

FOOTHILLS SENTRY

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Neighbors from Orange and Villa Park combine forces to ride in the OPA 4th of July Parade. See photos, page 11.

RSCCD Board attempts to shoot the messenger, avoids the real issue

By Barry Resnick

Nearly two years ago, Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD) Trustee Phil Yarbrough began asking questions about \$8 million held in an account controlled by the district's insurance provider, the Alliance of Schools for Cooperative Insurance Programs (ASCIP). Rather than receiving answers, he was removed from the district's Audit Committee.

Undeterred, Yarbrough continued pressing for a forensic audit to determine who knew about the account and why it had been kept outside the district's control. In late 2024, the Board of Trustees voted to hire the Texas-based forensic accounting firm Weaver Assurance to conduct the investigation.

In March 2025, Weaver released its audit report, concluding that the funds had

been held outside the district's control both before and during the tenure of current RSCCD Chancellor Marvin Martinez.

Don't look now

Rather than acting on the audit's findings and investigating those identified as having knowledge of the account, including Chancellor Martinez, then-Board President Daisy Tong hired an outside law firm to audit the audit. That effort produced no meaningful action.

Yarbrough continued calling for accountability and was elected board president in December 2025. Three months later, he publicly called for Chancellor Martinez's dismissal, arguing that Martinez had failed to inform the Board of Trustees about the existence of the \$8 million fund.

See "Real issue" continued on page 4

Orange Council will ask voters to consider charter city status

By Tina Richards

Having already placed two measures for voters to decide on the November ballot, the Orange City Council opted to go for number three at its July 14 meeting. The decision was made in haste because July 17 was the Registrar of Voters deadline to consolidate city measures with the general election.

The first two measures the council placed on the ballot dealt with taxes. The first, an increase in the city's Temporary Occupancy tax (TOT); the second, a one percent sales tax. The third measure voters will be asked to consider is whether or not Orange should become a charter city.

Orange is currently a general law city, as are most California municipalities. General law cities follow state defined regulations; charter cities operate under a self-defined "constitution" that gives local officials more power over "municipal affairs." That is, governing decisions may be made by a city council or mayor and enacted by ordinance. While "municipal affairs" is loosely defined, it generally includes elections, term limits, zoning, procurement, and local taxation, as long as there is no conflict with the state constitution. The state maintains jurisdiction over housing, traffic, school systems, trade or professional licensing

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Lawsuit claims City of Orange misused fees collected for street sweeping and overcharged some residents.

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Past OUSD parent calls out the politics behind candidates challenging incumbent board trustees in November.

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Apparently more than the Orange council bargained for when it agendized renaming the Main Library after a former mayor.

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TWO FOR THE SHOW

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DIG DEEP

Serrano Water District drills new well to replace a 100-year-old workhorse that is slowing down.

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New Serrano Water District General Manager Andrew Wiesner, left, gets tips on Stetsons (and water) from retiring General Manager Jerry Vilander. See story, page 8.

Lawsuit filed challenging Orange's use of street sweeping funds

A lawsuit, filed by an Orange resident, July 6, alleges the City of Orange is violating Prop. 218 by spending fees levied for street sweeping on expenses not related to that city service.

John Nelson, acting on behalf of the Committee for a Transparent City of Orange (CTCO), alleges that from 2003 to 2017, the city collected fees from residents for street sweeping that exceeded the actual costs, and the overage was illegally diverted to pay for other expenses. The suit also claims that street sweeping fees are charged to residents who live in private tracts and do not benefit from that service.

Nelson, who used to work for the city, says that when Orange was doing its own street sweeping, from 2003 to 2013, it charged residents some \$1.2 million annually, while it cost \$800,000 per year. At that time, the street sweeping fee appeared as a separate item on the ratepayer's water bill.

The city's waste hauler, CR&R, took over street sweeping in 2013. Orange continued to collect the street sweeping fee via water bills and paid CR&R from that fund until 2018. Fees collected during that time exceeded payments to CR&R. The fund balance continued to grow.

As of Jan. 1, 2020, CR&R began

billing customers a combined rate for waste collection and street sweeping. The city was no longer obligated to pay CR&R for sweeping service and the million-dollars-plus remaining in that account is considered orphaned funds.

The city has, the lawsuit alleges, used those orphaned funds to pay pension and bond debts. Nelson claims that if the city instead used that money for street sweeping, ratepayers would get a break from that fee for 10 years.

A secondary challenge in the lawsuit is that street sweeping fees buried in the total waste collection cost are charged to everyone, including residents who do not benefit from the service. The lawsuit is asking the city to stop spending street sweeping funds on other obligations; and terminate CR&R's ability to charge street sweeping fees to customers in private tracts.

A similar legal challenge filed by Nelson alleging "hidden taxes" were being collected on utility bills was "settled" last May. The city agreed to remove a tree maintenance fee from residents' water bills and redefined fees collected by CR&R for asphalt repair to street use.

See Guest Commentary, page 4 for details on that legal action.

Court finds that OC Board of Education member failed to report millions of dollars of income

Orange County Superior Court Judge H. Shaina Colover issued a Proposed Statement of Decision July 15, 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 \$81,800 in civil penalties, plus attorneys' fees and costs, which could run in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The order came in an action brought by Hon. Lynne Riddle, a retired United States bankruptcy judge, seeking compliance with the law requiring elected officials to disclose their economic interests.

From the time of Barke's election in 2018 to the filing of the lawsuit in 2023, Barke reported only \$99 of income, investments, business positions and gifts. Judge Colover found that Barke "reported nominal income figures while substantial reportable financial interests and community-property-related assets of over a million dollars per year existed."

elected official."

At trial on the matter, Barke claimed that she relied on the advice of her now-ex-husband, Dr. Jeffrey Barke. The Court stated that Mrs. Barke's "purported reliance on the alleged advice of her now-ex-husband was objectively unreasonable. Dr. Barke's supposed statement—that Defendant Barke need only disclose her economic interests if they conflict with the OCBE—is not only wrong, it is incomprehensible that anyone with defendant's sophistication would rely on such a statement."

The plaintiff, Judge Riddle, issued the following statement regarding the decision:

Financial interest disclosures are critical to the public. When elected officials flout their disclosure obligations like this, it undermines public's right to honest and ethical government. The court's decision vindicates the public's right to know what their elected officials are doing. This ruling, and the substantial penalties awarded, should send a clear message to every elected official in the county that they cannot shirk their responsibilities to disclose their economic interests.

Barke is an executive with the California Policy Center, a think tank focused on extreme education policies, muting the voice of local teachers' associations and weakening public schools in favor of advocating charter schools.

Barke holds herself out as someone who "advises and educates local elected officials on government transparency."

Public interest

The court also stated that "the undisclosed interest and income were of a magnitude that would have been plainly material to members of the public evaluating potential conflicts of interest and transparency obligations of an

Villa Park to bury a time capsule

Celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the United States Declaration of Independence by contributing to Villa Park's community time capsule.

Villa Park is seeking captivating photos, personal items, and heartfelt messages from residents, businesses, and organizations to capture the spirit of our time.



This unique capsule will be buried at the Villa Park Knowles during a public dedication event at the end of the year. It will remain sealed until its grand unveiling in 2076 for the 300th Anniversary celebrations.

If you have something meaningful that embodies the world of today and deserves to be remembered by future generations, go to the city website villapark.org, or email vptimecapsule@villapark.org.

The time capsule committee will meet with residents on August 8, between 1 and 3 p.m. to view their contributions. Share your stories, memories, and reasons why your contribution is a piece of history worth preserving.



"Charter city"
continued from page 1

and open and public meetings. There are 108 charter cities in California, 10 in Orange County.

Local motion

Charter city supporters claim that they provide more local control, streamline regulations and attract investment. Opponents argue that they concentrate power within a group of elected officials, limit accountability, public discourse, and are more vulnerable to lawsuits.

The Orange charter city discussion was introduced by Councilmember Kathy Tavoularis earlier this year. She subsequently drafted a "constitution" for council consideration. That draft was slimmed down and presented to the public in hearings on May 12 and June 23. Neither hearing was well attended, with only a handful of residents commenting on the topic.

The municipal affairs addressed in the proposed charter included term limits, district elections, procurement, fiscal responsibility and open space preservation. With the registrar's deadline looming, the council was pressed to finalize the charter language to present to voters in November. If, that is, the council agreed that it should be placed on the ballot at all.

More council control

Orange has been electing its city council members by district since 2020. Districts were established to settle a lawsuit alleging that citywide elections silenced the voice of Hispanics. While it is not clear whether by-district voting could legally be abolished, the council opted to include the possibility that it could be eliminated. The language in the approved charter states that a future council could determine the method of election by ordinance, subject to applicable state and federal law.

The draft charter allowed that council members could serve for three four-year terms, after which time they could not run again. The mayor could serve

two four-year terms and no more. Several council members objected to the longer terms.

Ana Gutierrez noted that the existing terms limits are good the way they are. Arianna Barrios advised that three four-year terms are too long, that council turnover is desirable. They were countered by Tavoularis and Jon Dumitru, who asserted that the three terms were a trade-off for the life-time ban.

A discussion of the merits of two vs. three four-year terms continued until Mayor Dan Slater motioned to change the language in the charter to reflect two four-year terms, not three. Tavoularis made a substitute motion to retain the three-four year terms. The substitute motion was voted on first. In a surprise action, the three four-year term option passed with a 4-3 vote. Slater had voted yes along with Tavoularis, Dumitru and Bilodeau. "Uh-oh," he said. "I accidentally voted yes, that should have been a no. Can I change my vote?" He could not.

A call for financial stability

Councilman John Gyllenhammer has long been hammering on the need for a structurally balanced budget, wherein recurring operating revenues are sufficient to fund recurring operating expenditures. During previous council discussions of the charter, he stressed the importance of financial sustainability, which does not include drawing from reserves or selling assets. The draft charter said just that. It also, however, allowed future councils to override those restrictions "in an emergency."

Denis Bilodeau objected to the need to declare an emergency before digging into reserves. "I don't want to handcuff future councils," he explained. "I don't want to declare an emergency every year to balance the budget to maintain high levels of police and fire service."

Strive for, not shall do

Jon Dumitru suggested that using the word "shall" in reference to the council maintaining a balanced budget was overly demanding, and that

it should be replaced as "strive to."

In that case, Gyllenhammer advised, you might as well take out all of the financial commitments. "Having a structurally balanced budget is not uncommon, and we already have that noted in the city's mission statement." The council opted to make those changes, but retain the rest of the financial language in a 5-2 vote. Gyllenhammer and Barrios voted no.

Ballot bound

With details of the proposed charter defined, the council was positioned to decide whether or not to place it on the November ballot.

"Why does this have to go on the ballot now?" Ana Gutierrez asked. "We have other pressing issues. The only local control you get from this is procurement [locally funded projects exempt from prevailing wages] and term limits, which are self-serving. This is not the right time."

Barrios agreed that the charter's term limits are a show-stopper for her. "This is not a bad idea overall," she said, but she could not go along with three four-year terms for council members.

Tavoularis disputed Gutierrez's description of longer term limits as self-serving.

"I'm not doing this for myself," she said. "I'm doing it for the city. It's a tool we all can use."

We should put it on the ballot and then respect what voters say."

Get it right

Gyllenhammer reminded his colleagues that once a charter is approved by voters, the only way to change it is to go back to voters. He noted that other city charters, unlike this one, are fully comprehensive and establish specifics on how they want to govern themselves.

"My fear," he said, "is that if we pass this tonight, we're missing depth and detail. We will end up in a perpetual adjusting mode. This needs to be more developed. We don't have a product to bring forward."

"Going back to the voters is the point," Tavoularis countered. "That's the way it is supposed to be. What's not in the charter falls back to ordinances."

The vote was 4-3, with Tavoularis, Bilodeau, Dumitru and Slater voting yes; Barrios, Gutierrez and Gyllenhammer opposed.

**WCO to hold
Craft Fair**

Woman's Cub of Orange will hold a Holiday Boutique Craft Fair on Sat., Oct. 10 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 121 S. Center. The event, featuring Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas items, is open to the public, with free admission, a sweet shop and lunch available for purchase.

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Guest Commentaries

Choosing OUSD leadership is personal, not political

By Darshan Smaaladen

Orange Unified has been through a lot these past few years, and it's looking like we're going to have to brace ourselves for another storm.

After purging the Orange Unified Board of Trustees of members who had more interest in personal agendas and pet projects with the 2024 recall, it felt like calm weather was here. OUSD lost many talented employees during that time of chaos and, as with any institution, it takes much longer to build something than to blow it up. OUSD is slowly rebuilding, better than before, with an upwards trajectory in test scores, parent involvement, and communication. These were the "blue skies" our community needed. A strong financial

position promised to shelter OUSD from any financial storms. Smooth sailing ahead?

Enter Orange United who, according to its website, is funded by the Community Action Network, the Political Action Committee (PAC) for the Newport Beach-based Lincoln Club. Sheltered by the secrecy of cascading PACs and nonprofit filings, Orange United lacks the normal transparency of a political campaign. But campaign is all it does. Ironically, a campaign focus is transparency (that already exists on the OUSD Board). Its website and social media don't even mention students, just the candidates the PAC is backing, with the help of its paid full-time political organizer from south county, the son of a Lincoln Club member.

These Orange United candidates campaign on "keeping politics out of schools," but they are the ones backed by political organizations with political agendas. They are the ones with deep and troubling connections to developers and apartment owners and funded by wealthy Newport donors.

Many remember the controversy surrounding the Peralta property, when the recalled board majority approved transferring control of the site to a non-OUSD school affiliated with recalled trustee Madison Miner. For many in the community, that experience serves as a reminder of what can happen when local priorities are overshadowed by outside interests. OUSD cannot afford to repeat those mistakes.

While they say "it's not

personal, it's politics," that just doesn't ring true to the parents, families and trustees who have dedicated thousands of hours of volunteer time, to not only make OUSD schools better for their own children, but also the ones that follow. It is personal, it's our kids and our community. It's a legacy of work that goes back decades.

Do not let millionaires from Newport Beach and organizers from South County put OUR schools back in chaos. Please listen to those who are active in the schools, have volunteered for decades, and our teachers in the classrooms. OUSD Proud.

Darshan Smaaladen, an Orange resident and former OUSD parent, was co-chair of the successful OUSD recall effort in 2024.

The City of Orange tax you didn't vote on

By John Nelson

Residential trash bills have increased nearly 30% since 2024, while business rates have increased nearly 96% in the last two years. Recent headlines highlight the City of Orange's financial woes and the city council's bid to increase sales tax by 1%. While you were distracted, on June 9, the council passed another tax and buried it on your trash bill.

In 2024, the city adopted a new trash contract. Buried in it was a "fee" whereby CR&R was to pay the city an initial \$6 million, then \$2.1 million every year for the next 15 years for street repair. These fees were passed along to ratepayers, essentially a \$41-plus million tax that would potentially last until 2039. Despite being a blatant violation of California Vehicle Code Section 9400.8, the city performed an end-run around state laws designed to protect residents from taxation without representation. Subsequently, my organization, Committee for a Transparent City of Orange

(CTCO) sued the city to shut down this naked cash grab.

When our complaint was filed with the court, the city quickly agreed that it had no defense and readily agreed to remove this "fee." Additionally, the city agreed to drop the Tree Program fee from water bills, as it, too, was deemed illegal. Trash bills, however, did not go down.

On June 9, every single council member voted to pass another tax, without even having a discussion on this important matter. Coincidentally, the amount of this new "tax" corresponds exactly to the old tax that the city agreed to remove. It is obvious that this maneuver was designed to slip past the attention of the public and cover up their previous attempt to outmaneuver our laws which protect us from unlawful taxes.

What is this new "tax"?

The city required that CR&R make annual franchise payments. Franchise payments are "stealth" taxes whereby contractors who work on behalf

of the city, pay a fee for the privilege to do so, and pass along the franchise fee to the ratepayer. Orange has not levied franchise fees for decades, but reversed itself in this case due to financial woes.

The previous "tax" was to fund street repair for the damage that trash trucks did. Despite a law prohibiting that, it was a reasonable premise. The reasoning for this new "tax" is worse. The staff report explaining the new fee states that each and every household must pay \$89.14 per year, or \$7.42 per month because the trash truck must stop to pick up trash, and it is a disruption to the right-of-way. However, the city does not charge FedEx, UPS, OCTA, Uber, Lyft, cabs, mail carriers, school buses, and other vehicles engaging in normal commerce, but ratepayers must pay for the trash truck that stops in front of their homes.

Worst yet, the courts of California have long held that franchise fees are taxes, and, therefore, must follow the same laws that prevent the levy of

unlawful taxes. Proposition 218 requires that before a new tax is discussed, each and every resident must be notified by a mailer sent at least 45 days in advance. There must be a first and second reading of the proposal at two council meetings. Most importantly, the city must provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the new tax. The city did not do any of these required actions. While you were distracted by the new sales-tax measure, the city passed a tax that you did not know about, weren't given an opportunity to object to, and that you didn't vote on.

The Committee for a Transparent City of Orange has updated its complaint to the court again to prevent the city from unlawfully taxing all of us.

John Nelson, an Orange resident, is chairman of the Committee for a Transparent City of Orange (CTCO), a municipal arborist and municipal contract specialist. He is a former employee (24 years) of the City of Orange.

"Real issue" continued from page 1

Following Yarbrough's call for Martinez's dismissal, an ad hoc committee composed of Trustees David Crockett, John Hanna and Tina Arias-Miller was formed to investigate and discipline him.

The committee accused Yarbrough of violating board policies, disregarding board directives, improperly discussing confidential personnel matters,

interfering with board governance, and failing to fulfill his duties as board president under Board Policy 2715.

Slow motion

At the July 13 board meeting, an agenda item seeking to remove Yarbrough as board president was brought forward. Despite the extensive allegations against him, not a single trustee would second the motion. Without a second, the

motion died, leaving Yarbrough in his position as president.

Meanwhile, the Board of Trustees has yet to address the central findings of the Weaver audit.

The district has not publicly explained why the \$8 million remained outside its control; why neither the Board of Trustees nor the district's independent auditors were informed of the account; or whether anyone will be held accountable for the

governance failures identified in the report.

In addition to Chancellor Martinez, the audit identifies two senior administrators as having knowledge of the funds.

The district continues to face scrutiny, not only over the \$8 million, but also over whether its governing board has devoted more energy to targeting the trustee who exposed the issue, rather than to resolving the failures the audit revealed.

LETTERS to the EDITOR



Not fitting

Dear Editor:

As a resident of Orange Park Acres, I want to make one point perfectly clear: I am not opposed to development.

I recognize that the property at 6146 Santiago Canyon Road has development potential if it is consistent with the long-established vision for Orange Park Acres. That is approximately six one-acre homes compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. My objection is not to development itself.

My objection is to a project that is fundamentally inconsistent with the character of Orange Park Acres and the planning principles the city adopted decades ago.

The proposed 30-home subdivision would replace the rural landscape with suburban-density housing. It would remove more than 50 mature coast live oak trees, introduce extensive block walls, urban sidewalks, street lighting, and significantly increase traffic at an already challenging intersection. Homes would be built on lots too small to support the equestrian lifestyle

that defines Orange Park Acres.

Orange Park Acres is unlike any other neighborhood in the City of Orange. For more than 50 years, the Orange Park Acres Specific Plan has recognized and protected its unique rural and equestrian character. That vision has guided generations of residents who choose to live here because of the open space, mature trees, horse trails and peaceful setting.

Approving a project of this density would represent a significant departure from that vision.

I respectfully ask the Orange City Council to require a project that is compatible with Orange Park Acres, protects its natural resources wherever feasible, preserves its rural and equestrian character, and reflects the community values embodied in the Orange Park Acres Plan.

I also respectfully ask the city to carefully evaluate the environmental impacts of this proposal, including the removal of mature coast live oak trees, effects on wildlife movement, traffic safety, drainage and the cumulative changes to the character of Orange Park Acres.

The residents of Orange Park Acres are not asking the city to prevent all development. We are asking the city to ensure that development respects the unique community it has spent decades planning to preserve.

Laurie Cesena
Orange Park Acres

OUSD takes action

Dear Editor:

I wanted to make you and members of our community aware of a recent discovery I made, and how it will impact our community. Earlier this month, I was driving past my children's elementary school, La Veta Elementary, and I saw quite a few work trucks and workers on campus.

Curious as to what was going on, I reached out to a teacher who told me the campus was receiving substantial upgrades from a \$40 million investment the school board had approved earlier this year for elementary schools throughout the district. I am told this includes painting the buildings, parking lot reconfiguration, shade

structures (so needed!) and teaching walls with upgraded technology, which will make the classrooms feel "new." They may seem like small projects to some, but these will make huge differences in our students' and teachers' daily lives. Most importantly, they show our children we care about them, their education and their future.

I have three children in Orange Unified. While we have loved much of our experiences at school, the buildings themselves have always been a bit disappointing. After being in the district as a family for 13 years, it feels like we're finally on an upward trajectory in Orange Unified, and I hope my neighbors will join me in celebrating this!

Ainsley Jolly
Orange

Say cheese

Dear Editor:

I'm writing today because I have concerns about the use of Flock cameras in the City of Orange.

I'm not talking about the automated traffic enforcement cameras that catch speeding cars, people who run red lights, or don't pay their tolls on the toll roads. I am OK with those cameras because they are triggered by someone actually breaking the law.

What I am talking about are the Flock automatic license plate readers that are tracking, logging and sharing our vehicle data. Flock cameras register every vehicle that comes into the camera view and sends it through an AI algorithm to catalog. We all know how many mistakes AI can make! After AI massages our personal data, it is uploaded to a nationwide database.

There have been several horror stories as to how Flock data has been misused. In Dunwoody, Georgia, Flock employees were accessing cameras in a children's gymnastics room, a playground and a pool. ICE and Customs and Border Protection have used Flock data to go after immigrants without warrants.

In Kansas, police used them to pursue a man who wrote a critical op-ed about the department. In Colorado, a police officer wrongfully accused a woman of theft based on Flock data. A mother and her children were held at gunpoint because the cameras wrongly flagged their car as stolen. In Joplin, Missouri, a police officer was accused of stalking after he ran one woman's license plate nearly 400 times using the Flock system. In Milwaukee, an officer

used the Flock system more than 170 times over a two month period to track a woman he was dating and her former partner.

The LAPD has recently decided not to renew its contract with Flock due to privacy concerns. LAPD is the third largest municipal police department in the United States. If a law enforcement agency of that size discontinues using Flock, that should be a screaming red flag for the City of Orange to, at the very least, re-evaluate the decision to use Flock.

Marci Carey
Orange

Dear Editor:

As a 10-year resident of Orange (District 1), I am writing to express my disapproval of our city's reliance on Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) systems, such as Flock.

While marketed as public safety tools, these pervasive networks operate as a massive dragnet that carries worrisome legal liability for local governments.

Recent class action lawsuits and leaked city attorney memos highlight municipalities that face multi-million-dollar legal exposure for violating state privacy statutes, particularly through improper data retention and unauthorized data sharing.

ALPR networks lack meaningful safeguards to prevent misuse. Documented incidents across the country — ranging from a Milwaukee police officer criminally charged for misusing Flock systems, to a Costa Mesa officer using the camera network to stalk his mistress — demonstrate a systemic failure of internal controls.

Audits confirm that police departments have used ALPR data to track peaceful political protesters and have allowed federal agencies like the Department of Homeland Security and out-of-state officers to bypass local and state policies (CA SB34) to access — without warrants! — information on persons of interest.

Also troubling is the threat ALPR technical errors pose to public safety. Algorithmic misreads have led to high-risk felony traffic stops, including harrowing cases where innocent motorists were pulled from their vehicles at gunpoint due to a system error.

When flawed technology is combined with unchecked access, everyday residents pay the price. I strongly urge you to suspend or terminate our Flock/ALPR contracts immediately.

Letters continued on page 6



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What is especially appalling is that it appears the city council It appears the city council has fallen for the oldest trick in the book: slick marketing. Where is the evidence that crime has decreased?

Does spending \$400K on surveillance toys actually improve public safety and decrease policing costs? Why would a city in debt choose to waste money on technology with an unproven track record? These are all questions worth asking, and the city council members have yet to explain to the concerned citizens of Orange why this form of warrantless search is worth the risks.

Ryan Johnson
Orange

Dear Editor:

Somebody’s watching you.

I am a homeowner, a resident of Orange, and a concerned citizen who believes in the right to privacy. I am deeply concerned about the future of our city and our country.

I don’t want to live in a world where my movements -- going to visit friends, volunteering in the community, or going to the grocery store -- are being tracked and recorded in a database.

I don’t want my patterns of everyday life being analyzed by artificial intelligence or unauthorized users.

Automatic License Plate Reader cameras are being used throughout Orange and in many OC cities. In Orange, there are approximately 56 Flock cameras (13 of which are video cameras).

Data that is collected from these devices is analyzed and categorized by artificial intelligence. Car make, model, color, license number, bumper stickers, damage are recorded.

Why do we have these cameras recording our movements? The OPD claim they are lowering crime. Yes, crime has come down in Orange, but it’s also lower countywide and nationwide. There are no statistics that show these cameras prevent crime.

I would argue that the negatives far outweigh the benefits: use by unauthorized users, cases of people being pulled over and jailed based on erroneous information, lawsuits against cities, high cost (the recent contract with Orange was almost \$400K), and an invasion of our privacy.

Jana Anderson
Orange, CA

Don’t take the bait

Dear Editor:

I recently found a paper plate in my backyard. The night before, a dead skunk was found on a neighbor’s front lawn with no visible injuries. The plate was near a skunk den under one of my trees.

It had a brown substance that had been smeared. I figured the skunk ate it, became deathly ill, climbed over the fence and died on the neighbor’s lawn. Prior to this, a dead rat was found across the street. A few days after that, others said they saw a dead skunk and opossum near Torres Street. Obviously, someone is poisoning them.

It is a punishable federal crime to kill hawks and owls. I haven’t seen our resident Cooper’s hawk or heard either of the two resident owls for a long time.

When raptors eat poisoned animals, they, too, die.

Skunks and opossums are beneficial and harmless. Using poison baits of any sort kills randomly and needlessly. This includes poison bait boxes where the rodent enters, eats the bait, leaves the box and slowly weakens, thus making itself easy prey for raptors.

It seems likely a person is distributing green poison bait blocks, such as those sold at Home Depot. People with chicken coops often buy these.

Forget the poisons. Let nature do as intended.

If folks disregard this as, “It won’t happen to me,” wait until their pet eats poison put out by some uninformed or inconsiderate wildlife killer.

If you see poison baits in any form, report them to the city and animal control.

Timothy Scott
Orange

What’s to befall the mall

Dear Editor:

I am a homeowner who has lived near the Orange mall for 42 years.

I am writing about the Meats to Heim Specific Plan and possible zoning changes. The Specific Plan has not been made available to the public, and its release appears to be running very late.

The residents of Orange want to be involved in the Specific Plan process. There will be direct impacts to the community that must be discussed and mitigated. These impacts will affect the adjacent neighborhoods and city streets. The expanded Walmart (a superstore) alone will possibly increase vehicle traffic by 5,000.

The Specific Plan must not change the zoning on any portion of the TRC company parking lot behind and/or

west of the Walmart building. That area is zoned properly for Walmart, and the current zoning is clearly the highest and best use for that portion of the TRC property.

Our city budget must have the increased sales tax revenue that a Walmart Superstore expansion would bring. If the city council makes the mistake of approving a mixed-use zoning for that portion of the TRC property, it puts the site at risk of being subdivided and sold to a home builder. A zoning change will further undermine the city’s budget. Keep this in mind: Proper zoning is the foundation of a bountiful city budget.

The Grant Thornton financial instability report predicted our city’s bankruptcy in a little more than three years. Grant Thornton said two or three times during its presentation to the city council that the city cannot afford to give up any sales tax revenue from the former Orange mall.

I am of the belief that Place-Works Inc. has developed the preferred plan for the mall. I am asking that the city make it publicly available this week. Residents want to be directly involved in the process so we can have the highest and best outcome at the former Orange mall.

Doug Hamilton
Orange

Orange puts hold on massage parlors

A moratorium on new massage parlors coming into the City of Orange was extended by 22 months via a unanimous council vote held during a special meeting called June 29.

A temporary moratorium was put in place May 26 to allow staff to develop a legally justified ordinance to stem their proliferation.

Former Mayor Carolyn Cavecche noted during public comments that she counted 33 massage parlors within a 2.5 mile stretch of Tustin Street. “It’s hard to find a strip mall that doesn’t have one,” she said. “Twenty-one have opened in the last few years. They are impacting legitimate businesses.”

There are approximately 90 massage parlors operating within the city at this time. One of them is under investigation by the Orange Police Department for human trafficking, but it has not yet been shut down.

While admitting there are legitimate uses and operators, Arianna Barrios advised that the city’s current ordinance is inadequate. Other cities have addressed the issue with updated, robust ordinances.

Orange is on track to do the same. Since the original moratorium was put in place, city staff has been evaluating the existing regulatory framework governing massage establishments. Working with the Orange Police Department and City Attorney’s office, staff has explored approaches used in neighboring cities, evaluated enforcement and begun developing amendments to the Orange Municipal Code and Zoning Code.

Additional time is needed to conduct stakeholder outreach, evaluate evolving state law, and prepare comprehensive regulatory amendments for planning commission and city council consideration.

Orange residents reject library name change

Pushback on the Orange City Council meeting agenda item 8.1 came soon after the document was released to the public, July 23. It was swift, unequivocal and unrelenting.

Renaming the Orange Library and History Center to the Mayor Mark and Vikki Murphy Library and History Center was slated for a vote at the July 28 meeting. Agendized by Councilmember Kathy Tavoularis, with Mayor Dan Slater’s concurrence, no one, apparently, bothered to notify the Library Foundation, the Friends of the Library, or any other stakeholders.

The answer to the suggestion was a resounding “no.” Of 72 public comments received via email, not one supported it. The Library Foundation pointed out that there is a process for naming rights, and a healthy donation is part of it. Email commenters noted that the library should be named after the city, not a politician; that it belonged to the people and its name should reflect that; former Mayor Joanne Koontz was the force behind the expansion and modernization of the facility that re-opened in 2007; and there were other, less controversial, ways to honor Mark Murphy.

Mayor Dan Slater pulled the item from the agenda at the start of the meeting. It could be brought back for later discussion, or not.



Yes. No. Other.

By Andrew Tonkovich

has changed, fill out the form at tinyurl.com/58v8nw9v.

First things first

"Thousands have lived without love," wrote W.H. Auden, "not one without water." Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) has been busy lately, nearing completion of the Fleming Tank and Pump Station Project at the entrance to Silverado. It will enhance drinking water storage and pumping reliability, replace a 150,000-gallon steel storage tank with a 1.3-million-gallon concrete tank, and includes a new state-of-the-art pump station and other upgrades. Recently, permanent generators were installed at several locations, including Cabinland. Next is the Modjeska Canyon Pipeline Relocation Project, moving 360 feet of pipeline at various locations with construction starting as early as fall. The Shaw Tank Reservoir Improvements Project, slated to begin in spring 2027, calls for replacement of that reservoir and the Modjeska-Harding Pipeline Project includes upsizing 2,600 feet of pipeline and conversion of the Harding raw water pipeline to significantly enhance flow to the canyon.

Uncle SMRPD wants you!

This year, four of the five seats on the Silverado-Modjeska Recreation and Park District (SMRPD) Board of Directors will be filled by election. Current directors -- incumbents JJ Galvez, Laurie Martz, Ted Wright, and Michael Veerkamp -- don't plan to run for reelection. Interested? File in person as a candidate with OC Board of Elections by 5 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 7. Information at ocvote.gov/candidates.

E-I-E-I-Owe

Nina Macdonald has started a GoFundMe project to replace the Modjeska Park water fountain. Three people from last month's garage sale donated, but Macdonald needs \$4,500 to cover the cost of fountain, shipping and installation. The URL to donate is gofundme.com/f/help-fund-a-new-fountain-for-modjeska-park.

Nina is also assembling an updated directory for Modjeska residents. If you weren't in the last directory or your information

Threshold

In more -- if less salutary -- water news, the U.S. National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center advises increased likelihood of extreme El Niño-related conditions this winter. First, fire season, then possible big precipitation and flooding. Yikes. People talk about the weather, but nobody does anything about it, or climate change either. We've now crossed the 1.5-degree Celsius warming increase threshold which Greta Thunberg and Climate Extinction responded to, well on our world-way to two degrees with hotter ocean temps and, obviously, heat waves. Still, you can act now, locally, for your safety and others'. Reseal your roof or deck, go solar, install a rainwater capture system, and plant barren hillside properties with earth-holding natives.

Wait for it . . .

You don't have to be a tree hugging environmentalist, socialist, tax and spend liberal, progressive, Democrat, or even moderate Republican (oops, they're extinct!) to observe that underfunding and restricting the labor of OC Public Works inspectors benefits criminal assaulters of our hillsides. Got your attention? Just to be quantifiably clear: In my own amateur investigation of the latest illegal, unpermitted grading in Modjeska, I learned that Code Enforcement does not own drones or a single four-wheel drive vehicle, and --- wait for it --- cannot "trespass" on private property or even access the scene of the crime without permission from the scofflaw. So how is anybody supposed to even document the blatantly illegal activities which residents can see from their homes? Of course, we'll see the dirt and debris on the road after the first rains.

Inter-Canyon League

The July ICL meeting included a cheerful update on organizing for October's Silverado Country Fair. Parking challenges at the Riviera aside, organizers are pleased at the number of new artist presenters, but could use volunteer help now. Bic

Edwards reported a potentially precedent-setting investigation by sheriffs of the hit-and-run driver who, after hitting the wood retaining wall near Mine Track, dared residents to report him. They did and, after first ignoring reports, OC Sheriffs are now on the case.

Push me, poll you!

"Do you believe the American Dream is still within reach for most Americans?" That's one of many recent push-poll campaign provocations posing as a sincere query from Congressperson Young Kim, running against Ken Calvert. Here's another, built on the entirely false premise of noncitizen voting: "Do you support requiring proof of U.S. citizenship AND a photo ID to vote in federal elections?" "YES -- Only citizens should decide American elections. No. Other." Note caps for YES. Pretty subtle.

By the Book

On Wednesday, Aug. 5 (5 p.m.) Book Group of the Canyons discusses "Change the Recipe" by Michelin-starred chef and humanitarian José Andrés. And, in local literary news, short story writer Lisa Alvarez ("Some Final Beauty and Other Stories") won a much-coveted California Arts Council individual artist's

grant, one of 20 awarded OC playwrights, fiction writers, dancers and artists. She is at work on a second collection.

Gustatory

With only three dining establishments in the canyons, this first-ever restaurant review is a one-off.

Celebrating his wife's retirement at Xacalli recently, this devotee of Mexico City-style cuisine and big-time fig fanatic couldn't have been happier with an opening side dish of enchiladas made from blended cheese, fig mole, jocoque, avocado, habanero oil and onion ash, then slowly devoured Chef Vincent Espinoza's gorgeously grilled whole branzino. Confirming the goodness and rightness of cheesecake, owner Mimi Vy Nguyen arrived with an individually baked celebratory dessert, no kidding, a mini-Basque cheesecake. ¡Buen provecho!

One more

Veteran Modjeska firefighter Bruce Newell long offered just two, but lately has expanded his valuable wildfire wisdom into an easily memorized three-part maxim: 1) Don't start the fire. 2) Don't block the road. 3) Don't be dying to stay.



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Assistance League voted "Best"



Assistance League of Orange President-elect Alice Prothero accepts the "Best Association/Nonprofit Organization" from Duke of Orange Cameron Pate and Miss Orange Kalista Brown.



Sarah Saunders, center, of the Orange Blossoms Auxiliary, Assistance League of Orange, accepts the "Best Community Event" first place award for the annual Taste of Orange from Duke of Orange Cameron Pate and Miss Orange Kalista Brown.

Assistance League of Orange was the first place winner in the "Best Association/Nonprofit Organization" category in the Orange Chamber of Commerce "Best of Orange" contest, voted on by the public. In the "Best Longstanding Community Organization" category, the nonprofit earned second place. The volunteer-led organization works to transform the lives of students, veterans, women

in the community via its 16 philanthropic programs. The Assistance League of Orange Now and Again Thrift Shop, which is volunteer-run and offers donated clothing, jewelry, antiques and housewares, earned third place in the "Best Thrift/Antique Store" category. The Orange Blossoms Auxiliary of Assistance League of Orange earned first place in the "Best Community Event" for its annual Taste of Orange event.

Jerry Vilander honored at SWD



Villa Park City Council presented a proclamation to Jerry Vilander upon his retirement from Serrano Water District; from left, Crystal Miles, Vilander, Mayor Pro Tem Robert Frackelton, Mayor Jordan Wu, Nicol Jones and Kelly McBride.

After 13 years of leadership as General Manager of Serrano Water District, Jerry Vilander has officially retired, concluding a 33-year career serving in various roles throughout the water industry. His retirement marks the end of a distinguished career devoted to public service, water reliability and the Villa Park community. To celebrate his retirement, Serrano Water District hosted an open house at the district office where board members, staff, elected officials, colleagues and friends gathered to recognize Vilander's many contributions and wish him well in retirement. During the celebration, Vilander was honored with three proclamations recognizing his years of public service. He received proclamations from Orange County Supervisor Don Wagner's Office, the City of Villa Park, and the Serrano Water

District Board of Directors, which presented its proclamation during his final board meeting. Throughout his tenure, Vilander guided the District through infrastructure improvements, strengthened regional partnerships, and maintained a steadfast commitment to providing reliable, high-quality water service to the community. His leadership helped position Serrano Water District for continued success while earning the respect and admiration of colleagues throughout the water industry. The SWD Board of Directors and staff extend their sincere gratitude to Jerry Vilander for his years of service to the District. They wish Jerry and his beloved dog Rocky, a long, healthy and fulfilling retirement. Andrew Wiesner has been named the new SWD general manager.

Redistricting wars to be discussed at OC Dems meeting

The Central Orange County Democratic Club will welcome Christian Grose, Ph.D, director, USC Democracy and Fair Elections Lab and professor of political science at the University of Southern California, at its Wednesday, Aug. 26 meeting. Grose will present what the data, polling and districts

indicate regarding potential seats Democrats can win in November. Snacks and shmooze at 6 p.m., general meeting at 6:30. RSVP is required to attend. Meeting location will be given upon RSVP at CentralOCDems@gmail.com. Visit CentralOCDems.com for additional information.

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Jeff and Kelly Meyers Named Tustin Area Man and Woman of the Year



Jeff and Kelly Meyers

By Mark Eliot

Longtime Tustin community volunteers Jeff and Kelly Meyers have been selected as Tustin Area Man and Woman of the Year for 2025.

This is the first time husband and wife nominees were awarded the title in the same year. Both individuals were nominated by the Tustin Area Council for Fine Arts.

The announcement was made at the annual Tustin Area Man and Woman of the Year (TAMWY) awards dinner, June 5.

The TAMWY program has been held for more than 60 years. Tustin individuals are recognized for their dedicated work, leadership and volunteerism. Nominations for the award

come from previous winners or nonprofit organizations. This year, four men and six women were nominated for the award.

“Receiving the Tustin Man of the Year award is an extraordinary honor, yet the true privilege has been the opportunity to serve the City of Tustin,” said Jeff Meyers. “I am grateful beyond words for this recognition by my peers, and it inspires me to continue giving back and lifting up the people who make Tustin such a special place.”

The Tustin Area Council for Fine Arts (TACFA) has benefitted from Jeff’s contributions as a member of its board of directors since 2018. Jeff became its vice president of marketing in 2021 and executed a marketing plan for the organization. During this time, he also was the food, beverage and concessions chair for Broadway in the Park.

Jeff has been a steady contributor behind the scenes to HeART of OC and student art invitational events; he leads the food, beverage and merchandise booth at the City of Tustin Art Walk. For 22 years, Jeff has served in a volunteer leadership role with Dance! To Your Heart’s Delight (DTYHD), the Tustin-based nonprofit affiliated with Tustin Dance Center, owned

and operated by his wife Kelly.

DTYHD promotes the arts through annual events, highlighted by its flagship production – and professionally staged Nutcracker ballet now in its 23rd year. Jeff overseas marketing, graphic design, program development, theatre contracting, merchandising, the Nutcracker Boutique and audience engagement.

“I am deeply honored and humbled to be named Tustin Woman of the Year,” said Kelly Meyers. “This recognition is especially meaningful because it comes from a community I love and from an organization whose commitment to the arts I greatly admire. Sharing the honor with my husband makes it even more special.”

Since joining the Tustin Area Council for Fine Arts (TACFA) 10 years ago, Kelly has had a significant impact and is a vital part of the organization, filling every void and doing any and every position needed.

Kelly has been the chair, for the past five years, of Broadway in the Park, handling all aspects of creating an outdoor theater and a professionally produced Broadway show for a five-night run in Peppertree Park. Kelly single-handedly

created, marketed and chaired Broadway in the Park Summer Camp for children. She co-chairs the annual Student Art Invitational, showcasing middle and high school students, and Chemer’s Gallery adjudicated art show. She also co-chairs the Tustin Art Walk.

Kelly co-founded Dance! To Your Heart’s Delight to ensure that high-quality performing arts experiences are accessible to all. Each year, approximately 700 tickets and refreshments are provided so underserved individuals and families can experience a live performance in a professional theatre setting. Kelly leads the artistic side of the organization, including casting, rehearsals, production coordination and directing.

Most recently, Kelly served as backstage manager for the Miss Tustin Scholarship Pageant 2025, which involved being a liaison with sound, lighting and running the order of the program.

Jeff and Kelly Meyers will become lifetime members of TAMWY. They will also ride in the Tustin Tiller Days Parade and have their names permanently etched on a brick walkway in the plaza between the Tustin Library and Community Center.

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Villa Park Women's League joined the City of Villa Park in celebrating America's 250th birthday with a big parade of decorated bikes, wagons and golf carts, a flyover, community street fair, concert in the (Villa) Park, carnival games, dunk the mayor tank and a kidsmarket. VPWL women in the parade included, from left, Cathy Hall, Ola Al Asadi, Kathy McCarthy, Eva Wyszowski and Terry Applebaum.

Walk 'n' Shop in Old Towne

The third annual Thrift & Vintage Walk 'n' Shop event will take place on Saturday, Aug. 22, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. In celebration of National Thrift Shop Day, it promotes secondhand shopping, sustainability and supports local charitable organizations. Participants receive a free passport from a participating Old Towne merchant and then collect stamps from all of the merchants for a grand prize drawing of a gift basket and \$700 gift card. Discounts and giveaways may be available from select merchants throughout the day. See fullcircleorange.com/walk-n-shop for more information.



Benjamin Franklin and his wife Deborah (Mark and Joanne Skousen) spoke at the annual Fourth of July Celebration at the Orange California Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, held along with a 5K and Fun Run and flag-raising ceremony. Mark, portraying Franklin, extolled the importance of liberty, unity and that "God governs in the affairs of men," a famous sentiment spoken by Franklin during the 1787 Constitutional Convention. Attendees commented how timely it was to celebrate America's 250th with friends, neighbors—and one of our Nation's founding fathers. The Skousens are community members and Chapman University faculty.



Villa Park's annual 4th of July "Stars on Parade" was a two-wheeled celebration of America's 250th. It was followed by a picnic and concert.

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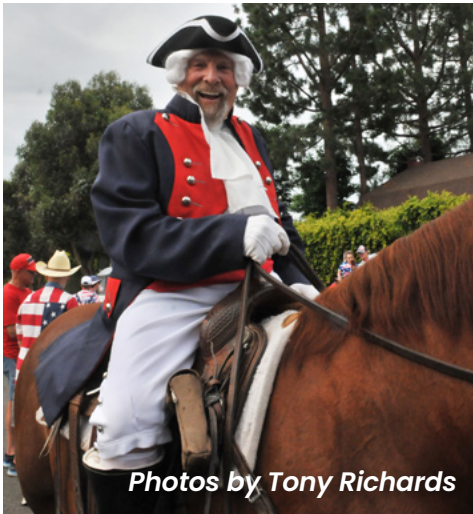
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OPA 4th of July parade celebrates America's 250th birthday



Commemorating America's 250th birthday, OPA's annual 4th of July parade featured George Washington and Abraham Lincoln (not pictured) as the Grand Marshals.



Danielle Walker rides the parade route with Dolores and Mirabel.



The Wimberleys Bluegrass Band is always a fixture at local events. From left, James, Michael, Danielle and Mark



Katrina Kirkeby and the family llamas bring up the rear of the 60th annual parade.



A 1940 Oldsmobile with owner Max Dressler and friend Parker Smith



Kids along the parade route have learned they can catch more candy with paper bags than with bare hands.



Karen (right) and Lisa Rindoni take Callie for a spin around Orange Park Acres.

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SWD drills new well



Serrano Water District (SWD) is drilling a new well, Well No. 6, to replace existing Well No. 3. That well, originally drilled in 1920, has reached the end of its useful life after over 100 years in service. Over the past several years, its pumping capacity has declined significantly, requiring replacement. The new Well No. 6, located behind the SWD offices on Lincoln Street in Villa Park, will increase Serrano’s groundwater production capacity, which will increase SWD’s local reliability. When Well No. 6 is in service, Serrano will be able to supply the majority of its potable water demands from local sources, reducing dependance on the Colorado River and State Water Project.

The project began in early July, with the mobilization and set up of the drilling rig. The pilot hole

drilling, geophysical testing, and the well casing design were completed. During the last week of July, the well drilling contractor will be reaming (increasing the diameter of the hole) the pilot hole and installing the well casing. These activities require 24-hour-per-day work for several weeks. It is critical to the successful drilling of the well, as it is at the highest risk of collapse during this time. Reducing the total time for these activities is the best way to reduce risk of collapse. Following the installation of the casing, the well will be developed (cleaned from the drilling activities) and tested. The drilling construction is scheduled to be completed this winter.

To alleviate impacts of the construction noise, SWD has installed a 25-foot sound barrier around the area. However, noise from the SWD Lincoln Street Headquarters is anticipated to increase throughout the well-drilling process and overnight during the 24/7 activities. Patience from the neighbors throughout this process is greatly appreciated by SWD, and everyone is encouraged to call with any questions. The successful completion of Well No. 6 will help ensure SWD’s local reliability for many years to come.

OPA Fall BBQ on tap

The Orange Park Acres Annual Fall BBQ and Dance will be held Saturday, Sept. 19. Tickets go on sale Aug. 1.

This Orange Park Acres signature fundraiser will be held at the Sandford home.

The event supports the on-going preservation of OPA’s 25-mile multiuse trail system, connections to regional parks, and enhancement of the

equestrian opportunities in this rural equestrian community, established in 1928.

The BBQ dinner will be followed by silent and live auctions and dancing to the Mowdy Band.

Tickets may be purchased online at orangeparkacres.org. To donate an auction item or volunteer to help, contact OPA President Sherry Panttaja at (714) 343-4965.

Win two tickets to fly anywhere jetBlue flies

By Guy Ball

If you had two tickets to fly to almost anywhere in the world, would it be to Rome to search for early world history? Or to Aruba for that romantic getaway? Maybe even to Tokyo to enjoy sushi, as it was meant to be? Or to Boston to visit family you haven’t seen in years?

The Tustin Area Historical Society is offering 100 opportunities to win two tickets to fly wherever jetBlue airlines flies as a fundraiser to benefit the Tustin Area Museum and its various programs and projects.

Thanks to a very generous donation by jetBlue airlines and Angie Kardasian, the two tickets will allow the drawing

winner (and companion) the opportunity to fly to wherever jetBlue flies, which includes locations around the world. While there are some flight black-out dates, the winner will work directly with a jetBlue concierge to plan the trip. The tickets will include only the airline portion of the trip.

The opportunity drawing tickets will be sold via the historical society website. The winner will be drawn on Aug. 20 during the Tustin Sunset Market. The winner must use the tickets by Aug. 1, 2027.

For purchasing opportunity drawing tickets, visit TustinHistory.com/fly. For additional information, call the museum at (714) 731-5701.

Elks give retired flags TLC



From left, Tracey Nowakowski, Heidi Laskey and Jennifer Weerheim fold faded flags prior to their ceremonial disposal.

What do you do with a worn or tattered American flag? Let the Elks have them.

The Orange Elks Lodge #1475 organized an American flag folding party to properly retire faded, worn or tattered flags.

Over 250 flags, collected during the year in a flag donation box at the lodge, were folded

and will be given to the Orange Coast District for a flag disposal ceremony.

Throughout the year, the Orange Elks, its members and friends, fly the American flag at Flags Over Orange, Flags Over the Plaza, the “Roamin” Elks campouts and at Elks and Antlers meetings.

Orange Elks earn All-American status



Exalted Ruler Lynn Butler accepts the All-American award from Michael L. Kennedy, Grand Lodge Fraternal Committee.

For the tenth time in the last 12 years, the Orange Elks Lodge #1475 is an All-American Lodge.

The term “All-American,” in Elkdom and in our society, means that you are the best that you can be. For the 2025-26 Elk year, the Orange Elks officers, committee chairmen, members, spouses and friends have helped the lodge earn this title through hard work supporting the community, veterans and

youth.

The Orange lodge supports the programs of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. Key programs are scholarships, youth activities, such as the Americanism Essay Contest and Drug Awareness Education; and veterans causes. The lodge also works closely with its community partners, e.g., the Orange Police Department, the Orange City Fire Department, the Hub of OC, the Santiago Creek Greenway Alliance and GRIP (Gang Reduction Intervention Partnership).

Successful 2025-26 programs included two blood drives for the American Red Cross; Flags Over Orange; and Flags Over the Plaza. The Lodge also aided members of the Pasadena Lodge who lost homes in the fires; worked with the Hub OC Resource Center; and provided dinners at the Tustin Village Outpost.

The new Antler Program was formed and officers installed; 110 Navy, Marines and Coast Guard personnel were hosted during Fleet Week; supported the Jasper Ray Foundation for swimming lessons; the lodge made a \$2,500 donation to the Orange Police Department to install an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) in police vehicles; a Bereavement Committee was formed to support the families of members who have passed away; and a Little Free Library was erected in the lodge parking area.

REAL ESTATE

with David Silva



MARKET SNAPSHOT

ORANGE, CA
JUNE 2026
Single Family

\$1.32M

Avg. Sales Price

↓ 9%

\$1.53M

Avg. List Price

↓ 5%

59

No. of Prop. Sold

↑ 9%

33

Avg. Days on Market

↓ 19%

\$695

Avg. Sales Price per Sqft.

— 0%

DAVID SILVA

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

Based on data from Orange County (CRAI.S) for property types: single family in the price range \$5 - \$999,999,999 for the period March 2025 - June 2026. June 2026 data are compared to previous 3 months' average. Source data is deemed reliable but not guaranteed.



MARKET SNAPSHOT

TUSTIN, CA
JUNE 2026
Single Family

\$1.50M

Avg. Sales Price

↓ 11%

\$1.95M

Avg. List Price

— 0%

21

No. of Prop. Sold

↓ 3%

71

Avg. Days on Market

↑ 45%

\$656

Avg. Sales Price per Sqft.

↓ 12%

DAVID SILVA

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

Based on data from Orange County (CRAI.S) for property types: single family in the price range \$5 - \$999,999,999 for the period March 2025 - June 2026. June 2026 data are compared to previous 3 months' average. Source data is deemed reliable but not guaranteed.



MARKET SNAPSHOT

VILLA PARK, CA
JUNE 2026
Single Family

\$2.98M

Avg. Sales Price

↑ 9%

\$3.28M

Avg. List Price

↑ 1%

3

No. of Prop. Sold

↓ 31%

49

Avg. Days on Market

↓ 28%

\$696

Avg. Sales Price per Sqft.

↓ 7%

DAVID SILVA

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

Based on data from Orange County (CRAI.S) for property types: single family in the price range \$5 - \$999,999,999 for the period March 2025 - June 2026. June 2026 data are compared to previous 3 months' average. Source data is deemed reliable but not guaranteed.



Diving into Tustin’s early bar scene



The Swinging Door Saloon has graced El Camino Real since 1951.

By Guy Ball

Step back into the smoky lounges, neighborhood taverns and legendary watering holes that helped shape Tustin’s past. Local researcher and historian Taylor Hadden shares how, for generations, local bars, taverns, lounges and restaurants served as far more than places to eat and drink. They were gathering spots where friendships were formed, business deals made, celebrations held and community history unfolded. Hadden will explore some of Tustin’s most memorable establishments, including the Ranch House, Swinging Door, Safari Room, Walnut Room, Tustin Inn, Newport 5 and Zeb’s Boathouse. Drawing from archival research, historic newspapers, photographs, interviews, and public records, Hadden traces the evolution of these businesses and the people who built, operated and frequented them. The presentation reveals how changing social attitudes, local politics, military influences,

economic development, crime and community traditions shaped Tustin’s nightlife and hospitality culture throughout the 20th century. Along the way, attendees will encounter colorful characters, surprising controversies, forgotten landmarks and stories that connect directly to the city’s broader history. Taylor Hadden is a researcher with the Tustin Area Historical Society, whose work focuses on preserving and documenting overlooked stories from Orange County’s past. His recent research has explored local businesses, aviation, agriculture, military communities, and the people whose lives helped shape Tustin and the surrounding region. This *Night at the Museum* meeting will be held on Friday, Aug. 28, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Tustin Area Museum, 395 El Camino Real in downtown Tustin. Tickets are \$20 per person and \$15 each for members. For more information and tickets, visit TustinHistory.com or call the museum at (714) 731-5701.

A working draft of the City of Orange Historic Preservation Ordinance is available for public review. The draft ordinance will be scheduled for review and comment by the Design Review Committee, as well as public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council in the coming weeks. It can be found on the Community Development page on the city website.

Boutique Noël 2026 coming to town

Mark your calendars for Boutique Noël 2026, returning to Old Towne Orange Oct. 7–10. Presented by Assistance League of Orange, this holiday tradition features handcrafted seasonal décor, unique gifts, homemade culinary creations, and festive treasures for every style and taste. Shop for one-of-a-kind Halloween, autumn and Christmas décor created by talented Assistance League members, enjoy offerings from the Orange Blossoms and Assisteens, and discover specialty vendors. Every purchase supports Assistance League of Orange’s philanthropic programs benefiting children and families in our community. The event will take place at the Chapter House, 124 South Orange Street, Old Towne Orange.



Orange Emblem Club 418 members gathered for a combination workshop/social to assemble table favors for a visit from Emblem State President Juanita Burns-Bergstrom. The group also packaged a gift to present to the president during her July 12 visit at the Santa Ana Elks Lodge. Members also made “cheer cards” for our troops, while sharing snacks, coffee and conversation. From left, Karen Kremer, Jay and Vicki Chaisson, Carole Walters, John Russo, Kim Smith, President Laurie Padilla, Laura Lockridge, Irene Jones, Barbara Keeler, Terry Castellon and Jan Genelle. Kim Raya was not in the picture, because she took it.

Exer Urgent Care opens 64th clinic



Local and state officials welcomed Exer Urgent Care to Orange.

Exer Urgent Care held a ribbon-cutting for its newest urgent care center in Orange, marking the company’s 64th clinic and fifth location in Orange County. The new facility is located at 396 S. Main St., and offers walk-in care for a wide range of non-life-threatening illnesses and injuries, as well as on-site X-ray, laboratory services, occupational medicine, physical exams, vaccinations, and more. Patients can reserve a spot online or simply walk in, with care available seven days a week.

CEO Rob Mahan noted that

the cost of Exer services are only 8% of similar ER services. COO Shamim Wu emphasized advantages of the modern technology, high-quality care and welcoming environment in her own community.

The Orange clinic offers a full range of occupational health services, including treatment for work-related injuries, pre-employment physicals, drug and alcohol screening, and employer health programs designed to support local businesses and their employees.

To reserve a visit or learn more, see exerurgentcare.com.

Elks fly Flags for the U.S. Army birthday



From left, Elk John Smith, Olivia Erskine, Elks Guy Erskine and David Salas serve the veterans and families in attendance.

The Orange Elks celebrated the U.S. Army’s 251st birthday at its June 18 Flags Over the Plaza event.

The program began with Elk Guy Erskine’s granddaughter Olivia Erskine, leading the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by Miss City of Orange Kalista Brown singing the national anthem.

A veteran from the Disabled American Veterans (DAV)

talked about the organization’s many programs. Orange Elks member Diana Trujillo shared some insight on Women Veterans Appreciation Day, which was celebrated on June 12. The ceremony ended with the folding of the American flag.

The Assistance League of Orange provided an Army cake and soft drinks, while the Orange Elks served the guests.

Contest identifies best home-grown tomatoes



Best Tomato Grower Rose Cunningham, left, with Linda Corcoran

Members of the Orange Elks Lodge talk about many things. But one of the popular topics this time of year is home-grown tomatoes.

Member Linda Corcoran had an idea: have a contest to determine the best home-grown tomato. A \$5 entry fee was charged. There were 12 varieties, and 30 votes cast.

The contest raised \$120, which was donated to the Fire Peer Support Dog Program. That program funds the support dogs that are used as therapy to help the men and women who go out on traumatic calls deal with the stress of the job, and may also be used on calls where residents could use a little puppy love.

For the second year, Rose Cunningham was the winner of the Best Home-Grown Tomato.

Celebrity speaker series features Rainbow Cabaret



“Judy Garland” and “Liza Minnelli”

Tribute singers celebrating Judy Garland and Liza Minnelli will be presented by the Crescendo Guild of Segerstrom Center for the Arts at its Sept. 17 Celebrity Speaker Series program at the Bowers Museum.

Straight from Las Vegas, the Rainbow Cabaret’s Denise Rose and Suzanne Goulet are singers, dancers and comedians, who

sing and look like the famous mother/daughter combination of Judy Garland, “Over the Rainbow,” and Liza Minnelli, “All That Jazz.”

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

The Bowers Museum is located at 2002 N. Main Street, Santa Ana. Parking is \$7 cash.

The Guilds of Segerstrom, including the Crescendo Guild, raisefundstosupporttheCenter’s community engagement and arts education programs.

Woman’s Club of Orange plans busy August



Debra Ehrhardt

The Women’s Club of Orange will present “Look What Fell Out De Mango Tree” on Sunday, Aug. 16 at 3 p.m. at its event center at 121 S. Center St.

The play was written by Debra Ehrhardt, performed by Debra Ehrhardt and Christopher Grossett and directed by Grammy and Oscar-winning songwriter Paul Williams.

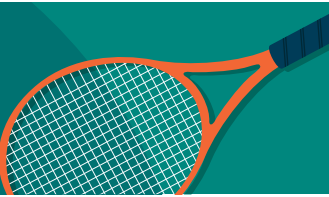
Tickets are \$30 per person, available at womanscluboforange.org. (Recommended for mature audiences only.) Proceeds

support WCO philanthropies.

A daytime get-together for new and prospective members will be held at 10 a.m. on Wed., Aug. 5 at the clubhouse. Learn about the club, sections, activities and philanthropies; RSVPtoWCOMembership2025@gmail.com. Or, join in for an evening luau New Member Reception from 6–7:30 p.m. on Tues., Aug. 25; RSVPtowomanscluboforange.org/member-interest.

The next General Meeting and Luncheon will be held the third Monday of the month, on Sept. 21.

The WCO supports numerous charities, including Alzheimer’s Association, Adopt-a-Senior, scholarships, Friendly Center and Friends of the Library. Over \$20,000 of in-kind donations were collected for HomeAid, Casa Theresa, Spencer Toys for Kids, CHOC, school supplies and backpacks and Youth Centers of Orange. In addition, the WCO purchased new stage curtains for its event center.



COMMUNITY SPORTS

Three decades of handball celebrated



Coach Johnny Johnson, left, with the handball players.



Johnson recognized the top GPA earners; clockwise from left, Angel Vian of OHS, 3.4; Jakob Duesterhaus, ElMo, 3.6; Adam Poliquin, VPHS, 3.2; Michael Herrera, Orange High North, 3.4

Student-athletes from Richland, Orange, El Modena and Villa Park High Schools gathered at El Modena High, May 7, for the 30th Annual Knox-Barrera Handball Classic.

Coach Johnny Johnson, a retired OUSD teacher and coach, is the originator and driving force behind the sport at OUSD. He began teaching, coordinating and organizing handball as a sport, introducing it first in the middle schools, then the high schools, as “all you need is a ball and a wall.”

He believes the game fosters good sportsmanship and teamwork, and keeps youth busy and out of trouble. The tournament name was in honor of the first sponsors, Jerry Knox and Fred Barrera.

A hearty breakfast was provided by ElMo’s Chef Deleo, followed by an awards ceremony. Business owner Ricardo Fernandez was the keynote speaker, sharing his struggles and inspirational story. He came to the U.S. at age 10 from Colombia, finished high school at 16, then graduated

college with a business degree. He started his own business at age 21, and now owns two successful companies. He encouraged the athletes to stay focused and follow their own goals and plans, despite the inevitable setbacks.

Coach Johnson commended the 50 students for their commitment to school and the sports season before awarding gift certificates to the graduating seniors. The athletes from each of the four high schools holding the top GPAs were recognized, as were the team coaches and staff.

The athletes were each given T-shirts before hitting the courts, with each playing both a singles and doubles set.

After two hours of some intense handball, champions were crowned. Eighth grader Arley Carmona of Cerro Villa/Villa Park captured the singles title, defeating ElMo’s Enrique Villascan, 10-9. In the doubles match, ElMo’s seniors Jakob Duesterhaus and Brandon Ibanez defeated Nathan Salas and Arley Carmona, 10-7.



Graduating seniors are, from left with Couch Johnson, Carlos Ibanez, Orange High; Mike Herrera, Orange High North; Chris Castillo, Brandon Ibanez and Enrique Villascan, El Modena High; and Joey Aquila, Orange High.

Archer aims for Olympics



Archer Jack Williams

Archer Jack Williams took gold at the USA Archery SoCal Showdown in June, one of three major outdoor qualifiers for the United States Archery Team (USAT), with a record-setting 850 archers in attendance.

Williams, 26, has been aiming for the Olympics since he did well in a tournament in eighth grade. He had been introduced to archery a year earlier, but his success at the tournament encouraged him to take the sport seriously. He applied to the USA Archery Resident Athlete Program, earning a monthly stipend, and began training full time, opting to graduate high school during his junior year.

He moved into the senior division at 17, the youngest competitor on the USAT. He continues to practice eight to nine hours each weekday at the Olympic Training Center, and coaches junior level archers on the weekends, often accompanying them to tournaments.

Team trials will begin in April 2027, and the top three archers will participate in the 2028 Olympics. He competes

monthly year-round, primarily in the April to September outdoor season, and travels to Mexico, Turkey and Shanghai for the Archery World Cup. During the indoor season, which runs from October to March, he may only compete in one or two indoor events.

Williams is currently ranked #3 in the U.S. The competition is fierce, with all shooting at a level 10 (the innermost ring on the target). The sport is, Williams allows, 95% technique and 5% mental. Archers must master the technique and execute the exact same technique each and every time, allowing, mentally, for variables such as wind, weather, fatigue and pressure. The smallest separation between arrows on the target – the .125” width of an arrow – can make the difference between a medal or not.

Jack’s next big outdoor competition will be in Springfield, Mo. at the 142nd USA Archery Target Nationals and 2026 U.S. Open on Aug. 12-15. There, he must finish in the top four to continue his stipend – and be one step closer to the Olympics.