fact, transfers and in-migration have helped offset smaller birth cohorts and, if anything, fewer families appear to be leaving than historical averages. Digging further into the data shows that once a student attends school in OUSD, they rarely leave. As an example, last year's 9th graders are only two less students than when they were first graders eight years ago.

This is not to dismiss the concerns of families who never enroll or who transfer out of the district during a student's educational career. The district should continue to reach out to those parents, learn from their feedback, and address any avoidable issues. But treating declining enrollment as evidence of district failure or a crisis of defections risks misdirecting attention and resources.

OUSD would be better served by planning for a smaller student population: right-sizing facilities, focusing on classroom quality, and investing in the families who choose to stay. Luckily for us, the current board and Superintendent Rachel Monárrez seem to be on the right track to thoughtfully design a sustainable, thriving district with fewer children, rather than reacting with rapid school closures. That is how we preserve strong neighborhood schools through this demographic transition.

David Imboden
Orange

Dear Editor:

When my son entered kindergarten, Orange Unified was beginning a tumultuous period. He has now started fourth grade, and for the first time in his education, I feel genuinely hopeful about our district's direction.

Our current Board of Education brings a valuable range of experience and skills, and its hiring of Superintendent Dr. Rachel Monárrez has brought greater stability, direction and opportunity for parental input.

Together, they are addressing urgent needs, funding long-overdue improvements, while also planning thoughtfully for the future.

As an involved parent, I had the opportunity, in May, to participate in a workshop that helped shape OUSD's Strategic Roadmap and Graduate Profile.

We were asked to consider the academic knowledge, skills, experiences and personal qualities we want our children to possess when they graduate. At the July board meeting, I was encouraged to hear that our input had not simply disappeared into a binder. Feedback from students, families, educators, staff and community members is being used to shape the long-term vision and a three-year plan with measurable goals.

It feels great to see parent and community input integrated directly into the district's plan for the future – my child's future.

After years of instability, OUSD is finally righting the ship. This is the steady, collaborative, and student-focused leadership our community deserves and progress we should preserve.

Kimberly Buchan
OUSD parent

Dear Editor:

As the Orange Unified School District school board election approaches, voters deserve a campaign grounded in facts, transparency and respect for our schools, students, families and educators.

Recent campaign materials have raised serious questions about statements being made about OUSD, including false claims concerning student achievement, district finances, enrollment and state requirements affecting our schools. School districts are complicated organizations, and issues such as declining enrollment, school funding, academic performance, and state mandates cannot be reduced to political talking points.

The same standard should apply to everyone running for office. Candidates should be transparent about their professional backgrounds and affiliations. Chip Ahlswede designates himself as a "businessman," but his real title is "Policy & Political Strategist" for the Apartment Association of Orange County. He writes in his ballot statement about affordable housing, but what he advocates for is fewer guardrails that protect communities from rampant development.

Ivan Kokos says he's an "active PTA dad," (which in itself is a no-no -- PTA is not to be used in politics), yet active PTA parents had no idea who he was until a few months ago. Kokos was (allegedly) recruited by Curt Pringle – a developer turned political operative, former mayor with a sketchy past. He is also tight with the Anaheim Chamber (you know the one that got caught up in the federally investigated bribery scandal) and has the stink of those people all over his campaign.

Crystal Miles, fresh off a failed 2024 State Senate run and currently a sitting member of Villa Park City Council, was not endorsed by a single fellow city council member. She is endorsed by, and closely associated with, Madison Miner, who was recalled from the OUSD board just two years ago for her dishonesty and damage done to the district. Crystal touts a need for transparency, then neglects to mention that donations to her campaign go to the address of the Gould Group, a real estate developer in Newport Beach interested in multifamily investment properties – an entity that I am sure has a lot of interest in OUSD properties. Like Chip Ahlswede above, many of her donations are from developers.

Most importantly, our community should reject a campaign environment in which unverified accusations or misleading claims replace substantive discussion about how to improve our schools. We learned our lesson with the now-recalled Madison Miner. Don't listen to those who hide who they actually are and tell lies about our district in order to gain political power.

Michelle Weisenberg
Orange

The Orange Art Association will feature artist Jeff Horn at its Monday, Sept. 14 meeting. Horn will demonstrate landscape and oil techniques. The meeting starts at 7 p.m. at the Community of Christ Church, 395 S. Tustin St. For information, call Pat at (714) 538-8069.

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The Orange Emblem Club #418 welcomed new member Mary Kendrick at its Aug. 4 business meeting. From left, Vince Delgado, Vicki and Jay Chaisson, Kim Raya, Jan Genelle, Laurie Padilla, new initiate Mary Kendrick, Carole Walters, Terry Castellon, Kim Smith, Claudia Castillo, Barbara Keeler, Rebecca Schiess, Karen Kremer, Deann Collins, and Meri Wagner. Up front is Amelia Castro, photographer.



Members of the Woman's Club of Orange Garden Section, along with club members, spouses, grandsons, family members, friends, Assisteens Auxiliary members of the Assistance League of Orange and their parents/guardians, all came together to clean up the planters at Hart Park. The group worked on all three planter levels and added mulch to the lower level with the roses. The club's Garden Section Rosarians regularly maintain the roses in Hart Park and the Old Towne Plaza.

OPA 55th Annual BBQ is Sept. 19

Dust off your boots and come on down Saturday, Sept. 19 for Orange Park Acres' 55th Annual Fall BBQ and Dance. OPA's signature fundraiser will be held at the Sandford's home with BBQ and dancing to the Mowdy Band under the stars. The evening guarantees a fun time for all, complete with silent and live auctions and raffle items. Gates open at 5:30 p.m. All proceeds benefit the Orange Park Acres community,

dedicated to preserving its rural equestrian lifestyle, animal keeping opportunities, and 25-mile public multiuse trail system connecting to OC Regional Parks. This 98-year-old community is self sustaining because of your support. Last year was a sell out! Tickets are not sold at the door. Online: orangeparkacres.org. To donate an auction item or volunteer, contact Mary Nori at (949) 244-9080.



The Orange Elks billiards group plays pool while supporting the Lodge's philanthropic programs. Committee Chairman Mike Morales organizes three tournaments each month, and hosts an Annual Charity Pool Tournament. One of the tournaments each month is a ladies-only event that raises money for the Purple Pig, supporting children with disabilities, and the Elks' veterans group.

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The Orange Public Library Foundation offers estate planning workshop

The Orange Public Library Foundation will present "It's Your Estate!" a free, six-week program offering practical guidance on estate planning, legal considerations and financial legacy strategy.

All sessions take place on Tuesdays, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. in the community room at the Main Library, 407 E. Chapman. Space is limited. Please reserve your spot by completing the registration form at oplfoundation.org.

September 15:	Estate Planning Fundamentals
September 22:	Health Care & Power of Attorney
September 29:	Guide to Wills & Trusts
October 6:	Strong Retirement Asset Planning
October 13:	Tax Advantages for Philanthropy
October 20:	Navigating Estate Administration



BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS
St. Francis Day

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2026

Mass every Sunday • 9:30 AM
Blessing of the Animals • Sunday, October 4 • 11:00 AM

Small Chapel on the campus of Church of the Foothills
19211 Dodge Avenue at Newport Boulevard • North Tustin, CA 92705

holyanimalsOC.com
All are welcome.

Independent Catholic worship where all are welcome to receive sacraments

Breaking down the walls of segregation in Orange County

By Guy Ball

Historian Dr. David-James Gonzales will discuss his book, "Breaking Down the Walls of Segregation: Mexican American Grassroots Politics and Civil Rights in Orange County, California," at the next Orange County Historical Society meeting on Sept. 10.

Gonzales tells the story of how ethnic Mexicans built the unprecedented movement that led to the Mendez, et al. v. Westminster School District, et al. (1946) decision. Beginning in the 1880s, the story details the social and economic history of Orange County, explaining unrivaled control over the regional economy and local politics.

Industry-established walls of segregation managed ethnic Mexican labor. By the early 1930s, ethnic Mexicans were segregated into over 50 underserved communities, known as colonias and barrios, and 15 Mexican schools throughout the county. Local Mexicans mobilized against segregation starting in the late 1920s.

During the 1930s and 1940s, grassroots organizations proliferated throughout the county, intent on engaging in civic affairs and ending segregation. Their efforts led to the Mendez decision, the first school desegregation case won and upheld by the federal courts.

These efforts continued into the 1950s and 1960s, transforming Southern California.

David-James Gonzales is Associate Professor of History at Brigham Young University and a community-engaged public scholar who has worked with the UCI Irvine History Project and the Historic Origins Project investigating Economic Inequality in Orange County (HOPE-OC), sponsored by the Irvine Foundation.

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

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

TECH CLINIC

TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP

DATE: September 26th, 2026

TIME: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

LOCATION: Villa Park City Hall

villaparkrotaryclub@gmail.com
rcvpyouth@gmail.com
<https://www.facebook.com/RotaryClubOfVillaPark/>
<https://www.instagram.com/rotaryvillapark/>

or sign up in person at Villa Park City Hall or call Blanca at 714-998-1500



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Tustin Sunset Market ends for the summer

By Guy Ball

The Tustin Sunset Market ends its 2026 season in Old Town Tustin on Thursday, Sept. 20. The summer event takes place from 5 to 8:30 p.m. The event offers a unique shopping experience, food trucks, a farmers market and live entertainment, all set on a pedestrian-only street in the center of Tustin.

El Camino Real closes from 2nd Street to Main, allowing guests a peaceful stroll through one of Tustin's historic districts. The street fair also features commercial and craft vendors, community organizations, a beer and wine garden, and live music. The band for closing night is Living Color & the Remakes, playing top 40's classic/modern/pop music.

A holiday tradition opens in Old Towne Orange



Assistance League of Orange crafters, called Noëls, work throughout the year to create unique décor and items for Boutique Noël.

Before the first Christmas lights appear and the holiday shopping rush begins, something magical is taking shape in Old Towne Orange.

Inside the century-old Assistance League of Orange chapter house, volunteers have spent months transforming ordinary materials into extraordinary holiday treasures. Wreaths are assembled by hand, vintage finds are reimagined into festive décor, and seasonal gifts take shape one creative idea at a time. The result is Boutique Noël, an Orange tradition that returns for its 32nd year, Oct. 7-10.

Each autumn, the historic home at 124 South Orange Street is transformed into a holiday boutique, welcoming shoppers from throughout Orange County who are looking for something more meaningful than mass-produced merchandise. Here, every display tells a story of creativity, craftsmanship, and community service.

Visitors will discover one-of-a-kind seasonal decorations and gifts handcrafted by members of Assistance League of Orange, the Orange Blossoms Auxiliary, and the Assisteens Auxiliary. The collection celebrates the entire holiday season, featuring Halloween and autumn décor

alongside Christmas ornaments, wreaths, centerpieces, home accents, entertaining pieces, and gifts.

A collection of specialty vendors and local artisans complements the handcrafted creations throughout the boutique. What has made Boutique Noël a community favorite for more than three decades, however, is that every purchase has a purpose.

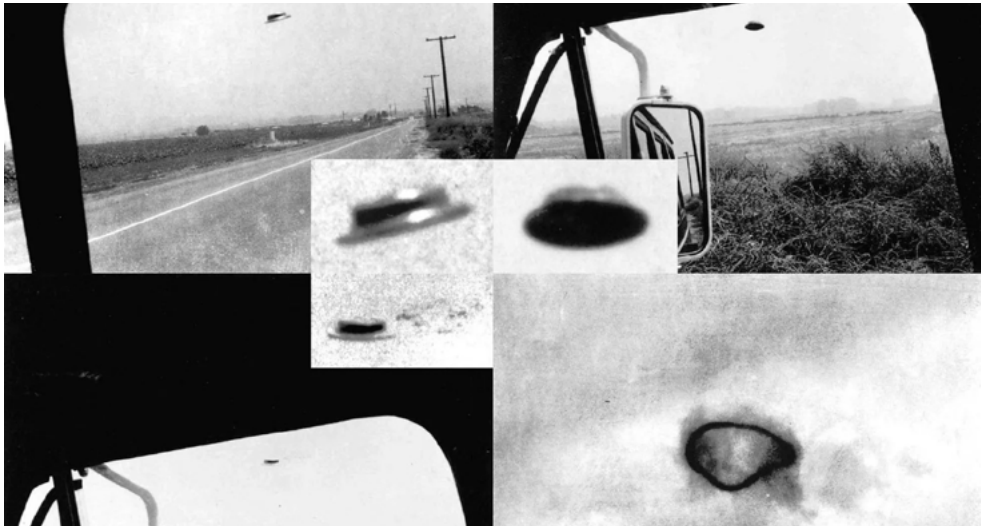
The event is the signature holiday fundraiser for Assistance League of Orange, a nonprofit, volunteer-powered organization that has been serving the community for generations. Net proceeds from Boutique Noël support local philanthropic programs that provide clothing, educational assistance, scholarships, and other essential services for children and families throughout the Orange community.

For many families, a visit to Boutique Noël has become an annual tradition—a chance to stroll through charming Old Towne Orange, discover beautifully handcrafted gifts, and experience the warmth of neighbors helping neighbors. It is a reminder that the spirit of the holidays begins not with the gifts themselves, but with the generosity behind them.

Boutique Noël 2026

Wednesday, October 7: 2:30–7:00 p.m.
Thursday & Friday, October 8 & 9: 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.
Saturday, October 10: 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
Location: Assistance League of Orange,
124 South Orange Street, Old Towne Orange.
For additional information, visit assistanceleague.org/orange.

Explore the mysteries of UFO sightings



By Guy Ball

Explore the mysteries overhead with stories, historical research, and fascinating accounts reported right here in Orange County at The Night at The Museum meeting, Friday, Sept. 25.

Local investigator Jim Cooper describes himself as “UFO curious.” His scientific training makes him careful about claims that outrun the evidence, but he’s genuinely interested in people reporting things in the sky that they can not readily explain—particularly when those reports come from such trained observers as pilots, military personnel and police.

Instances like in 1965, when California highway engineer Rex Heflin saw disk-shaped craft as he was traveling near the blimp hangars in Tustin. Heflin took a variety of photos to document his viewing.

Cooper will cover the history of UFO sightings in the Orange

County area, particularly those that cannot easily be dismissed as ball lightning, swamp gas, or the planet Venus, and those witnessed by expert observers. He will cover a selection of sightings in the Orange County area, and focus on the Heflin event.

Besides researching unexplained aerial phenomenon, Cooper teaches at UC San Diego and UC Santa Cruz, coaches the Orange County Giants, the local Australian football club played by people who regard helmets, sleeves and clearly defined positions as unnecessary complications.

This Night at the Museum is 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, and \$10 if you come dressed as a space alien.

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



ADULT PROGRAM

CANYON LIFE:
HOW WE GOT HERE

Saturday, October 3 from 2:00-3:30 PM

Celebrate the canyons with a multi-media adventure presented by the Inter-Canyon League History Committee. Learn about canyon people and places or discover yourself and neighbors in our Canyon Archives collection, a community treasure. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

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Villa Park Women’s League commences new program year



VP Women’s League officers are, from left, rear, Membership Chair Johanna Kwan; Secretary Angela Polk; Parliamentarian Eva Wyszkowski; Vice President Pam Dunn; Programs Chair Bridgett Baril; front, from left, are Community Support Chair Anita Kantak; President Cecile Wight; Treasurer Alina McFarlane.

Villa Park Women’s League welcomes its 2026–2027 Executive Board for its 57th organizational year. The League year commences with a general meeting to be held at a member’s Villa Park residence on Thursday, Sept. 17, beginning at 6 p.m.

An Informative presentation

by Orange County Development and Communications Manager, Rick Ponce, will be featured. For more information on their shelters and supportive service programs, visit HIS-OC.org. Membership in the Villa Park Women’s League is open to all female city residents; for information, see vpwl.org.



The Woman’s Club of Orange won Best Long-standing Community Organization in the Orange Chamber of Commerce’s citywide “Best Of” competition. Seen here, President Kathleen Stevens accepts the award alongside the Duke of Orange Cameron Pate and Miss Orange Kalista Brown.

WCO fundraises and gives back

The Lazy Dog Restaurant will donate 15% of your food and beverage bill to the Woman’s Club, if you mention the organization to your server. The donation opportunity runs all day from Sept. 28 to Oct. 1. The Lazy Dog is located at 1623 W. Katella.

The club will host a vintage jewelry sale at its Holiday Boutique, Saturday, Oct. 10., at the clubhouse, 124 Center St. Over the summer, member Rebecca Martinez delivered a collection of snacks to the Youth Centers of Orange to support its seasonal programs.



Samantha Arroyo, 20, was crowned Miss Tustin 2027, on Aug. 22 at Beckman High School Performing Arts Center. A Tustin High School graduate, and current student at Irvine Valley College, Arroyo was awarded \$4,100 in scholarships. Melody Chavez, 21, a Foothill High graduate now pursuing a nursing career, was named 1st runner-up; Veronica Chapman, 26, a Tustin High grad and student at Cal State University, Fullerton was named 2nd runner-up. A total of \$11,000 in scholarships was awarded by the Miss Tustin Scholarship Association.

REAL ESTATE

with David Silva





MARKET SNAPSHOT

ORANGE, CA
JULY 2026
Single Family



\$1.35M

Avg. Sales Price

↓ 6%



\$1.58M

Avg. List Price

– 0%



60

No. of Prop. Sold

↑ 15%



40

Avg. Days on Market

– 0%



\$700

Avg. Sales Price per Sqft.

↑ 1%

DAVID SILVA

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Based on data from Orange County (CRMLS) for property types: single family in the price range \$0 - \$999,999,999 for the period April 2026 - July 2026. July 2026 stats are compared to previous 3 months' average. Source data is deemed reliable but not guaranteed.



MARKET SNAPSHOT

VILLA PARK, CA
JULY 2026
Single Family



\$2.72M

Avg. Sales Price

↓ 5%



\$3.38M

Avg. List Price

↑ 1%



5

No. of Prop. Sold

↑ 15%



31

Avg. Days on Market

↓ 46%



\$752

Avg. Sales Price per Sqft.

↑ 5%

DAVID SILVA

M: 714-227-3822 | CalRE#: 01327642

Based on data from Orange County (CRMLS) for property types: single family in the price range \$0 - \$999,999,999 for the period April 2026 - July 2026. July 2026 stats are compared to previous 3 months' average. Source data is deemed reliable but not guaranteed.



MARKET SNAPSHOT

TUSTIN, CA
JULY 2026
Single Family



\$1.38M

Avg. Sales Price

↓ 18%



\$1.91M

Avg. List Price

↓ 2%



19

No. of Prop. Sold

↓ 19%



45

Avg. Days on Market

↓ 26%



\$708

Avg. Sales Price per Sqft.

– 0%

DAVID SILVA

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Based on data from Orange County (CRMLS) for property types: single family in the price range \$0 - \$999,999,999 for the period April 2026 - July 2026. July 2026 stats are compared to previous 3 months' average. Source data is deemed reliable but not guaranteed.



No election needed in Villa Park

As of the close of the nomination period on Aug. 7, only three candidates had filed for the three open positions on the Villa Park City Council. At a special Villa Park City Council meeting on Aug. 19, the council passed a resolution to consider the three nominated

and qualified candidates, Nicol Jones, Jordan Wu and Chad Zimmerman, appointed, as if they were duly elected. They will each serve a four-year term. The city will save approximately \$15,000 by not holding the election.