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Fullerton CROP Hunger Walk: Community Unites to Fight Hunger

See CROP Walk page 2

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PO BOX 7051
FULLERTON CA 92834

Fullerton's Union Pacific Trail Project Moves Forward

by Saskia Kennedy

An ambitious initiative aimed at transforming a neglected stretch along an old railroad spur into a vibrant community trail has ignited controversy, even with backing from \$1.78 million in state funding. The Union Pacific Trail project, which has garnered support from local residents for years, is facing significant delays that have left the community frustrated.

Initially approved three years ago, the project has encountered a series of obstacles. Most recently, during the May 6 City Council meeting, Councilmember Nick Dunlap made headlines by halting a construction contract, citing concerns over rising costs associated with contingency funds. However, city staff countered Dunlap's claims, clarifying that these contingency funds would not inflate the project's overall budget, leading many to question his motives.

At the subsequent City Council meeting on May 20, supporters of the trail gathered once again to advocate for the project's progress. City officials issued a warning that any further delays could jeopardize the vital state grant funding,



Advocates of the Union Pacific Trail Project rejoice in the lobby at City Hall.

triggering fears that the city might ultimately have to forfeit the anticipated \$1.78 million grant.

In a notable shift, Councilmember Jamie Valencia, who sought to understand the project's hurdles by walking the trail herself, proposed a compromise that successfully swayed Dunlap. Ultimately, he reversed his earlier position and voted in favor of the construction contract, joining fellow Councilmembers Zahra, Charles, and Valencia. In contrast, Mayor Jung stood alone in opposition to the project.

The Union Pacific Trail project represents the community's commitment to enhancing Fullerton, promoting equity, and fostering civic engagement. As discussions progress, residents remain optimistic about a future where the trail becomes a welcoming space for all community members.

Thank you to Our Generous Readers!

We want to express our heartfelt gratitude to all our wonderful readers for the donations you have sent to support our print issue and general operations. Your support and encouragement mean a lot to us.

**A special thank you goes to former Fullertonians
Parks and Paula Adams for their generous gift.**

(Paula's father, Dr. Lynn Sheller, served as president of Fullerton College from 1950 to 1969 and founded the Fullerton College Foundation in 1959 to help support the college.)



Fullerton CROP Hunger Walk: Community Unites to Fight Hunger

continued from front page

The annual Fullerton CROP Hunger Walk drew a diverse crowd on May 18 at noon to the steps of the Fullerton Downtown Plaza, uniting community members in a shared mission to combat hunger. This year's event not only aimed to raise funds to provide meals for local individuals in need but also supported global initiatives focused on enhancing food security.

Participants represented a variety of teams, showcasing their commitment to making a difference in the fight against hunger. Among the notable fundraising achievements was the Fullerton First Christian Church, which, with 11 participants in the walk, raised an impressive \$2,970. The Democrats of North Orange County fielded a team of five, who generated \$1,054 in donations. Meanwhile, the members of Live Oak United Church of Christ led the charge with 18 members who combined to raise \$2,626.

Other contributors included the UUCF – Fullerton, which managed to raise \$1,030 with a team of 13 partici-

pants, and the Fullerton Presbyterian Church, whose two members brought in \$200. Smaller teams also made an impact, such as the Barbara and Alan Miller Memorial and Church World Service, each with one participant raising \$50. OCC Orangethorpe Christian Church contributed \$300 from a lone walker, while Pathways of Hope and Veronica's Book Club raised \$25 and \$50, respectively.

As the event concluded, organizers announced they were \$625 shy of their \$10,000 fundraising goal. Donations are still being accepted, emphasizing that the fight against hunger is ongoing.

For those interested in contributing to this vital cause, donations can be made at: <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/crophungerwalks/event/fullertonca>.

The Fullerton CROP Hunger Walk exemplified a collective effort to ensure that no one goes hungry, highlighting the importance of community action both locally and globally.



PHOTOS BY GASTON CASTELLANOS



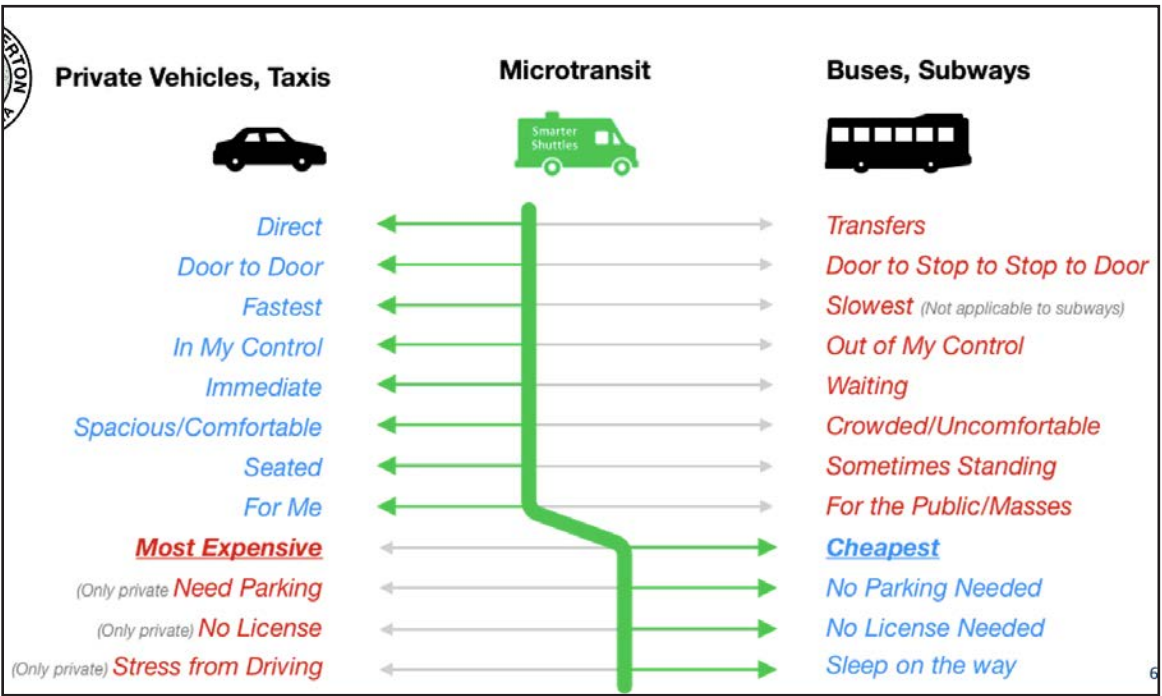
Exploring Innovative Transportation Solutions for Fullerton's Future

On May 29, a vibrant gathering of approximately twenty-five engaged community members convened at the Fullerton Public Library to explore the exciting possibilities of microtransit in their city. The event, featuring insights from Director of Public Works Stephen Bise, Director of Community and Economic Development, and Fullerton Police Department Traffic Bureau Sergeant Jeff Beaty, was hosted by Fullerton City Council Member Dr. Ahmad Zahra. This collaborative effort, which included participation from city staff, Fullerton College, and Cal State Fullerton, aimed to assess the feasibility of a micro-transit program that could significantly enhance the daily lives of residents.

The discussions centered on understanding the needs of the community and conducting a sustainability analysis for innovative micro-transit solutions. The initiative is poised to uplift local experiences, support businesses, improve access to schools, and create a seamless transportation network for visitors, ultimately enriching the Fullerton community.

Micro-mobility and micro-transit are at the heart of this transformative vision. Micro-mobility encompasses lightweight vehicles designed for short trips, such as bicycles, e-scooters, and shared bikes. These options promote lower emissions and reduce car dependence while offering a cost-effective, convenient means of getting around. Micro-transit, on the other hand, refers to flexible, on-demand transportation services that bridge the crucial gap between traditional public transit and personal vehicles. With their ability to provide first/last mile connectivity and serve underserved areas, these systems can effectively reduce congestion and enhance accessibility for all residents.

Despite some challenges, such as safety concerns and operational hurdles, the potential benefits are immense. Micro-mobility and micro-transit can extend opportunities beyond mere transportation, providing access to jobs, healthcare, and



education for those without a personal vehicle. This is especially crucial for seniors, students, and residents in underserved neighborhoods.

Currently, Fullerton is identifying key zones lacking reliable transit options, with the aspiration to connect workers, students, and families more efficiently. Micro-transit could link communities to essential destinations, including Cal State Fullerton and downtown job hubs, making it an ideal solution for areas where fixed transit is impractical.

An innovative pilot program is on the horizon, designed to test services in low-density or challenging areas, focusing on first/last mile connections and off-peak mobility. Engaging partnerships with local colleges and businesses, along with potential funding from various sources, will help shape these initiatives, ensuring that resident and business feedback informs every step of the process.

As Fullerton embarks on this exciting journey to assess the feasibility of a micro-transit program, the outlook is hopeful. With a dedicated commitment to improving transportation options and fostering community connections, this initiative stands to make a meaningful difference in the lives of residents and visitors alike. The city is poised to unlock new opportunities and build a more connected, inclusive environment for everyone. This will be on the city council agenda this year.



2025 Fullerton Host Lions City Scholastic Chess Championship

by Pete Baron

The 18th annual Fullerton City Scholastic Chess Championship took place on May 9 at Ladera Vista Junior High, drawing an impressive 67 young chess enthusiasts. Sponsored by the Fullerton Host Lions and supported by the Fullerton School District (FSD), this year’s tournament focused exclusively on students in 8th grade and below, eschewing the "super-championship" format typically seen in past events.

Marisol Terrazas, supported by Joy Tao, served as the tournament director and together they orchestrated the largest turnout in the event's history. A total of eight grade-level tournaments were held, with some groups required to split into two sections to accommodate the increased number of participants. The section winners then competed for the title of "2025 Fullerton City Champion" within their respective grades (names are in bold text below).

The championship not only showcased promising talent but also highlighted the support from the FSD, which effectively utilized the PeachJar system to help publicize the event. This collaborative effort ensured that more students had the opportunity to engage in the intellectually challenging and socially enriching game of chess.

The competition fostered a spirit of camaraderie among students but also celebrated the growth and dedication of the local chess community, setting high expectations for next year’s tournament.

- Kindergarten**
Oliver Magsaysay
Phoenix Courthian
Hurley Li
- First Grade**
Ayton Oei
Brendan Kim
Hudson Elwood
- Second Grade -group 1**
Olivia Leav
Ukrit Gupta
Liam No
- Second Grade -group 2**
Izykiel Park
Kaylie Yao
Coreline Esquivel
- Third Grade -group 1**
Sophia Kim
Leo Struckhoff
Joshua Yee
- Third Grade -group 2**
Alexander Bays
Rayan Shah
Wyatt McLean

- Fourth Grade -group 1**
Wyatt Chen
Ian Seung
Leon Sohn
- Fourth Grade -group 2**
Yue Yao Tang
Owen Tse
- Fifth Grade -group 1**
Nischay Battu
Lukas Cho
- Fifth Grade -group 2**
Nischay Battu
Robert Kim
- Sixth Grade**
Jayden Baek
Kevin Tse
Ryo Cabrera
- Seventh Grade**
Nathan Yoo
Colton Mears
- Eighth Grade**
Rayansh Shah

OTHERS PARTICIPANTS:

- Kindergarten:**
Donovan Wong
Everet Payan
Hurley Li
- First Grade:**
ArnikRain
Kevin Dias
Luther Struckhoff
- Second Grade:**
Dean Toledo
Ray Seung
Ryne Huber
Lincoln Struckhoff
Victor Cheen
- Third Grade:**
Brayden Ahn
Danel Kim
Eliso Payan
Kaydann Lee
Rishi Iyer
Ryan Yu
- Fourth Grade:**
Benedict Shin
Ferris Chen
Hayout Lim
- Fifth Grade:**
Alden Lee
Eamon Pirraglia
Julien Park
Zack Lee
- Sixth Grade:**
Ethan Shih
James S. Ju
- Seventh Grade:**
David Kauo Barrera
Louis Orozco
- Eighth Grade:**
Aaruv Biyani



Fullerton School District
Educational Services - Preschool Program
Free Part Day & **Full Day/Full Year California State Preschool
Tuition-Base - Part Day & Full Day Preschool
Offered to children ages 3 to 5 years old who meet the following criteria:

- Children who turn 3 years old on or before December 1 of the current school year, or upon their 3rd birthday.
- Children who turn 4 years old by December 1 of the current school year.
- Children who turn 5 years old on or after September 1 of the current school year.

****Monthly charges may apply to families in the (CSPP) full-day/full-year program.**

CALIFORNIA STATE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM (CSPP)

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT THE FSD PRESCHOOL WEBSITE OR CALL OUR OFFICE AT 714-447-7499

- Provides assistance with toileting
- Low staff-to-child ratio with 1 adult for every 8 children
- Class size is 24 students



SCHOOL DISTRICT NOTES by Vivien Moreno

• Fullerton Joint Union High School Board:
(714) 870-2800 or www.fjuhsd.org

Fullerton School District
Meeting May 13

The meeting opened with the Nicolas Junior High Mariachi Band Club playing for the audience. Students requested the afterschool club in January and, with the help of a Phelps Grant, purchased instruments. After just five months of practice, the popular club performed for the Trustees. Nicolas will add an extracurricular Mariachi Band class for the 2025/26 school year.

FSD 2025 Employees of the Year

CERTIFICATED:

- **Brenda Ramos**
Preschool Teacher,
Maple Elementary
- **Christy Jones**
Elementary Grade Teacher,
Rolling Hills Elementary
- **Darcy Blake**
Junior High Teacher,
Ladera Vista Junior High
2025 OCDE
Finalist Teacher of the Year
- **Cristina Centeno**
Manager Certificated,
Raymond Elementary
- **Mike McAdam**
Administrator,
OCDE Manager of the Year

CLASSIFIED:

- **Gina Matz**
District Painter
Classified Skilled Trade FSD,
Classified Employee of 2025,
2025 Orange County Department
of Education (OCDE),
and California Classified Employee
- **Lacey Kraft**
Instructional Aide,
Maple Elementary
- **Christina Escobar Valezquez**
Custodial,
Pacific Drive Elementary
- **Vanessa Larios**
Classified Manager,
Encore Afterschool Program Director

School Plans for Student Achievement

Each year, every school in the district creates a School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA), using a team consisting of the principal, school site committee, which includes parents, and staff. The individualized plan utilizes discretionary funds to serve the local student population in alignment with the overall Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) goals. This year’s SPSAs focused on student achievement, digital and informational libraries, safe and secure environments, and family engagement. The SPSA summaries itemizing

money allocation were confusing when comparing different site’s family engagement funding. Schools listed similar program summaries, but funding distribution ranged from \$220 to \$39,000 with no details on what the money supported. Mainly written by principals and approved by committees, these plans allow schools to create unique programs for student achievement, sometimes finding new ways to support students that may only work in a single site, or modified programs offering districtwide student assistance.

Performance Sports Academy

The Board approved the contract with Delta Sports Performance Academy for 2025/26 school year, modifying the previous contract so that only FSD students can access FSD fields during school hours, while outside students may participate with Delta Sports training on FSD grounds after school hours.

Bond N Oversight Committee

The board voted to approve the new seven-member Measure “N” facilities bond oversight committee for two-year terms. The seven members represent two parents of students in the district one of whom is a PTA member, two community at-large members, a senior citizen organization representative, a

local business organization representative, and a taxpayers’ association member. The oversight committee makes sure the school district spends the taxpayer money responsibly on facilities and oversees the allowable administration of such funds.
Next meeting June 10.

School Nutrition Update

Nutrition and Wellness Coordinator, Candice Sainz, updated trustees on the “Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child” wellness program. Implementing nutrition and activity programs and gathering parent, student, and teacher feedback provides baseline data for future improvements. She surveyed students and staff concerning current PE curriculum physical activity and nutritional education, taste tested new options for breakfast and lunch, and gained feedback concerning services like the BBQ Truck and after-school activity opportunities. Ms. Sainz’s goals include increasing student and family nutritional knowledge, greater breakfast and lunch participation by offering tasty, healthy, made from scratch food; incorporating activity opportunities like afterschool field hockey, Zumba; and partnering with Playworks and Move to Eat Healthy programs. Teachers are positive about the changes and are requesting support concerning structured recess events and ways to incorporate movement in the classroom. Facilities improvements include

planning new active outdoor play settings and updated kitchen facilities to expand the from-scratch cooking program. This year, from-scratch baking with Chef Bithia enhanced the Breakfast at School Nutrition program, tripling breakfast service at Commonwealth Elementary and more than doubling participation at Richmond Elementary. Teachers noted less sleeping and greater attention spans due to student participation. The nutrition department accommodates special dietary needs including nut and gluten food allergies. Chef Bithia, who is also a parent in the district, is working to expand the from scratch program and is looking forward to greater student input and expanded kitchen facilities funded districtwide by Bond Measure “N.” The department supports expanded student taste testing, school gardens facilitating garden to plate food, a mobile dairy classroom, and the traveling BBQ lunch truck. They are also listening to student environmental concerns and have converted to recyclable plates, trays, bowls, and utensils.

Maple Elementary School Student
Removed in Restraints by Vivien Moreno

An incident at Maple Elementary School on April 2 has sparked significant concern regarding communication protocols for students with special needs. A 9-year-old student, diagnosed with a neurological disorder, was removed from the school in restraints by a Student Resource Officer (SRO) at the direction of Principal Dr. Amanda Sobremesana. The child was then taken to Children’s Hospital in Orange (CHOC) for evaluation. Initially, the parents were informed that their child was acting out; however, they were told there was no need for them to come to the school. They were subsequently unaware of their child’s removal until receiving a phone call from hospital staff several hours later, leaving them uninformed about the seriousness of the situation. Notably, they were not notified of the police involvement nor informed of any assessment indicating that their child

posed a physical threat. This incident raises questions about the appropriateness of involving law enforcement rather than relying on the district’s trained behavior support team, specifically designed to assist students with special needs. Reports suggest that the police were not made aware they were responding to a child with special needs, potentially creating a dangerous lack of context for the officers involved. Following the incident, Dr. Sobremesana was placed on leave during the investigation conducted by the Fullerton School District (FSD). She has since been reinstated and will undergo additional training. Meanwhile, the student who was traumatized by the incident has been transferred to another school leaving behind friends and a sibling. FSD Superintendent Dr. Bob Pletka indicated that privacy laws constrain the details that can be disclosed about the incident. He mentioned that law enforcement is only contacted when a child is perceived to be a physical threat. However, the lack of communication from the principal post-restraint and transfer is a continuing concern for the family.

CORRECTION

In the mid-May 2025 issue we reported that the meeting for the high school board would take place on June 10.
The correct date is June 3 at 6pm for FJUHS meeting.

see 9 year old removed
in restraints on page 11

Legal Insights

by Kathryn, 8th grade

New York Times Co. v. United States

Freedom of the press is one of the most important rights in the United States, but its scope was not always clearly defined. This changed on June 30, 1971, when a Supreme Court case established a precedent that the government could not censor the media from publishing classified information unless it posed an immediate danger. This ruling was a significant victory for the First Amendment and for freedom of the press.

The case that ignited this ruling was *New York Times Co. v. United States*. The central issue was whether the government could prevent newspapers from publishing the "Pentagon Papers," a collection of classified documents that revealed information about the U.S. government's actions during the Vietnam War.

The government argued that publishing these documents would harm national security, while the newspapers contended that the public had a right to know the truth. The First Amendment, which protects freedom of speech and

the press, was at the heart of the case.

When the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the newspapers, it made it clear that the government could not use prior restraint to stop the publication of news except in extreme cases. The Court affirmed that the First Amendment protects the right of the press to publish information, even if it embarrasses or criticizes the government. This ruling allows the media to perform their duty of keeping the public informed without fear of government censorship.

Although the case was initiated in June 1971 and resolved within a few weeks, its impact on U.S. history has been enduring. It strengthened the principles of freedom of the press and government transparency in a democracy.

The courage of journalists who report the truth, even in the face of legal challenges, resulted in a decision that continues to safeguard the rights of the press and the public today.



Making the Most of Summer

by Alicia, 9th grade

Summer brings opportunities for families to take breaks while spending quality time together. Warm weather, school-free periods and longer days come with summer vacations. These are the days that promise lifelong memories. Whether going around the corner or across the country, family vacations can be a fun and unforgettable time to share.

Enjoy summer vacation by finding a destination with something for everyone's tastes. National parks, beach hotels, and amusement parks could be good places to consider, as they offer a balance of rest and adventure. Nature lovers will enjoy scenic trails for hiking, lakes for swimming and camping under the stars. On the other hand, amusement parks cater to all ages with their thrilling rides and games. Thus, everyone would be occupied, from kids to teens to adults.

Another secret to spending quality time together as a family on successful vacations is the skill of planning ahead while anticipating possible last-minute changes. A rough itinerary for important events or places to include with your travels should allow some room for free exploration into the days alongside the important requirements of planning the trip.

Too much planning can make things

feel fast-paced, while too little planning can lead to stress or confusion. A balance could provide the family with the best of both worlds.

Set aside time for everyone involved. Going on a group bike ride, cooking meals together, and playing fun games in their hotel or camp space will all help cement that bond. Those are experiences that will probably solidify the vacation in people's memories far longer than any souvenir would last. Having everyone participate in activity planning and allowing everyone to contribute to the "wish list" for a trip helps build excitement.

Most importantly, great family vacations are not necessarily about traveling away with a lot of money out of pocket or a long distance. An outing for a few hours or spending part of the day exploring the local scene, or even what they would have called a "staycation," could be great under the right mindset. What matters is the time spent together.

Summer vacations bring families a break, a re-connection and a recharge. With a bit of preparation, a positive attitude, and an adventurous spirit, this summer shall surely remain unforgettable.



*First they came for the journalists,
we don't know what happened after that.*



Support the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) by contacting your members of Congress. Approximately 20% of PBS's funding comes from the federal government, and it has served as a vital voice in Southern California for over 60 years. Help PBS continue its important mission to serve our communities.

Here are some representatives you can call:

- Derek Tran 202-225-2415

- Adam Schiff 202-224-3841

- Alex Padilla 202-224-3553

- Lou Correa 46 202-225-2965

You can call these representatives even if you do not live in their district.

National CPR or AED
Awareness Week

by Mateo, 11th grade

When someone chokes or has a cardiac arrest, quick action is crucial because every second counts. About 70% of cardiac arrests happen at home, where there may not be time for first responders to arrive. That's why knowing CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and how to use an AED (automated external defibrillator) is essential for keeping your loved ones safe.

National CPR and AED Awareness Week, held in the first week of June, helps educate people on how to respond in emergencies and emphasizes the importance of CPR and AED use.

National CPR and AED Awareness Week started in 2008 when the American Heart Association (AHA), American Red Cross, and National Safety Council worked together to promote education on CPR and AED use during emergencies. The federal government officially designated the first week of June for this purpose.

To observe this week, it's best to

learn the proper techniques for performing CPR and using an AED. There are many helpful videos online that can guide you. It's also a good idea to know where the nearest AED is located, and you can use the PulsePoint app to find one nearby.

AEDs are usually in white boxes with clear markings, making them easy to spot. If you're already skilled in CPR and AED use, consider sharing your knowledge with friends and family so they can be prepared in case of an emergency.

National CPR and AED Awareness Week encourages Americans to learn CPR and how to use an AED. By being trained in these skills, more people can respond quickly during a cardiac emergency, which can save lives. This week serves as a reminder that we cannot predict emergencies, so it's essential to be prepared to keep those around us safe.



Fullerton School District
Citizens' Bond
Oversight Committee



Background

On January 14, 2025, the Fullerton School District Board of Education adopted a resolution establishing a Citizens' Oversight Committee to inform the public concerning the District's expenditure bond proceeds, review Measure N bond expenditures and present an annual report to the Board of Education as set forth in Proposition 39, chaptered at Section 15264 et seq. of the California Education Code.

Composition of the Committee

In accordance with Proposition 39 and the CBOC Bylaws, the composition of the committee is as follows: Seven members to serve for a term of two years without compensation and for no more than three consecutive terms. One (1) member shall be the parent or guardian of a child enrolled in the District. One (1) member shall be both a parent or guardian of a child enrolled in the District and active in a parent-teacher organization, such as the P.T.A or a school site council. One (1) member active in a business organization representing the business community located in the District. One (1) member active in a senior citizens organization. One (1) member active in a bona fide taxpayers' organization. Two (2) members of the community at-large.

Qualification Standards

To be a qualified person, he or she must be at least 18 years of age. The Committee may not include any employee, Governing Board member or official of the District or any vendor, contractor or consultant of the District.

Apply to Become a Member

The District is currently seeking new applicants for the Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee (CBOC). Please scan the QR code to be redirected to our online application or contact us by phone at (714) 447-7412 or email at yajaira_ramirez@myfsd.org



all the Arts Kids
for all the FOUNDATION

2025 Summer
Arts Adventure Camp



Week 1: June 2 - 6

Week 2: June 9 - 13

8:30am to 12 Noon

Continue your Artistic Adventure with us!

Follow on Social Media: www.allthearts.org



100 years ago, on the evening of May 28, 1925 the ground was broken for Chapman's Alician Court Theatre now known as the Fox Theater
PHOTO ABOVE IS COURTESY OF THE FULLERTON PUBLIC LIBRARY LOCAL HISTORY ROOM • PHOTOS BELOW ARE COURTESY OF THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES



One Big Century

Take a gander at the ground-breaking photograph, and imagine what downtown Fullerton was like on that day. There were wide lawns with friendly trees, horses and wagons, by Jove, a variety of dudes donning lids and hotsty-totsy duds, and see here, it's bellibone Alice Chapman unearthing the first spadeful for the foundation as the Big Cheese and other wise heads stand by. Spreading out in all directions, one would have had a dickens of a time strolling through the Valencia orange groves.

All about, a smattering of small farms, homes, churches and schools, some lovely two-story brick and modern wooden structures to the south on the main drag, and today, a bum's rush to send a ritzy theatre, Chapman's Alician Court Theatre, named after Alice, rising towards the sky. Mary Pickford and some top notch canaries would be riding the rattler all the way from Hollywood to enthrall the sod busters, flappers, storekeeps, zozzled juice joint operators of speakeasys, oil magnates and a full house of various eggs and mugs who forked over real dough to witness a lineup of live stage performances, and soon after, moom pitchers, which set thousands of little nerves tingling

that never tingled before. Locals came by foot or horse and buggy, and for the high rollers, maybe even a motorcar as seen here.

100 years ago, on the evening of May 28, 1925, when the switch was flipped on the theatre marquee, the doors were opened and the curtain was raised for the first time, Downtown Fullerton was still a rural town out in the boonies, but now, we were aiming our sights on the big time. The Chapman Building, then the tallest structure in all of Orange County, and the California Hotel were clearly visible a short distance away on Spadra. Even closer was the Masonic Temple just across the street, rising high over the one-story structures nearby.

C. Stanley Chapman, son of Charles, our first Mayor, saw the need for entertainment and went all in, hiring Meyer & Holler to design and build a magnificent theatre on the heels of their successful work on Grauman's Egyptian Theatre, which had opened in 1922. The Marr & Colton 3/16" pipe organ is no longer there, nor the organist Julius Johnson, but just in the nick of time for the century celebration there arrived a donated Roland organ. More on that coming right up....





A special thank you to Todd Huffman who coordinated this centennial event
PHOTOS BY MIKE RITTO



The Future Is Now

And, it's in color (ok, maybe not in print, but online it is). If you think nostalgia just ain't what it used to be, you missed the celebration, so let's walk through the experience. The closed parking lot to the east was now open, with valet service, so they parked our Lamborghini Countach, cleverly disguised as a Ford Edge, and they kept eyeballs on it as we went back in time. Wish we had a DeLorean. Heading to the front, we got in line for the tour, and were entertained by the trio you see here. The aroma of freshly popped corn wafted out to us and we knew we were either at a movie house or Ace Hardware.

Next, we checked out the nearly completed restoration in the lobby. Fullerton Historic Theatre Foundation President Brian Newell provided the tour intro and informed us that sponsorships were needed to reproduce the original 1925 lobby torchiere lights as shown, \$7500 each, which is their cost to have them handmade by local craftsmen. Imagine, your name will live on via an engraved plaque next to your torchiere and you will surely be mentioned at the 200-year celebration. Other sponsorship opportunities can be viewed at www.foxfullerton.org.

As soon as everyone settled into the vintage theater seats, the promo film was projected on the screen. We were all watching a film and were actually in, not on the Fox, many for the first time in years, maybe decades. Up next, a Buster Keaton silent film, but just before it began, someone yelled out a question regarding the newly donated Roland organ, "Where is the organist?" Well, he must have heard, because soon Dave Marsh came running down the aisle and as soon as the screen lit up, he played along flawlessly, with accents at just the right moments, all the while Buster was performing his insane acrobatics. Young and old were as mesmerized as they must have been when this film was first released. Dave, by the way, is President of the Orange County Theatre Organ Society and performs all over the US, and we were lucky the timing was right. We have a Fullerton connection too. Former Fullertonian Alice Pepper, who married, became Alice Critchfield, and raised her family here, told us her Mom played piano and organ for silent films back in the '20s as well. Florence Wheeler was self-taught yet was so talented she played many theaters in Connecticut for years.

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HITS & MISSES

by Pamela Mason Wagner © 2025



MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE – FINAL RECKONING:

A HIT AND A MISS

Mission: Impossible – Final Reckoning is a spectacle of extremes, a film that pushes both its star and its audience to the edge of exhaustion. Among its pleasures: Angela Bassett's commanding voice delivers the familiar "impossible mission" over a tape that self-destructs in 5 seconds; Tom Cruise, in peak, if aging, physical form, swims away from a sunken submarine in nothing but tight black briefs; and a heart-stopping airplane chase features Cruise wing-walking through South Africa's towering ravines—leaving viewers to wonder what's real and what's CGI.

Cruise returns as Ethan Hunt, the shadow-dwelling operative who trusts his instincts more than orders. *Final Reckoning*, the eighth—and reportedly final—installment in the franchise, throws Hunt and his team into their most perilous mission yet: stopping a parasitic AI known as "The Entity" from destroying the world. But the threat doesn't end there—villain Gabriel (Esai Morales) is racing to seize the AI first and use it to unleash his own brand of chaos.

If only the whirlwind of flashbacks and references to earlier films in the franchise didn't completely fracture the already unwieldy story. Trying to follow who's chasing what, where, and why becomes a mission of its own. But scene by scene, shot by shot, the film delivers: cleanly choreographed action, clearly defined stakes, and wordless storytelling through loaded glances between talented actors.

At 2 hours and 50 minutes, watching it is exhausting. Filming it? A marathon that lasted over two years. The production spans the globe—UK,

Malta, Norway, South Africa's Blythe River canyon—and crams in everything from North by Northwest-style plane pursuits to Sound of Music mountaintop spins. Religious iconography, including nods to the Pieta and the resurrection, hints at deeper themes: belief, redemption, and legacy. Will Hunt's team and the president believe in him—or pull the plug?

The film dances between eras. A vintage ITT push-button 1970's office phone sits on the president's desk. A 19th-century sextant plays a key role in helping Grace (Hayley Atwell) escape on a dog sled. The looming AI threat feels very 2025, but a critical clue? Stored on a floppy disk.

It's not tech that saves the day, but memory—specifically, that of William Donloe (Rolf Saxon), a disgraced CIA analyst exiled to the Aleutian Islands. His recall of a lost submarine's coordinates just might save the world. Analog trumps digital.

The film's only genuine joy surfaces in Donloe's cozy, rustic cabin, where he lives happily with his Inuit wife Tapessa (Lucy Tulugarjuk). In a touching scene, Donloe thanks Hunt for getting him demoted, three decades earlier, in the first *Mission: Impossible*—because that derailment led to love, peace, and purpose.

Which begs the question: Is Cruise, as Hunt, saying goodbye, too?

In May 2025, he hinted this would be his final mission. If that's true, *Final Reckoning* is not just a cinematic farewell—it's a thunderous, heartfelt salute to a character defined by doing the impossible. And the perfect popcorn movie to start Hollywood's summer 2025 season.

OUR TOWN CROSSWORD

"NAcL" by Valerie Brickey (answer key on page 15)

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- ACROSS
- DOWN
1. Luggage
5. Weak poker hand
10. Treacherous, as winter roads
13. Sch. near the Rio Grande
14. Soccer superstar Lionel
15. "If you ask me," in text
16. Move: Abbr.
17. Brewery kilns
18. Like cotton candy
19. 2023 Barry Keoghan film
21. Divvy up
23. "High ___ kite"
24. Like offline interaction, initially
25. Gaynor of "South Pacific"
27. Aired again
29. "Shoop" group
33. Links org.
35. Catch on
36. British Gram?
37. Good and honest folk
43. Musical Yoko
44. "And now, without further ___..."
45. Lakers org.
46. California lake full of lithium
50. Outstanding bills
54. Leered at
55. "This Is India" novelist Santha Rama ___
57. Presidential nickname
58. Cantaloupe coverings
60. New England house style
62. Guitar accessory
63. "Repeat ___ me"
66. Go on and on
67. Love, in Lima
68. Baby grand, e.g.
69. Sheltered, nautically
70. Recipe amt.
71. Primp
72. Has no choice
1. College financial officer
2. "Relax, soldier!"
3. Buffy player Sarah Michelle ___
4. Lady Macbeth's "damned" tormenter
5. Love, in Lyon
6. Cultured set
7. Org.
8. Suffix with journal or novel
9. Spanish laugh
10. Powerless
11. Impudence
12. Hither and ___
15. Long Island town
20. Farmer's dog, in song
22. K-O connection
26. "At Seventeen" singer Janis
28. Suitable
30. "There was an old woman who lived in ___..."
31. Filmmaker Spike
32. Adolescent
34. Sign-off from an admirer
37. Comme ci, comme ca
38. Goes from Tokyo to Kyoto?
39. Sucker
40. Results of some bombs: Abbr.
41. Paula of pop
42. Sally Field's "Norma ___"
47. ___ sax
48. Not even
49. Fictional gentleman thief Lupin
51. Ricky's signature song on "I Love Lucy"
52. Chophouse choices
53. The Brady kids, e.g.
56. "___ Burr, Sir": song in "Hamilton"
59. Former Buccaneer Warren
61. Disney transport
62. Cindy Crawford of "Ted Lasso," for one
64. Coniferous tree
65. ___ kwon do

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Historic McColl Site Marker on southwest corner of the intersection of Sunny Ridge Drive and Rosecrans Ave



VIDEO *OBSERVER*

by Emerson Little © 2025

See videos on YouTube @emersonlittle1901

Digging Into the History Behind the "McCull Site" Marker on the Rosecrans Trail

Many residents who grew up in Fullerton in the 1970s and 1980s remember the McColl Superfund Site, where oil companies used to dispose of refinery waste. This was in the back of my mind as I was walking up the paved sidewalk portion of the Rosecrans Trail. On the opposite side of the street, at the southwest corner of the intersection of Sunny Ridge Drive and Rosecrans, I found a historic brown plaque sitting on a rock in a drought-resistant garden housed behind a fence within the Los Coyotes Country Club golf course. This historic marker memorialized the McColl Site and inspired me to dig deeper into the history of the location, while simultaneously leading me to a short hike on the Rosecrans Trail.

The "McCull Site" plaque on the corner of Sunny Ridge Drive and Rosecrans read "Completion of Construction - October 1997." Inscribed into the plaque was the following: "Thanks to the diligent efforts of the residents and elected officials of Fullerton, the McColl Site Group, The California Environmental Protection Agency, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency, this former waste site has been restored to a golf course. The work performed makes the site safe for public use and friendly to the environment."

However, this land in the past has had a history of being used as a disposal area for environmentally hazardous material. According to EnviroStor, the State of California's Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)'s online data management system, the 22-acre area of land in question was formerly used as a refinery waste disposal facility in the 1940s and 1950s. More specifically, from 1942 to 1946, the area had petroleum waste that "seeped into the soil and groundwater, creating a hazard for the community,"

according to the the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website. Refinery waste was left in 12 unlined pits, or sumps, on the site.

The history section of the California DTSC webpage for McColl goes into further detail, stating that "it is estimated that approximately 97,100 cubic yards of contaminated material (72,600 cubic yards of solid waste and 24,500 cubic yards of contaminated soil) is contained in the waste sumps," which mostly consisted of "an acidic sludge waste generated during the refining process for high octane aviation fuel during the 1940s." In the 1950s and 1960s, drilling mud was dumped over some of the sumps to control odors while the Los Coyotes Country Club golf course was being built.

According to the EnviroStor database, homes went up in the area in the late 1960s. In 1978, residents began to seriously complain about odors and health issues, which led to investigations by local, state and federal agencies that found that "the soil and groundwater on the site contained thio- phene (THTs); sulfur dioxide, and various volatile organic compounds VOCs) including benzene."

The EPA was then called in, and their original cleanup plan was "excavation and disposal of wastes at an approved disposal facility," according to EnviroStor. A State court injunction stopped the contaminated soil from being transferred, which led to the EPA changing its clean-up plans for the soil two more times: once in 1989 and then again in 1993, according to the DTSC website.

My grandparents distinctly remember driving by the area at the time and seeing people in white hazmat suits at the site. In the 1990s, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency capped the sumps, walled them off



from groundwater and lined drainage channels to contain the toxins, according to the federal webpage for "Cleanup Activities" at the McColl Superfund Site.

The former waste site "is now located entirely within the boundaries of the Los Coyotes Country Club. The portion of the golf course built over the site opened in 1998," according to the DTSC. Essentially, the golf course was expanded to cover the closed area, but the EPA continues to review the safety of the site every five years.

Walking down Rosecrans today, you wouldn't know that the golf course was formerly an oil waste disposal area unless you looked carefully to find the "McCull Site" plaque on an obscure rock in the country club's drought-resistant garden. The only reason I even noticed it was there was because of an out of place bench facing the golf course fence. The historic plaque on the rock can be seen through the bars of the fence. I noticed it while I was waiting for the stoplight to change and cross the street to hike on the Rosecrans trail, which is really popular among bicyclists.

On the opposite side of the street from Ralph B. Clark Regional Park, the 1.63 mile Rosecrans trail begins

near Fullerton Fire Dept. Station #6 and follows Rosecrans Avenue, which its name derives from, before ending at West Coyote Hills Tree Park. It is a relatively flat paved pathway with an adjacent narrow dirt bike path next to it. Eucalyptus trees line the trail as it runs by Coyote Hills Park on the corner of N. Gilbert St. It continues downhill until it curves by an Azalea bush and some cacti and cuts between neighborhoods to reach Tree Park, where it transitions from one of the flatter trails in Fullerton to one of the steepest, making its way sharply uphill to reach Parks Road. In my opinion, this trail seems to largely be used as a way for bicyclists to travel between Tree Park and the Castlewood Trail.

So, the next time you're riding down Rosecrans, and you're stopped by the southwest corner of the intersection of Sunny Ridge Drive and Rosecrans, look for the plaque for the McColl Site Marker. To read the government's full 68-page Five Year Review Report from 2022 for the McColl Superfund Site, visit the following link: 5th 5-year review rpt, w/appendices A-G or visit the Fullerton Public Library Local History Room to learn more about Fullerton's former oil waste disposal area.

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Orange County Grand Jury Report: Long-Term Solutions to Short-Term Rentals

As the popularity of short-term rentals (STRs) continues to rise in Orange County, residents find themselves caught between the allure of additional income and growing concerns over quality of life. Defined as rentals lasting fewer than 30 days, STRs have become a focal point of contention within communities, raising questions about their impact on local infrastructure and resident satisfaction.

A recent investigation by the 2024-2025 Orange County Grand Jury highlights the complexities surrounding STRs. While some residents argue these rentals disrupt neighborhoods and burden city resources with increased code enforcement, the Grand Jury's findings reveal a more nuanced reality. Notably, cities experiencing significant growth in STRs do not consistently report a corresponding spike in complaints.

The report underscores that effective management strategies are within reach. Some cities have successfully implemented measures to address issues, suggesting that there is much to learn from their approaches. Conversely, those that have banned STRs often find themselves in a frustrating cycle of enforcement, akin to a game of "whack-a-mole," where shutting down one unpermitted rental only leads to the emergence of another.

One alarming trend noted in the investigation is the leniency shown by many Code Enforcement (CE) departments. Fines for STR violations are rarely pursued, and the collection of the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) on unreported STR income remains sporadic. Some cities rely on what they call the "honor system," trusting STR owners to accurately report and remit their taxes.

Contrary to popular belief, the Grand Jury found no clear evidence that STRs are undermining affordable housing in the cities they studied. The report goes on to suggest several best practices for city councils and planning departments, advocating for revisions to STR ordinances and the use of third-party digital tools to enhance code enforcement and improve data tracking for TOT collection.

Orange County's status as a premier international destination—boasting attractions like Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, and its picturesque coastline—has a long history of vacation rentals, dating back to the 1920s. However, the advent of online booking agencies (OBAs) has transformed the STR landscape, making it easier than ever for property owners to market their rentals to a global audience. This surge in visibility has led to growing tensions between STR operators and local residents who may view these rentals as a nuisance.

The heated discourse surrounding STRs is not limited to individual complaints; it reflects broader social tensions within the community. Some cities have opted for outright bans, while others impose strict limits or no limits at all, leading to a patchwork of regulations across Orange County.

The Grand Jury's study focuses on the thirty-four cities in the county, particularly emphasizing areas with the highest concentrations of STRs as well as those that have chosen to implement bans.

In its examination, the Grand Jury thoroughly investigated STR permits and the effectiveness of existing bans before compiling a list of strategies aimed at improving the quality of life for residents while accommodating the needs of business owners.

STR operators typically must secure a business license, register for a permit, submit reports, and pass inspections to operate legally, all while adhering to strict timelines for complaint resolution. With numerous OBAs like Airbnb and VRBO facilitating rentals, properties may have multiple listings, making enforcement of policies significantly more complex.

As the debate over STRs continues, it's clear that Orange County is at a crossroads. Balancing the interests of residents who seek peace with those of operators hoping to capitalize on their properties will require thoughtful dialogue and effective policy implementation. The lessons drawn from the Grand Jury's investigation may be key to shaping a sustainable future for all.

See the full report here:
https://www.ocgrandjury.org/sites/jury/files/2025-05/Long-Term_Solutions_to_Short-Term_Rentals.pdf

Temporary moratorium on short-term rentals

by Saskia Kennedy

The Fullerton City Council discussed a proposed temporary moratorium on new short-term rentals (STRs) on May 20. This initiative aims to protect public safety and welfare while the city evaluates the impact of STRs and develops appropriate regulations.

The moratorium would halt approvals for new STRs for 45 days, but it would allow existing rentals to continue generating revenue, which has contributed approximately \$1,054,000 from the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT).

Discussions regarding STR regulations intensified following the adoption of Ordinance No. 3290 in November 2020, which established a permitting system for rentals of fewer than 30 days.

Modifications made in April 2021 prohibited "whole-house" rentals when the owner is absent and reduced the number of permits for such rentals from 325 to 100 while allowing partial rentals without restriction.

Although compliance with good neighbor guidelines is required, approximately 180 operators are currently unpermitted, complicating enforcement. There are also concerns about property modifications made for STR use that may pose safety risks. The proposed moratorium aims to provide city staff with time to reassess policies and address enforcement issues.

As of April 2025, there are 84 whole-home and 22 partial-home STR permits in place. Increasing complaints from neighbors about noise and parking have highlighted the impact of STRs on community dynamics. Councilmember Nick Dunlap proposed a permanent ban on anyone operating without a permit and potentially discontinuing STRs altogether. The proposal passed unanimously.

Ad Hoc COMMITTEE FOR CITY WASTE PROGRAM

by Saskia Kennedy

At the recent City Council meeting on May 20, city staff recommended the formation of an Ad Hoc Committee to evaluate options for a new Solid Waste and Recycling Services contract, as the current agreement with Republic Services will expire on June 30, 2027.

City Manager Eric Levitt proposed that two Council Members (to be appointed) work with city staff to develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) to ensure compliance with regulations, particularly under CalRecycle. This initiative aims to secure cost-effective, high-quality services for the community.

The Ad Hoc Committee will not have a direct fiscal impact but will guide the RFP development process. This guidance is crucial for meeting compliance and waste diversion goals while maintaining the quality of services.

Currently, the city is following an SB 1383 Corrective Action Plan due to delays in service implementation. However, it has received a state extension until June 30, 2027, to complete the RFP process. The Committee will review draft RFP content, evaluation criteria, and proposals, but it will not have decision-making authority and will disband once the contract is awarded.

Overall, the formation of this committee is a significant step toward aligning the city's operations with state mandates and community needs. This proposal was unanimously approved by the city council and meetings will commence soon.



Measure M2


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Spanish and Vietnamese interpretation will be provided during the webinar. For additional accommodations, email M2Review@octa.net at least 72 hours in advance. Visit octa.net/M2Review for updates and more information.

City Meetings

| | |
|--|---|
| June 2 at 4pm Transportation & Circulation | June 16 at 5pm Infrastructure and Resources |
| June 3 at 5:30pm City Council | June 17 at 5:30pm City Council |
| June 9 at 6:30pm Parks and Recreation | June 18 at 5:30pm Active Transportation |
| June 11 at 6:30pm Planning Commission | June 25 at 6:30pm Planning Commission |

How to contact your District Representative

| | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• District 1: Mayor Fred Jung (714) 738-6311 fred.jung@cityoffullerton.com• District 3: Mayor Pro Tem Dr. Shana Charles (714) 738-6311 shana.charles@cityoffullerton.com | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• District 2: Nicholas Dunlap (714) 738-6311 nicholas.dunlap@cityoffullerton.com• District 4: Jamie Valencia (714) 738-6311 jamie.valencia@cityoffullerton.com• District 5: Dr. Ahmad Zahra (714) 738-6311 ahmadz@cityoffullerton.com |
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Fullerton City Council Moves Forward with Sales Tax Measures for Ballot

by David Spargur

The Fullerton City Council unanimously voted on May 20 to start developing sales tax measures for potential placement on the ballot for either November 2025 or possibly June 2026. This decision enables city staff to begin drafting the appropriate language for these measures. The City Council intends to gather public input before finalizing which sales tax options will be presented to voters.

The proposed revenue from the sales tax is intended to support two main areas: street maintenance and public safety. The city is currently facing a projected operating deficit of \$9.5 million for the next fiscal year, and the sales tax measure may help address this deficit. An undisclosed city consultant has estimated that each 0.5% sales tax increase could generate around \$15 million annually.

Two options for the ballot measures are under discussion:

1. Single Measure: The first option is to present a single measure to approve a 1% "General Sales Tax Measure."

2. Dual Measures: The second option involves proposing two separate measures, each dedicated to a specific purpose: one for a 0.5% increase for streets and infrastructure, and the other for a 0.5% increase for public safety.

The single 1% sales tax increase would need to receive approval from a simple majority (more than 50% of voters). Although the measure would not dedicate funds to specific purposes, existing ordinance 3284 requires that 50% of new revenue be allocated to infrastructure, which includes streets and highways.

Conversely, the separate 0.5% tax increase measures would require 66.7% voter approval to pass. The difference in approval requirements is based on Proposition 13 and a 1982 court ruling that defined a "special tax" as one dedicated to a specific purpose and thus necessitating a two-thirds majority for passage.

Councilmember Zahra pointed out that past polling data indicated that the two-thirds majority requirement could make it more challenging for the measures to pass.

For instance, the Measure S sales tax proposal in November 2020 was not approved, with 57% of voters rejecting a 1.25% increase aimed at funding general city services.

Currently, Fullerton has a sales tax rate of 7.75%, the lowest in Orange County, while surrounding cities such as Placentia, La Habra, and Buena Park have rates of 8.75%. Some cities in Orange County, like Santa Ana and Seal Beach, have rates of 9.25%, and all cities in Los Angeles County have rates of 9.75% or higher.

During public comments, one resident suggested the implementation of a sunset clause, which would require future voter approval for the continuation of the tax. Other commenters, noted that a sunset provision might introduce complexities, such as increased costs.

The proposed ballot options were recommended by the Ad Hoc Finance Committee, composed of Mr. Bushala, Mr. Dean, Mr. Duong, and Mr. Smith. Mayor Fred Jung indicated that all concerns discussed would be considered in future meetings.

CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE TO ADDRESS SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PACKAGING REGULATIONS ON JUNE 3

The California State Board of Food and Agriculture will hold a meeting on June 3, 2025, from 10am to 2pm at the California Department of Food and Agriculture in Sacramento. The meeting will focus on single-use plastic packaging regulations and gather insights from agricultural organizations, policy experts, and businesses to tackle plastic pollution.

CDFA Secretary Karen Ross highlighted the importance of balancing environmental concerns with the needs of the agricultural community. This meeting follows the Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act (SB 54), which aims for a 25% reduction in single-use plastics by 2032, with public comments accepted until June 3, 2025.

Key speakers include Susan Robinson from the Circular Action Alliance and Gail Delihant from Western Growers, along with a delegation from Spain discussing agricultural technology collaboration. However, Board President Don Cameron raised concerns about the financial impact of regulatory changes on growers during challenging economic times. The board advises the governor and the CDFA secretary on significant agricultural issues and fosters dialogue among stakeholders.

For those unable to attend in person, the meeting will also be accessible via Zoom at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87122649005>.
Webinar ID: 871 2264 9005
Passcode: Board2025!
(For phone access, use Passcode: 2509326576)
(Simultaneous Spanish interpretation is available through the Zoom application.)

Read Opinion: *A Committee With Power, No Oversight, and a Donor at the Table* by Elijah Manassero in mid-May 2025 issue or online <https://fullertonobserver.com/2025/05/19/opinion-a-committee-with-power-no-oversight-and-a-donor-at-the-table/>

9 year old removed in restraints

continued from page 4

In light of these events, the parents reached out to the *Fullerton Observer* to emphasize the necessity for improved communication and proper protocols to protect vulnerable students. They are contemplating filing a formal complaint to document the incident and advocate for accountability and preventive measures for the future.

The Fullerton School District emphasizes the importance of fostering a safe and supportive educational environment. Officials encourage parents who notice challenges with their child's academic or emotional well-being to engage with teachers for assistance. Support services are available irrespective of whether a child has a special needs designation.

Meanwhile, a statement from the Fullerton Police Department, issued by Public Information Officer Kristy Wells, noted that state laws limit the release of information regarding police interactions with minors. She confirmed that a School Liaison Officer and a Behavioral Health Clinician were present during the incident and that communication with the child's parents occurred by phone at the scene. A follow-up meeting was also conducted, during which body camera footage was shared with the family. A review of the officers' actions is currently underway to ensure adherence to departmental policies.

As discussions continue surrounding this incident, it underscores the critical need for enhanced communication and support frameworks in educational settings to ensure the safety and well-being of all students.

CHARTER CITY WORKSHOP

Thursday, June 12 | 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Fullerton College

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| FULLERTON BOWLERO 1501 S. Lemon at 91 Fwy | 8:00 AM | 12:00 NOON | 8:30 PM |



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| FULLERTON BOWLERO 1501 S. Lemon at 91 Fwy | 8:30 PM |



OPINION: **Out of My Mind**

by Jon Dobrer © 2025 • [Jonathandobrer.substack.com](https://www.jonathandobrer.substack.com)

A Stranger in a Strange Land

—Exodus 2:22

No longer at ease... —T.S. Eliot The Journey of the Magi

I walked into a market in Redwood City in search of a normal drink to quench my thirst. Wasn't looking for anything exotic or one pretending to be healthy. Just kind of regular. What I encountered was completely disorienting. I didn't see Coke or Pepsi, or Fanta, 7 Up, Canada Dry or A&W. I felt I was losing my bearings, becoming dizzily disconnected and visibly disconcerted.

It was a shocking experience. I had every expectation of normalcy, of being able to walk into a market, see something recognizable, buy it and drink it. But not this day and not in this market. I was a Southern Californian and a "Stranger in a Strange Land."

The times I've felt out of place in the world have never been in foreign cultures but in returning to my country and culture and finding it changed and somehow foreign. I wasn't disoriented in my year in Vienna—a year of real change and adjustments. Learning to be on my own in a very foreign culture was an adjustment.

Living with another language and encountering the challenge of not being highly articulate but having to circumlocute and guess at words to get my point across, was both challenging and fun. But it didn't fundamentally alienate me or make me feel like a fish out of water.

Nor was I particularly in "culture shock," when I lived in Tunisia for two years—teaching English for the Peace Corps. Again with a foreign language—actually two: Arabic and French. Sure, it felt exotic at times—particularly the first time I stepped in camel caca next to my home. "Damn," I thought at first, but then I realized that this was pretty special and would remain in my memory banks longer than on my sandals.

As a guest in two nations, I rapidly adjusted to different rules regarding social space, modesty, political discourse and the limits of my free speech. I loved these new experiences and felt quite comfortable.

Culture shock hit when I came home. Returning from Vienna and adjusting to the anti-war movement and some fairly open rebellion against our government was hard. Coming home from the Peace Corps was even harder. I returned not to USC where I'd done my undergraduate degree but to rebellion central, Berkeley.

I'd left the States thinking of myself as a liberal (which I still do) but in Berkeley in 1969 I was perceived as quite conservative. I was confused. I had returned from the Peace Corps

**The MAGA plan
for my country
is the
social version
of New Coke,
and I reject it.**

with increased patriotism—a respect for American intentions, if not always American policies.

But I didn't recognize my country. I could get behind the anti-war protests but not the pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric and some violent exhortations from radicals. OK, sometimes the radicals were funny without meaning to be.

I heard lots of Marxism from people who'd never read any Marx save Groucho. There was a lot of posing but also some interesting people with hopes that ran the spectrum from idealistic to naïve to monstrous. In Berkeley of 1969 I often felt like a fish out of water.

Today this fish has long been out of once calm waters with once survivable temperatures. These waters roil and boil as I gasp longing for the comforts of calm, ordinary and normal.

Today it's not an anti-war movement that confuses me or the civil rights struggle that has to be fought again that discourages me. It's America.

It's our government that works to destroy itself. It's our president who cannot stay on message or policy (good or bad) but flits from position to position, from one assertion of fact and statement of values to their very opposite. If my critics accuse me of being confused, I readily, though tearfully, confess, that I am.

Once upon a time, I could agree or disagree with an American policy and still believe that I was on the same side with a common vision but only different paths to truth, justice and what we

thought was the American way. I believed in our good hearts and competence.

I could never have envisioned a convicted felon as president, a cabinet secretary trying to explain habeas corpus and not having a clue what she was talking about, a Secretary of Health who didn't believe in vaccines and undermined life-saving public health research and programs. I could never have imagined a Republican Party that would fall so in the thrall of a president that they could abandon a long-time ally and cleave unto Putin and Russia.

Women's choice under attack. Civil rights reversed. Ecology laws rescinded or ignored. The judiciary threatened and judges arrested. The Deptment of Justice becoming a tool for a single client: The President. Our universities being threatened with loss of grants and even their tax exemptions if they don't discipline as per the president's desires and hire and fire according to the president's whims.

Who are we? Where am I? It's not, I guess, the soft drinks that threw me. It's...it's, well, everything. I no longer recognize my country. I feel like a stranger in a strange land. As much as I have been at ease and comfortable with many social struggles, today I am no longer at ease.

I remember when Coca Cola attempted to replace its old formula and tried to sell us New Coke. We the People would have none of it.

Well, the MAGA plan for my country is the social version of New Coke, and I reject it. Yes, I want normal, but normal won't return by itself. We the People must again rise up and be heard.

OPINION: **AT HOME WITH THE HOMELESS**
by Andrew Williams © 2025 [HTTPS://WWW.PATREON.COM/C/THEEOPINIONATOR](https://www.patreon.com/c/theopinionator)

**Hypernormalisation
is a Thing We Must Not Give in to**

It's tempting to say chaos is the new normal. Even those of us viewing with alarm the destruction wrought by the Trump badministration find ourselves, at times, so overwhelmed by the incursions against due process, habeas corpus, the rule of law and all other democratic norms that we start to get numb. This is an effect of what is known as hypernormalisation—the idea that we know our leaders are corrupt and dangerous but feel that they are too powerful to oppose. It's the numbness that you feel when you begin to freeze to death—and just as dangerous. Because if we canaries pass out and keel over, who is going to sound the alarms as things continue to get worse?

This is not a time for silence. If anything, a redoubling or trebling of effort will be necessary to overcome the pull of listlessness and apathy. We need more protests, more phone calls, more petitions, more letters, more signs, and

more heat on those who have shown they are willing and eager to dismantle our democracy and who embrace the new cruelty. Hannah Arendt, who so often has the final word on fascists and fascism, wrote that "The death of human empathy is one of the earliest and most telling signs of a culture about to fall into barbarism."

Let's talk about that for a minute. We've heard words and phrases like "oligarchy," "kakistocracy," "stochastic terrorism" and "performative cruelty" tossed around a great deal in the past six months. We've also learned that the mission statement of the Trump badministration has nothing to do with moral, ethical governance and everything to do with doing the most harm to the greatest number.

**It's the numbness
that you feel
when you begin
to freeze to death
—and just as
dangerous.**

So what is their ultimate objective, or objectives?

First, take a good, hard look at the current state of unemployment. Then factor in how many more millions of jobs will continue to be lost as AI and automation technology continue to grow and learn. What will happen to all of us rendered unemployed by technology? Will we become a society of artists, using our now-unlimited supply of time to gain new skills and advance human growth? That sounds wonderful—even Utopian—but how likely is it?

What's more likely—and what seems to be the aim of this administration—is the sloughing-off of these millions, gradually cutting their access to good medicine, mental health, food and shelter until they are reduced to a subservient, dog-eat-dog existence. At the same time, the 1% continue to profit from their technological innovations. It's no secret that many of these individuals refer to the commonwealth as "useless eaters." The math and the logic of their machinations seem to lead inexorably to a culling of Earth's population, either through disease, starvation, exposure or—most likely—a combination of all three.

For more on the basis of this inhuman plan, see Thom Hartmann's essay "Red State Hell: The GOP Plan to Keep You Desperate, Sick, and Too Damn Tired to Fight Back."

And the current strategy to reduce dissent is a highly effective one: fear of imprisonment, fear of becoming unemployed—that's enough right there to silence a lot of people. For too many of us, our work is our worth, a spurious and delusional ideal that is built into

Western industrialized society. Religion, for all its faults, reminds us that we are all children of the creator, and thus possess innate worth—which cannot be traduced nor discounted.

This brings us back to our question: how do we stand against all this moneyed power? How do we resist and resist meaningfully? When do we reject the role of being good little consumers and start being authentically human? That time is now, and any action of resistance - even if it's the wrong action - is better than sitting with our hands in our laps.

So, yes, keep making phone calls. Keep making signs. Keep writing letters. Keep going to protests. If you think of other ways to protest, try them and if they work, suggest them to others. Above all, don't let the naysayers tell you that you're wasting your time and energy and that the overlords aren't paying attention. They are. And any sign of resistance is worrying to them because it means that there are people who aren't giving up and giving in, who are continuing to dissent despite the risks.

"I decline to accept the end of man... I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. The poet's, the writer's, duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past. The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail."

—William Faulkner

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Balance & Change

by Michelle Gottlieb, Psy.D., MFT, LPCC © 2025

The Journey of Change:
Exploring Personal Transformation

A question I often get asked: is it possible to change? The short answer is yes. But, naturally, there is a much longer answer.

If you are asking because you want another person to change, that is a very complex subject. The first point about creating change is the wanting to. Your wanting for someone else is not enough. We all have to make the decision that we are not satisfied or happy with something and are willing to put the work in to create change within ourselves. We cannot make someone else get there, no matter how much we love them or how clear this choice seems.

However, if you are asking for yourself, then the answer is still yes, but it is still much more complex. If you truly want to do it for yourself, you have a much better chance of making that change than if you are feeling pressured by someone.

Look at the behavior or thought pattern or habit that you wish to change. Notice what triggers it. Start creating different patterns. For instance, if you wish to stop smoking, notice when you smoke. Some people get triggered to smoke after eating. Get a bunch of sugar-free lollipops and have them available to put in your mouth after a meal instead of cigarettes. Have them readily available. There are many more steps to quitting smoking. In fact, it is one of the hardest addictions to quit, but this gives you an idea of what I am suggesting.

It is possible to change. It takes effort, patience, consistency, and self-forgiveness. You can do it, slowly. But you can do it. Stick to it and become the person you wish to become!

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Healthy Awareness

by Jo Ann Brannock, Ph.D. © 2025

Anxiety: A Major Disruption of Life

Over the past several years, anxiety disorders have significantly increased and have become the most common mental disorder. Approximately 30% of adults, not to mention children and teens, will experience anxiety sometime in their lives, although I have read that the percentage was much higher. Some of the symptoms include insecurity, helplessness, and being emotionally overwhelmed and overly aroused, which leads to unrealistic and irrational fear.

There are seven types of anxiety disorders:

- 1. Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD):** This involves chronic, uncontrollable worry about various objects or situations. Physical symptoms may include difficulty concentrating, muscle tension, and sleep problems.
- 2. Panic Disorder:** Characterized by sudden and intense attacks of fear, this disorder can cause difficulty breathing, heart palpitations, dizziness, trembling, feelings of terror, and a sense of impending doom.
- 3. Phobias:** These involve intense, irrational fears of specific objects or situations. Simple phobias might include fears of needles, rats, spiders, snakes, flying, heights (acrophobia), or enclosed spaces (claustrophobia).
- 4. Agoraphobia:** This is the fear of being in situations where escape may be difficult, such as using public transportation, being in open or enclosed spaces, waiting in line, being in crowds, or being alone outside the home.
- 5. Social Anxiety Disorder:** This involves anxiety about being embarrassed, humiliated, rejected, or looked down upon in social situations, such as public speaking or meeting new people.
- 6. Separation Anxiety Disorder:** This is characterized by excessive fear or anxiety about being separated from loved ones.
- 7. Selective Mutism:** This disorder involves not speaking in certain social situations, not due to a lack of ability but rather due to anxiety.

Related conditions include:

- **Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD):** Marked by intrusive, repetitive thoughts and urges to engage in ritualistic behaviors or compulsions.
- **Adjustment Disorder:** This involves significant distress that is disproportionate to the severity of the stressor.
- **Acute Stress Disorder:** Caused by exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violations, either through direct experience or witnessing.
- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** This results from life-threatening situations that evoke intense horror, characterized by flashbacks, nightmares, and impaired functioning.

How are these disorders treated?

People often cope with anxiety through defense mechanisms like denial, in which an individual protects themselves from painful experiences by refusing to acknowledge them, which can hinder healing. Effective management strategies include deep breathing exercises, desensitization techniques, time management, organizational skills, and regular physical exercise.

Psychiatrists frequently prescribe medications such as Valium and Xanax to alleviate symptoms quickly. However, these minor tranquilizers carry a significant risk of addiction.

As the awareness of anxiety disorders grows, it becomes increasingly vital for individuals to recognize the signs and seek help, ensuring they are not alone in their struggle against this widespread epidemic.



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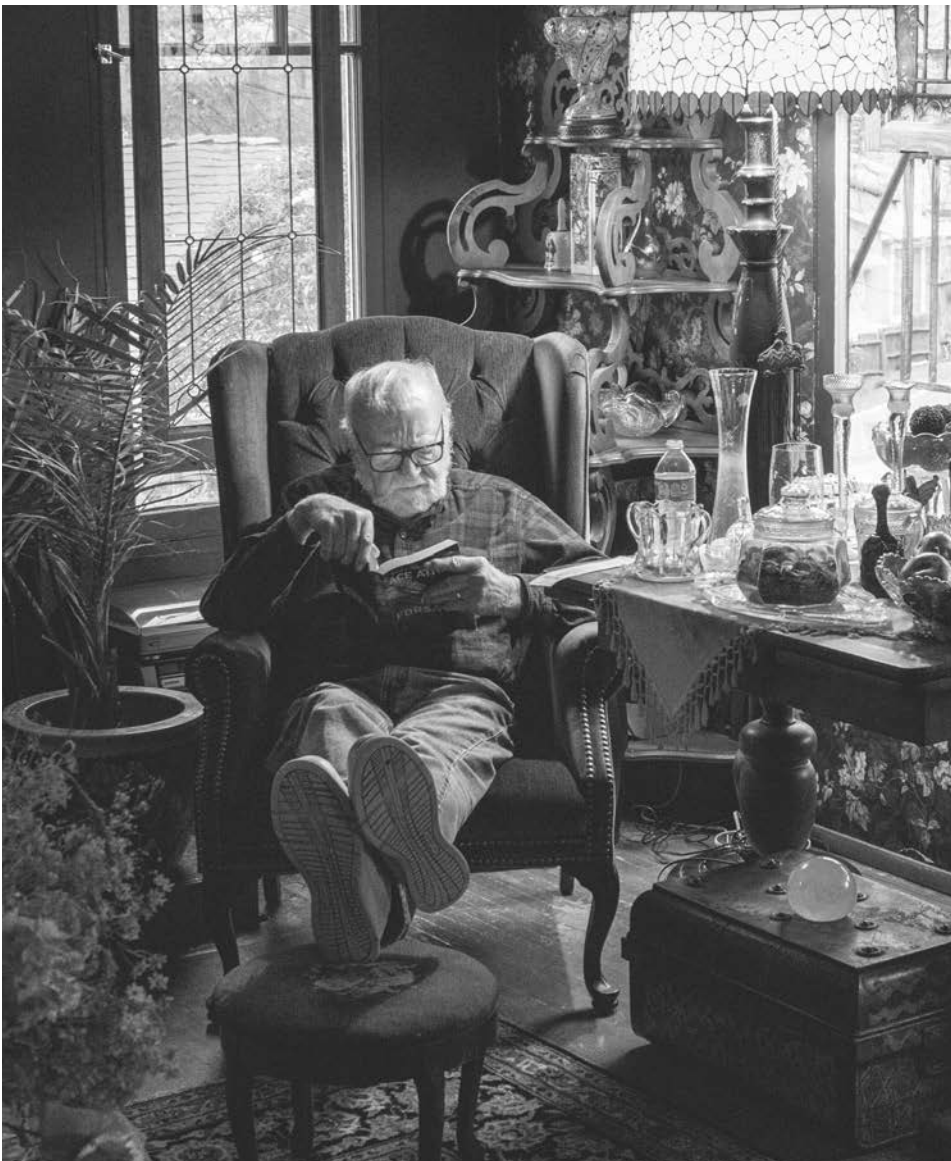
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A STORY OF READINESS AND RESILIENCE

by Yoyo Zheng, contributing writer for Troy Preparedness Club

In a world marked by uncertainty, where disasters and unforeseen emergencies can strike at any given moment, the significance of disaster preparedness cannot be overstated. Through a perspective shaped by her unique story, Julie Yang, the Deputy Chief of Staff for the Hawaii State Office of the Lieutenant Governor, thoroughly understands that readiness can often-times define the difference between life and death.

Raised in a military family, Julie moved to a different base every two to three years. One of the places her family lived was South Korea, a country still technically at war. As a result, all military households were required to make thorough preparations and remain ready to evacuate at any time. Julie explains, “We did this by keeping ‘go bags,’ registering all of our important items into a database including our vehicles so maybe they could be returned to us after the evacuation, and by doing evacuation drills.” Preparation even extended to assigning specially-sized gas masks to every member of the family. These measures were not just routine but essential for the safety of military families.

Julie recalls the constant awareness of potential threats that became second nature during this time. These early experiences not only cultivated a deep understanding of the importance of being prepared but also underscored the fragility of peace in conflict-prone regions. She credits these lessons with shaping her approach to leadership and her commitment to proactive planning. Fortunately, Julie’s family never had



Julie Yang

to utilize these safety measures, but her readiness and experiences instilled values of responsibility and vigilance that have stayed with her throughout her life. As Julie noted in an interview, “Although we never had to make use of these precautions, it made the families that lived there respect the seriousness of relationships between the countries in the region.”

Today, as Deputy Chief of Staff, Julie works tirelessly to make Hawaii a safer place to live. In a recent questionnaire, Julie emphasized the critical role disaster preparedness plays in her job, saying, “Being better prepared for and ready for disasters and emergencies is a significant component of that mission. A team of our staff, including me, spends some of our time attending trainings and drills to make sure we are ready for both natural and man-made disasters.”

Julie’s promotion of disaster preparedness serves as a rallying cry for all of us to take readiness seriously. Preparing for disasters is not just about personal safety; it’s about ensuring the well-being of entire communities. Her story, along with those of many others, reminds us of the vital importance of being prepared to respond effectively to emergencies.



Have you experienced a situation where disaster preparedness was useful or could have been beneficial? Please share your story with us! Use this QR code to answer a few questions.



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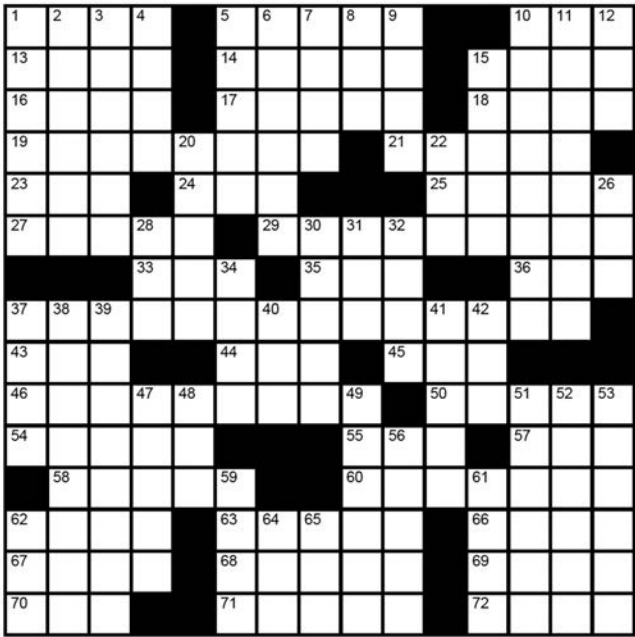
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ANSWER KEY TO “NACL” on pg 9:



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