News for the people, by the people

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CALIFORNIA TO RAISE MINIMUM WAGE TO \$16.90

The Labor Commissioner's Office has announced that California's minimum wage will increase to \$16.90 per hour starting January 1, 2026. This change reflects a 2.49% increase based on the national Consumer Price Index. Additionally, the minimum salary for exempt employees will rise to \$70,304 annually. As of now, there are no reports of a higher minimum wage specific to the city of Fullerton, so the statewide rate will apply.

Furthermore, the minimum wage for fast food workers, which was set at \$20.00 per hour on April 1, 2024, may see an additional increase of 70 cents, pending the Fast Food Council's assessment.

The minimum wage for healthcare workers is based on a tiered system that is higher than the state's minimum wage, and is scheduled to increase on July 1, 2026. Employers should be prepared for the financial implications of these changes in 2026.

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Pelicans at Tri-City Park Photo Courtesy of Mayor Protem Dr Shana Charles

CALL TO ACTION:

Support Our Immigrant Communities

by Saskia Kennedy

Communities in Orange County, including Fullerton, are facing unprecedented challenges due to illegal ICE raids. The Fullerton Collaborative met on November 3 to discuss how to assist those impacted by these actions. Experts highlighted the urgent need for an immigration defense infrastructure to ensure due process for individuals facing deportation.

Bethany Anderson, Executive Director of Camino Immigration Services, emphasized the shift in immigration policy under the Trump Administration in 2025, which has led to increased arrests and deportations without due process.

Bethany Anderson said, "This morning, I had a difficult phone call with a married couple who are clients of Camino. Two years ago, we filed a family petition on their behalf. One spouse is a U.S. citizen; the other is an immigrant. The only legal process the immigrant spouse is eligible for is a multi-step one:

- 1. File a family petition.
- 2. Apply for a waiver for unlawful presence.
- 3. Finally, complete the visa process through the U.S. Consulate abroad.

"But none of that can move forward until that first petition is approved. So,



they waited - patiently - for over two years. They've obeyed every law, kept every appointment, and held onto hope. The immigrant spouse has no criminal record. They've done everything the "right way." Then last week, they received a notice to come in for an interview. That may sound routine - it's not

"In over ten years of practicing immigration law, I have never seen a simple family petition case require an interview. These petitions are almost always approved via mail. This isn't routine. It's a trap.

"If my client, a husband and father, goes to that interview, there's a high chance he will be detained.

"If he doesn't go, his petition will be denied, ending any chance to obtain legal status. Either way, he's being funneled into removal proceedings. And if he's deported, he'll face a 10-year bar before he can return. That's 10 years separated from his wife and children.

Continued on page 7



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City Moves Toward Permanency For Parking Pilot Program

The City Council considered making the Early Morning Parking Pilot Program a permanent fixture following a positive evaluation since its launch. Initially established to address neighborhood parking conflicts, the program operated with a self-sustaining model supported by a \$50 permit fee.

City staff reviewed the program in response to a directive from the Council on April 4, 2023, exploring options to streamline parking regulations for residents. The City Traffic Engineer presented three alternatives: repealing the ordinance, creating a citywide permit program, or modifying hardship exemptions.

Ultimately, on March 19, 2024, the Council approved the continuation of the pilot program with a focus on a more user-friendly online application process.

The pilot was set to expire in December 2025. Since implementation, requests for Early Morning Parking Exemptions have notably decreased, with staff receiving no active requests or complaints about the program's administration.

To date, approximately 700 permits have been issued, generating \$17,000 in revenue against an estimated \$18,000 in costs, including staff time and vendor fees. As awareness of the program grew, staff expected permit issuance to increase. The \$50 annual fee remained unless costs rose, with comparisons drawn to a \$39 fee for a single overnight parking citation.

On November 18, 2025, the Council expressed unanimous support for a pilot program of overnight parking permits for residents.

Fire Engine Approved For Repairs After Collision

The City Council has approved a purchase order for \$115,719 with ReNewell Fleet Service to repair Fire Engine Ladder Truck 360A. This truck was damaged during an emergency response on June 14, 2025, when a driver who failed to yield and ran a red light collided with it. The ladder truck was essential for emergency operations, and its out-of-service status affects response times.

The repair costs are covered by the Equipment Maintenance Fund (Fund 67), with plans to seek reimbursement from the responsible party's insurance.

The repairs, including body work and mechanical restoration, are urgent to comply with National Fire Protection Association standards. A sole-source contract with ReNewell Fleet Service was recommended to expedite repairs and avoid delays, ensuring the city could maintain effective emergency services.

STATEMENT

From Council Member Ahmad Zahra

Dear friends and fellow residents,

I will not be seeking re-election to the Fullerton City Council next year, and my term will end in December 2026.

I'm grateful to the many community leaders and residents who have been encouraging me to run for another term, but leadership means staying true to one's values and purpose. Seeking local office was never about attaining titles or holding on to perceived power. It was an opportunity to serve, bring new perspectives, and show what community- driven representation looks like. That I've done.

Together, we made history, delivered progress, and stood up to self-serving interests — empowering residents and inspiring a new generation to fight for what's right. I am proud of what we've accomplished, and I look forward to finishing my term [December 2026] with the same purpose and heart that inspired me to run in the first place.

– Ahmad Zahra Fullerton Council Member, District 5

LETTERS TO EDITOR -

ENCOURAGE THE CITY TO RECONSIDER

On November 14, 2025, Gabby Rice, in her article "opinion: The Loss of Les Amis Patio Signals Threat to Community and Local Businesses" writes about the recent decision by the city of Fullerton to remove the patio of Les Amis restaurant. I found the article accurate in describing the patio as a meaningful community space.

Its jazz music and inviting atmosphere encouraged people to gather, and its absence has left the alleyway noticeably empty and lacking energy. This decision affects more than one business.

The patio helped define the identity of the neighborhood, and the significant increase in outdoor dining fees described in the article places added strain on local establishments that contribute to that identity.

While the city may be aiming for regulatory consistency, the broader impact of these changes reduces the sense of connection that once made this area distinct.

Metaphorically speaking, spaces like this patio are beams of support in the structure of a community; removing them weakens the whole.

I encourage the city to consider how these choices shape the daily experience of residents and to work with the community to preserve what makes Downtown Fullerton unique.

Mallory Gonzalez Fullerton

Congratulations Fullerton Observer

Congratulations on your "Well Deserved" recognition from the League of Women Voters. You guys are defiantly an asset to our community.

Jon Lee Fullerton

Stories, Opinions, and the Nov 4 Council Meeting

Thank you so much for publishing "Broken Promises and Donor Privilege: ... The Story of the Les Amis Patio" and "Opinion: City Council Majority said ...", coverage of the City Council Meeting on November 4.

Regarding the Story of the Les Amis Patio by Elijah Manassero, it was well written and informative. The city junta, a la the Bushala Bloc, led by dictator Fred Jung, with his minions Jamie Valencia and Nick Dunlap, backed by gangster and political donor Tony Bushala, decided that Jinan Montecristo had to pay exorbitant rates for her patio, whereas Bushala's patio at Santa Fe Express is free. Where is the money going?

As to the Opinion by Aelin Lavoie, "City Council Majority Said there was no Money for Immigrant Families ...", of course, Jailhouse Jung's wealthy mega church, Grace Ministries, received a land giveaway while Jung claimed that there were no funds for Latino-dominated South Fullerton. Is Trumpty Dumpty rubbing off on the Bushala Bloc? Whose funds are they, the public's or the Bushala Bloc's?

It may be time for the California Attorney General and the FBI to look at the goings on in Fullerton Politics. Fullerton may be following in the footsteps of Anaheim and former OC Supervisor Do. Thank you, Fullerton Observer, for publishing those articles.

Don Waterbury Fullerton



Dear Fullerton Observer,

Your paper gets delivered to Morningside. We all look forward to reading it. We have 421 people reside here. I took this picture of 31 of our Service people that live here. Thought you might be interested in putting it in your paper. The vets here have service in wars/conflicts from Korea, Vietnam, and the various Global War in Terror regions/eras. Best, Patsy Zima Fullerton

ullerton bserver

The Fullerton Observer is a community newspaper founded in 1978 by Ralph and Natalie Kennedy, Roy and Irene Kobayashi, and a group of dedicated friends. Local volunteers are responsible for creating, publishing, and distributing the paper across the community. As a not-for-profit organization, all revenue is reinvested to enhance our independent and non-partisan publication.

Our mission is clear: to inform Fullerton residents about the institutions and societal forces that impact their daily lives. We empower citizens to engage actively, ensuring that private and public entities serve the community in lawful, transparent, and socially responsible ways.

We offer local news coverage and a community calendar to strengthen connections and celebrate the diversity that defines our nation. As an all-volunteer newspaper, we rely on the support of our subscribers and advertisers.

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Fullerton Welcomes Delegation from Sister City Fukui, Japan by Pam Keller

The Fullerton Sister City Association warmly welcomed a delegation from Fukui, Japan, during the City Council meeting at City Hall on November 18. Co-Presidents Pam Keller and Leah Yamamoto addressed Mayor Jung, Mayor Pro Tem Charles, and members of the Fullerton City Council, sharing their excitement about the Longstanding relationship between the two cities.

Established in 1989 under Mayor Molly McClanahan, the partnership with Fukui marks 36 years of cultural exchanges and visits, highlighting the bonds formed through cooperation and friendship.

Keller expressed gratitude to the City of Fullerton for hosting a Welcome Dinner for the visiting delegation and recounted a day filled with activities, including tours of City Hall, the Police and Fire Departments, and a stop for lunch at the beloved

California fast-food chain In-N-Out. The delegation also previewed the Fullerton Museum's latest exhibits.

Yamamoto provided details about the current delegation, which includes the following members: Fukui Mayor Mr. Saigyo Shigeru, Mr. Horikawa Hideki, Vice-Chair of the Fukui City Council, Director of the Commerce, Industry and Labor Department Mr. Kuroda Yoshihiro, Director of the Secretariat Division, Mr. Fujii Keitaro, Deputy Director of the City Council Secretariat, Mr. Ono Yoshisada, International Affairs Director, Mr. Raimaru Hiroki, Mr. Ito Go, General Affairs Division, Ms. Kitade Yuko, Official Interpreter

Additionally, the delegation includes the following Fukui City Council Members: Mr. Fujita Satoshi, Ms. Tsuda Kaori, Mr. Terashima Kyoya, Mr. Uragami Hayato, Mr. Sano Hiroshi

The delegation also comprises seven residents who are part of a Citizen Delegation.

"We have been planning this trip for months and are excited to introduce them to our Education Community," Yamamoto said, highlighting upcoming visits to Cal State Fullerton, Fullerton College, and Fullerton Union High School.

In an exciting announcement, the Co-Presidents revealed plans to take ten Junior Ambassadors to Fukui in June 2026. The selection process was competitive, with numerous applicants, and Keller expressed confidence in the chosen group of young representatives.

As the evening progressed, attendees looked forward to hearing from the Fukui delegation, starting with Mayor Saigyo, followed by Vice Chairman Horikawa and citizen group representative Eiichi Yamazaki.



Inflatables Take Over Local Lawn: A 10-Year Tradition of Holiday Cheer by Roy Rivenburg

The inflatables invasion began 10 years ago with a trio of blow-up witches for Halloween. Looming over the of Doreen and Guy Haarlammert's house on Dorothy Lane, the fan-powered broomstick riders were followed by a jumbo Santa balloon for Christmas.

Then Doreen caught inflatable fever. The symptoms were mild at first. For Valentine's Day, she displayed a few king-size hearts. "Then I thought: I'm going to do all the holidays," she says. By 2017, she had collected air-filled decorations for everything from Cinco de Mayo to St. Patrick's Day.

Today, with a rotating cast of more than 100 inflatables, the Haarlammert front yard is slathered with electricpowered creatures almost year-round. The only big gap is between July 4 and Halloween. To fill it, Doreen tried to find Yom Kippur inflatables, but came up empty. "Î'm still searching," she says.

of holiday-themed French bulldog blow-ups, a tribute to her household

The Haarlammerts' pop-up potpourri has attracted many compliments over the years, but it also has drawbacks. The home's electricity bill runs about \$200 a month, Guy says, even with solar panels on the roof. And windy days can wreak havoc. Doreen once chased three inflatables down the street in her pajamas, she says. Another time, Santa's head sailed off in a gust.

Also, because the blow-ups run from 7 am to 9 pm daily over several weeks, they typically break down after three to five years, she says. Some cost as much as \$600 to replace, Guy notes.

But seeing the joy on passers-by's faces is worth it, says Doreen, a Fullerton High grad whose father -Dennis Murphy – co-founded the American Basketball Association.

"Every time I drive by, it puts a smile

But she has tracked down a handful on my face," says Dan Harrison, (minus the face shield). of holiday-themed French bulldog whose family uses Dorothy Lane as a Off-duty inflatables in the face shield. shortcut to Placentia. "It's kinda sad between holidays, because it's just an empty lawn."

Other fans include Rosary High School, which Doreen says once borrowed a few inflatables for a dance, and the scores of families who show up around Christmas.

On Friday evenings in December, the inflatables extravaganza expands to include free hot cocoa, cookies and photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus (played by Doreen's nephew-in-law and niece, Mike and Debbie Williams of Brea). The costumed Claus visits debuted during Covid-19, when kids weren't able to have their pictures taken with St. Nick at local malls, Doreen says. She asked Santa Mike to don a face shield, pose with the children, and send the snapshots to a Wi-Fi printer stationed in the yard. The tradition has continued every Yuletide since

Off-duty inflatables are stored in a Yorba Linda warehouse owned by a Haarlammert son-in-law. Or, if the blow-ups are on deck for the next holiday, they wait in a backyard outbuilding that also holds backup decorations in case any front yard balloons mal-

Normally, she buys a couple of new blow-ups for each season, but in 2025, she scaled back the number of inflatables on display after vandals kept cutting the string lights that circle her lawn.

"Maybe some people don't like all this," she frets. So she also reset the timers to turn everything off at 9 pm instead of 10:30.

She even considered dropping every holiday except Christmas and Halloween. "But I didn't want to shut it down if it makes people happy," Doreen says. "I love doing this for kids."

Fullerton School District Board Meeting

by Vivien Moreno

The 5-hour Fullerton School District Board (FSD) meeting on November 18 began with the ceremonial swearing in of new Trustee Miguel Alverez. He was officially sworn in at the October 31 special meeting, but this ceremony was done with his family and friends surrounding him.

SNAP Suspension Response

FSD mobilized within 48 hours to serve families impacted by the temporary suspension of SNAP benefits during the recent government shutdown. FSD worked with community partners and volunteers to create weekend family food boxes feeding 95 FSD families in need.

FSD gathered and delivered the food, taking food allergies and special requirements into consideration as the government cut off food for families. Dry goods, protein sources, and fresh produce are still strongly needed. To provide food or volunteer, call Victor Trejo, FSD's Director of Nutrition Services, at (714) 447-7435.

Sunset Lane Butterfly Way Station

Girl Scout Troop 7127, originating from Sunset Lane Elementary, and their advisor, Elizabeth Yee, presented their Girl Scout Silver Award Project: an official Monarch Butterfly Way Station that enriches the life science environment at Sunset Lane. Leah Kim, London Pye, Shiloh Santos, and Lauren Yee worked with their GS Leader, Shari Santos, to create a garden with drought-tolerant, California native plants that provide year-round food and habitat for all stages of the Monarch butterflies.

The garden includes plants, "puddlers" (raised dishes that provide water), and information links and QR codes that provide NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards) aligned life science information in age-appropriate lessons from kindergarten to 6th grade.

New Superintendent Search

The Trustees voted to hire Leadership Associates, an executive sourcing firm, to facilitate the search for the new FSD superintendent after Dr. Bob Pletka retires in February 2026. This is the first time going through this process for 4 of the trustees, and over 13 years since the district last hired a new superintendent. Leadership Associates found the current Fullerton Joint Union High School District Superintendent, Dr. Steve McLaughlin, 4 years ago.

GATE Program Update

Superintendent of Assistant Education Services, Dr. Adaina Brown, presented options concerning the district's Gifted and Talented Education Program (GATE) policies of student identification and priority enrollment for designated hubs placed throughout the district. Current FSD policy tests all second graders using a National Association for Gifted Childrenapproved assessment. Parents may opt out of testing their child.

Qualified students receive enrichment from a GATE-certified teacher at their home school or transfer to a designated GATE school. Designated schools prioritize enrolling students from specified feeder schools over students transferring from non-feeder schools, forming a 3rd grade cohort that stays together until 6th grade.

Current policy has older identified

GATE students, whose home school is a designated GATE school, prioritized to join the cohort GATE class and possibly pushing a transfer student out of the cohort class into a cluster group at the GATE campus. This happened in August at Acacia Elementary.

FSD GATE currently serves 1,431 students districtwide. The GATE review committee, composed of parents, teachers and staff, recommended retaining the designated hubs, and once the cohort reaches 34 students, splits into two clusters of 17 students each, creating two classes supplemented with regular program students and taught by a GATE-certified teacher.

Earlier, the GATE Coordinator referred to studies showing GATE students achieve better in clusters. The trustees shared additional concerns. Trustee Vanesa Estrella questioned equitable representation in the program, and Dr. Brown and Trustee Ruthi Hanchett shared a belief that GATE students provide "models to less high-achieving students," which indicated a misunderstanding concerning GATE-identified students.

Some GATE students exhibit highachieving qualities, but many do not. Compare identifiers of gifted students and high achievers at the FSD GATE website:

www.fullertonsd.org/departments/ educational-services/gate

These contrasts reflect why GATE identified students tend to thrive in a specialized academic environment with trained instructors and additional parental involvement.

The trustees requested additional consideration of unconscious bias concerning assessment, defining additional designated schools, the prioritized enrollment policy, and maintaining equitable GATE cluster sites at students' home schools.

The trustees approved the proposed cohort split policy, with Trustee James Cho disagreeing, but he was outvoted

Dual Language Program Expansion

Last summer, Trustee Vanesa Estrella requested, with board support, that the administration explore dual language program expansion if parental interest existed. Dr. Brown presented parent survey results, available classroom areas, and staff support data.

Maple and Hermosa Elementary schools had the strongest parental support, with high staff support and space at Hermosa, and low space and moderate staff support at Maple.

Trustee Estrella, Trustee Miguel Alverez, and Trustee Hanchett postponed opening a new program until the 2027/28 school year, but sent the administration back to find a south Fullerton school that would support an expanded dual language Spanish program.

The Fullerton School District will host a Dual Language Program Parent Information session on December 11 at 5:30 PM.

The session will provide details about the district's Spanish and Korean language programs.

Parents interested in attending can register at www.fullertonsd.org.

For more information, contact the district office at (714) 447-7416.

is on December 9.



New California Education Legislation 2025 by Vivien Moreno

In October, Governor Newsom signed these new California education laws. (Resources: Fourth District PTA: The Advocacy Communicator, November 2025, www.fourthdistrictpta.org, EdSource Legislation, September, and October 2025, www.edsource.org, Cal Matters Digital Democracy, www.cal

AB 461 Ahrens: Truancy.

The law repeals state criminal repercussions for student truancy and chronic absenteeism. It reallocates enforcement money into social service programs that address children's basic mental and physical needs, which prevent them from attending school regularly.

AB 495 Rodriguez: Family Preparedness.

legal counsel to create secure guardianship plans caring for their children in case of family separation due to ICE roundups, military service, or incarceration.

The law allows parents and guardians to designate from a wider field of temporary guardians and

This law allows families to secure makes it easier to undo the guardianship transfer once parents are safely back home.

> It mandates that California licensed daycare facilities cannot ask for or record a family's immigration status. Contact your child's school counselor or administrator for additional information.

AB 1454 Rivas, Muratsuchi: Literacy.

This bill suggests a combined phonics and sight word reading curriculum using current education research for a accessible to all students, including garteners.

second language learners and literacy learning challenged students. The bill provides \$480 million for dyslexia uniform state literacy curriculum screening of all incoming kinder-

SB 19 Rubio: Threats.

This law makes it a crime to threaten to commit a violent act at a school. daycare, university, workplace, house of worship, or medical facility on social media or by other means.

Even if the person claims they did threat.

not intend to carry through the actions, it becomes a crime as soon as people fear for their safety in these settings because of an action by someone posting on social media or calling in a

SB 48 Gonzalez: Pierson.

AB 715 Zbur, Addis. Anti-Semitism Education. These laws work in tandem, reinforcing California's anti-discrimination laws.

These laws appoint a Religious Discrimination Coordinator (RDC) who focuses on identifying and proac-

Religious Discrimination Prevention. tively preventing any antisemitic occurrences in the educational settings

> The RDC team will provide teacher training to identify discriminatory situations and alternative processes to halt religious discrimination or actions effectively.

SB 1264 Gabriel: Nutrition.

A bipartisan bill appointing a committee to define "ultra-processed" foods by 2028.

This includes food and beverages containing the following food dyes: Blue 1 and 2, Green 3, Red 40, and Yellow 5 and 6. The law defines nutritional school meals by emphasizing fresh foods and "from scratch" meal preparations, with no fried food options. Any food or beverage falling under this new definition will be banned from sale on campuses by

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- 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.

For more information visit FSD Preschool website or call our office at 714-447-7499

CALIFORNIA STATE
PRESCHOOL PROGRAM
(CSPP)

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









TUITION-BASED PRESCHOOL

The next FSD Board meeting

Fun With the Family

by Keshav, 9th Grade

In a world that moves faster each day, where screens glow longer and brighter than sunsets and schedules fill before we notice. Even when life gets busy, there is always time to create lasting memories with loved ones.

Time spent with family is essential, as it strengthens bonds and builds long-lasting memories. One of the best ways for families to connect is by spending time outside. The outdoors provides a refreshing break from screens, schedules and stress. Activities such as going for a walk, having a picnic or playing a sport encourage teamwork and communication. When families enjoy nature, they can focus on the world around them without the distractions of technology.

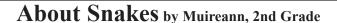
Some of the most memorable moments happen at home. Family activities such as cooking, board games or watching a good movie bring everyone closer in a simple yet unforgettable way. Home is where people can relax, be themselves and enjoy

each other's compa-

Another way to strengthen family bonds is by exploring

something new together. Trying new activities brings excitement and adventure. Families might start a small garden to keep them busy each day, or take a class that gives them the determination to do their best. These shared experiences help everyone learn from one another and discover new skills they may not have known they were interested in.

In the end, it's not the activity that matters most but the time spent together as a family. Even small moments like a quick chat before bed or a meal can create lasting memories. In busy lives, people often forget that the simplest moments can be the most meaningful. Families grow stronger when they make time for each other. The best memories are made not by what we do but by who we do them with.





Do you find snakes creepy? Don't! There is nothing to be afraid of!

You might be thinking, "But don't they bite?" Snakes only bite for prey or if they feel threatened. Another interesting fact is that they go places using the power of only their muscles. Very impressive, right? Snakes slither from side to side to cool off.

There are many different kinds of snakes, such as the California King Snake, rattlesnakes, and pythons. Snakes are the kings and queens of staring contests! They never blink! This is because their eyelids are clear.

Snakes also smell with their tongues! How crazy is that?! Keep fighting for snakes!

Gifts That Don't Come Wrapped by Aarna, 11th Grade

Snowflakes float softly to the ground, each carrying the joyful glimmer of childhood. A fire sways side to side, crackling and popping in harmony with the cheers of children as they unwrap presents encased in patterned wrapping paper. The real presents, though, are nearly invisible; quality time spent with family and friends, sharing stories by the fire, a sip of creamy hot cocoa from one's favorite mug – all tied together with a ribbon of

The gifts that don't come wrapped often carry the greatest weight. In fact, many older adults say the most meaningful aspect of the holidays isn't presents; it's presence. In today's bustling world, time seems to tangle together and leaves people exhausted. But when one makes an effort to cherish the moment, their experiences become beautiful memories. With years of gathered wisdom, seniors often remind us that the moments we share can outlast any store-bought gift.

Presence can take many forms: storytelling, kindness, handmade cards and family traditions, to name a few.

Storytelling can create bridges between generations. Seniors, in particular, harbor rivers of memoriesmemories of holidays celebrated before technology and online shopping, before the world sped up. They remember family recipes passed down from generation to generation, from hand to hand, memories of the sneaky smiles of mischievous children. These stories transform into everlasting gifts that enhance the holiday spirit.

Additionally, kindness is a gift

requiring no wrapping paper. Kindness can manifest in numerous ways, including as a hand-

written note, a cheerful smile or sharing advice. It shows up in the smallest gestures.

For seniors who may be missing loved ones or remembering holidays once spent in fuller households, these small acts can brighten the entire season. Kindness can also be visible in the thoughtfulness behind a gift.

Finally, traditions are another significant aspect of the holidays. Traditions carry history, stories, identity, and heritage. When seniors see their favorite recipes, songs, customs, or rituals carried forward, it is an act of honoring their lives and experiences. Whether it's lighting a candle, baking a certain dessert, or watching a classic movie together, traditions can connect generations in a way that no store-bought item can.

During the busiest time of the year, being fully present is rare. We're often thinking about our next task, next event or next place we have to be. But the holiday season can become truly meaningful when we slow down enough to notice the people around us.

Being present is a present! By simply putting down the phone, listening without rushing and laughing without watching the clock, one can see that the most unforgettable moments are the quiet ones: the conversations after dinner, the shared laughter, the long hugs at the door. One can realize some

The Fascination Behind Fruitcake by Grace, 11th Grade

Once a symbol of wealth, fruitcake now has a bitter reputation. Seen as too dense, dry, and unappetizing, most fruitcakes today are mass-produced and filled with overly sweet candied fruits, which contribute to the negative reactions people have toward them. Yet fruitcakes remain staples at weddings and during Christmas.

Fruitcakes are cakes made with fruit, nuts and spices. Sometimes they include alcohol, though mass-produced versions often do not. Alcohol helps keep the cake moist and adds a more nuanced flavor. It also allows the cake to last longer, as alcohol kills bacteria by breaking down proteins and disrupting cell membranes. High sugar content also contributes to fruitcake's long lifespan through osmosis, which draws water away from microorganisms and dehydrates them.

The origin of fruitcake may trace back to ancient Egyptians, who presumably placed it in tombs for consumption in the afterlife. Another possible origin is Rome, where fruitcakes consisted of barley mash, pomegranate seeds, nuts and raisins with wine. These cakes, called "satura," were eaten by soldiers as they traveled across the empire.

In the Middle Ages, during the Crusades, knights used fruitcake as nourishment while traveling to the Holy Land or nearby areas because it stayed edible during their six-month

Fruitcake went through a period in which butter was prohibited during Advent, a time of fasting. Stollen, a German version of fruitcake made with flour, oil, yeast and water, temporarily replaced butter. Fruitcake returned after Pope Innocent VIII, the fifth pope after the one who set the butter ban, allowed butter again, but only if people paid an annual tax.

When the New World was discov-

British ered, colonists brought fruitcake across the Atlantic Ocean, where it became

more common, especially in regions without fresh fruit.

In 1896, Collins Street Bakery as well as Claxton Bakery began the trend of fruitcake commercialization. Both originated in the South due to inexpensive access to nuts, a fruitcake staple. Dislike for fruitcake grew partly because of mass production.

Other influences included Tonight Show host Johnny Carson, who joked, "There is only one fruitcake in the entire world, and people keep sending it to each other." Marie Rudisill, known as the Fruitcake Lady, also appeared on the show in segments called "Ask the Fruitcake Lady," where she answered questions with unpredictable, sometimes profane responses. Warner Brothers cartoons likewise mocked fruitcake in the early 20th century.

Today, fruitcake appears in almost comical contexts. For example, the annual Great Fruitcake Toss in Manitou Springs began in 1995. Contestants attempt to throw a fruitcake as far as possible, with the record around 1,450 feet. This record was set in January 2007 when eight Boeing engineers built the Omega 380, a mock artillery piece powered by compressed air from an exercise bike. One fruitcake was even claimed to have been baked in 1878 and passed down for generations.

In the end, fruitcake, although disliked by much of the public, will likely stay well-known for years to come. With a rich history and a memorable presence, it is hard to imagine a future in which fruitcake fades from relevance. And why not try it sometime? You might actually like it.



The Dental Corner

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The staff, curators, artisans and many others have outdone themselves this time. To do the re-opening of our Museum Center justice, after a thorough renovation that revealed lost details of the space, and the immaculate installation of new exhibits would take a book, not just a page.

Happy solution, don't wait, go soon and see 'em.

We spent much of our time immersed in the expansive John Van Hamersveld exhibit, drawn in by his iconic Endless Summer Poster art, a great variety of his post-future and other artistic ventures, plus his many immediately recognizable album covers. Among the hundreds he was commissioned to create, you will see Beatles and Rolling Stones art, among many others. (see photo of Stones cover band Jumping Jack Flash). It is imperative to go back at least two more times to do justice to it all, including "A Man Named Charlie: Fender's Unsung Hero."







EARLY DECEMBER 2025



Let The Magic Begin

When we are too young to believe it, most of us were told by our elders that time goes by faster and faster the older one gets. This turns out to be true, especially when looking back to days at "FJC." Securing a part-time job reserved for starving students, this guy was sent to the Library basement under the heavy hand of good ol' Joe, a lifer who would have liked to see all of us with flowing locks and tie-dye shirts sporting a buzzed head and khaki uniform instead. The basement, as well as Joe and the entire building, are history, replaced in 2005.

Time does go by faster now. The Library seemed new, and those days seem like recent, not ancient history. Suddenly, it's time for a Performing Arts Center where the sculpture garden stood at the corner of Lemon and Chapman Avenues. Will we see a new Hornet there soon? Hmm. We shall see.

No more radio and TV classes in the old theater, but one would certainly rather be in the new Library or the new

center, set to open in 2028. This development is not sudden in the least bit to former Dean of Fine Arts Robert Jensen, who lobbied for these new facilities for many years.

Robert's take on the groundbreaking, "A large audience attended the groundbreaking, which is cur-



Above: Robert Jensen Below Assembly Member Sharon Quirk-Silva







rently under construction. The center, the future home of the award-winning Theatre and Music programs, will include a proscenium stage, a black box theatre, a recital hall, a recording studio, a choir room, rehearsal halls, shops, classrooms and offices."Among many other speakers, "Assembly

Member and alumna Sharon Quirk-Silva and Dean of Fine Arts Grant Linsell spoke about the importance of creating performance spaces for student voices, student performances, student confidence development, and the unique role of truth-telling that the arts can provide."

New In Town

Not quite brand new, but seemingly in a new location whenever spotted. This time we caught up with Milo's Coffee and Co. in the lot next to Williams Insurance on North Harbor. They move about, spending the day in various locales. To find them, keep an eye out, or even better, go to their Instagram page @miloscoffeeco. They serve "serious coffee vibes literally out of a vintage VW bus. This farm-to-cup coffee spot sources its beans directly from a sustainable farm." Say hi to Caesar and Amber. Oh yea, Milo is the dog.



Music

We always try to give you a heads-up when live music events are on the horizon, and this time it's on the Bootleggers stage on Saturday, December 6, starting at 6 pm. Relive the 90s with Vitalogy (Pearl Jam), Light Grenade (Incubus) and Coup DeVille.

www.eventbrite.com will hook you up with tickets.





Photo Quiz Send answer to Mike at AllMedia@sbcglobal.net



Last time:
Confusing perhaps,
but taking the photo
from the front would
be too easy. Not for
Mark, first correct
answer, it is in front
of Barbarians
Barbershop at 825 N
Harbor.



OUR TOWN CROSSWORD © 2025

"BRIEFLY" by Valerie Brickey (answer key on page 19)

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68						69						70	Г	П
71			Т	Т			72	Г		Г		73	Г	П

ACROSS

- 1. Allows
- 4. Low digits
- 8. Some bow ties
- 13. Econ. yardstick
- 14. Up in arms
- 16. Lucy's sitcom neighbor
- 17. Number of weeks per annum?
- 18. Question from the backseat
- 20. D sharp equivalent
- 22. Breton or Gael
- 23. Fast-food chain with Epic Burritos
- 26. Like always
- 31. Register
- 33. Solo vocal piece, similar to an aria
- 34. King or queen
- 36. ___ salts
- 38. Crew nickname for the mechanical shark in "Jaws"
- 39. "Round and Round" metal band

- 41. LA region
- 43. Self-images
- 44. Catchall category
- 46. ____ spray
- 48. Rowland , CA
- 49. Denver, for one
- 51. Stringed-instrument player
- 53. Abhors
- 55. Let go
- 58. Young newts
- 60. Tatted
- 61. Hamlet's famous line
- 67. Opposite of pos.
- 68. Stoli alternative
- 69. "Common Sense" author
- 70. Santana's " Como Va"
- 71. 1953 Alan Ladd western
- 72. Shipshape
- 73. Gob

Down

- 1. Leered at
- 2. Stab
- 3. Gossipped
- 4. Rarer than rare
- 5. En route, in text
- 6. Farm female
- 7. TV show with SJP
- 8. Bother
- 9. Noshed
- 10. Demure
- 11. Casual top 12. Ctrl-__-Del
- 15. Perlman of "Cheers"
- 19. "Frozen" queen
- 21. Fictional news conglomerate in "Succession"
- 24. Cagney and Lacey
- 25. Kaitlin of "High Potential"
- 27. "Your Majesty"
- 28. Obvi
- 29. Cravat
- 30. Fertile soil
- 32. In the neighborhood

- - 34. Sulk
- 35. Words on a Wonderland cake
- 37. "The Thing" actor Richard
- 40. Start to phone?
- 42. Behind schedule
- 45. Set aside
- 47. Daughter of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle
- 50. Bye, to Tigger
- 52. Padilla or Schiff, from CA
- 54. Halt
- 56. " later, alligator"
- 57. Skirted
- 59. Obsessive fan
- 61. Festoons with Charmin. informally
- 62. and aah
- 63. Compound banned from some plastics, for short
- 64. Ball or bass ending
- 65. Deadheat
- 66. __ whim



The City Council approved on November 18 a \$173,301 Professional Services Agreement with Dunbar Architecture to provide architectural services for the Police Department Building Renovation Project.

Additionally, the council has authorized a \$200,000 budget transfer from existing Infrastructure Funds to cover potential unforeseen project expenses.

The council accepted a \$2.5 million grant on July 15, 2025, from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the renovation. The grant does not require a local match, but the budget transfer aims to address any ineligible costs and contingencies.

The Fullerton Police Department cur-

rently operates out of three buildings, including a federally recognized his-

Upgrades will address hazardous materials, health, safety, and operational needs. Planned improvements include renovations to locker rooms, jails, the front lobby, a Crime Scene Investigation Laboratory, and the historic courtyard.

Following a Request for Proposal process, Dunbar Architecture was selected for the project, primarily due to its experience with historical building renovations. The design phase is expected to take about eight months, allowing construction to begin in Fiscal Year 2026-27.

CALL TO ACTION: Support Our

Immigrant Communities continued from the front page

"This is what I mean when I say our immigration system is being dismantled - not to target criminals, but to pad detention and deportation numbers.

"This is what I mean when I say the government is not pursuing "bad actors." But the easiest targets: families who try to legalize, who trust the system, who believe in the promise of fairness. When I cry injustice, this is what I'm talking about. Nothing about this is fair. Nothing about this is just. Nothing about this keeps families together or serves the public good.

"Get in line," they say.

"Do it the right way," they say.

"Just leave the US and come back legally," they say.

"They are lying."

This has created a critical situation, where many immigrants find themselves without legal representation or support.

To combat this crisis, the Fullerton Collaborative is mobilizing to raise funds and provide necessary legal

resources. Here's how you can help:

1. Donate to Camino Immigration Services:

caminoimmigrationservices.org

2. Contact the Fullerton City Council to advocate for the establishment of funds to support immigrant defense services.

Previously, funding requests were denied by Mayor Fred Jung and Council Members Nick Dunlap and Jamie Valencia, so they are the only ones who can bring it back to the City

Council Member Emails:

Councilmembers@cityoffullerton.com Fred Jung:

fred.jung@cityoffullerton.com

Nicholas Dunlap: nicholas.dunlap@cityoffullerton.com Jamie Valencia:

jamie.valencia@cityoffullerton.com City Council office: 714-738-6311

Your support is vital to protect the rights of our immigrant communities. Act now.

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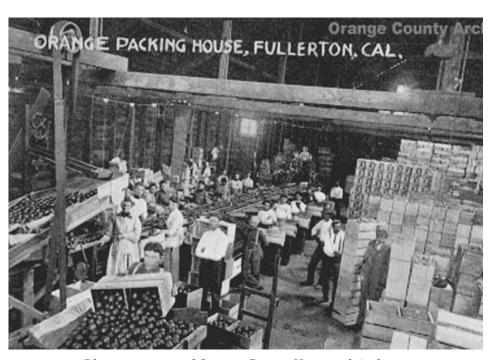
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Orange County's History of Worker Ownership by Benjamin Hintz

Fullerton, and OC more broadly, have a rich history of a special kind of business: cooperatives.

Cooperatives, also called worker's cooperatives, are businesses where, instead of being owned by investors or a single owner or even family, are owned by their very own employees, and operations are managed democratically from the ground up.

All things considered, it's not a common business model, especially not in the United States anymore. That wasn't always the case, though.

In the Gilded Age—from roughly 1870 to 1900—workers' cooperatives

weren't as uncommon, especially in the agricultural sector. This was in response to big businesses dominating the industry at the time. In order to lessen the burdens of competition with these trusts, farmers banded together to form agricultural cooperatives. Workers, too, formed cooperatives so that they could control their own workplaces and prevent the exploitation that they would face otherwise in factories owned by the ultra-rich of their time.

During this time period, Orange County was experiencing a significant turning point. A crossroads—in some ways quite literally—between industry and agriculture, since it was dominated both by packing houses and early centers of manufacturing and also large swaths of farmland, especially orange groves.

According to the Orange County Historical Society, as many as half of the packing houses were at one point owned by cooperative associations. One such association would grow to become Sunkist, which to this day remains the largest agricultural cooperative. They also famously license out their brand to Keurig Dr Pepper, the two of whom cooperatively produce Sunkist Soda.

It is difficult to identify former packing houses today; it is even harder to identify who owned them. However, the historical prevalence of cooperatives leaves little doubt that they have had a lasting impact on Fullerton's history. After all, Fullerton was central to the railway system that transported OC's (quite literal) fruits across the country, making us the largest sellers of citrus in the nation. A feat aided massively by cooperative associations, from growers to packers. It is no exaggeration to say they made OC, and Fullerton by extension, what they are today.

3

The History of Pools by Alicia, 8th Grade

The swimming pool is a major part of recreation, fitness and luxury, with a long and diverse history. The history of

pools reflects human technological development and changing views on living, as well as the enduring bond between people and water.

The evolution of pools can be traced back thousands of years, from large ancient stone basins to contemporary high-tech oases found in modern backyards.

The earliest known swimming pool was built around 2500 BCE in the Indus Valley city of Mohenjo-Daro. This structure, called the Great Bath, is 39 feet long and about 8 feet deep. Made with double-fired bricks and lined with tar, it is believed to have been constructed for ritualistic purposes. Its simple slab walls show an early understanding of water storage and shared space. From there, pool technology spread into ancient design philosophies.

In Greek culture, pools were linked to athletics practiced in the gymnasium and reflected the culture's value for fitness and discipline. The Greeks used bathing for practical and therapeutic reasons. The Romans, however, viewed pools and baths as an essential part of daily life. Roman baths were large buildings that housed hot bath pools and lukewarm lounging pools, and featured sophisticated plumbing systems. They served physical needs and also acted as places for social and political gatherings. The Romans perfected early water engineering, including aqueducts, drainage and heating systems.

After the decline of the Roman Empire, public baths disappeared for nearly a millennium as dirt and disease became associated with them. It took about a thousand years for public swimming pools to reappear with the goal of restoring bathing practices and swimming instruction. One early example was St. George's Baths, opened in 1828.

In the 20th century, many free-form pools were created for pleasure rather than necessity. Water treatment and filtration systems have improved, increasing safety and cleanliness. Backyard pools became popular after World War II, as nuclear families grew, leading to renewed investment in pool construction as a household amenity.



The Evolution of Winter Wear

by Yoyo, 8th Grade

As November comes to a close and cold winter weather settles in, we begin reaching for thicker

layers and cozy accessories. However, winter wear has evolved significantly throughout history.

Outerwear that was once purely functional has become more innovative and a form of art and expression.

In prehistoric times, humans stayed warm with waterproof clothing made from animal skins, furs and plant fibers.

According to the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology, Otzi the Iceman, discovered in 1991, wore clothing made of hide, leather, and braided grass, as well as a bearskin cap. Although the main purpose of clothing in earlier periods was protection from the elements, our ancestors still had a personalized style, decorating their clothes with fringes, shells and beads. Winter wear later shifted as fashion and trends began playing a larger role alongside functionality.

In the Victorian era, women stayed warm by layering long stockings and extra wool or flannel petticoats under their outer garments. Cloaks made of wool, silk, or velvet were common for both men and women, though only the wealthy could afford high-quality materials. Innovations in the vulcanization of rubber by individuals such as Thomas Hancock and Charles Goodyear in 1843 were also a major step toward creating practical water-proof clothing.

In 1936, Eddie Bauer invented the first down jacket, naming it the Skyliner. Bauer used quilted down for insulation and to prevent the material



Images for the Blizzard Proof and Skyliner Jackets in the inaugural Eddie Bauer catalog. | Photo courtesy of the Eddie Bauer Archives.

from bunching at the bottom, making the coat both lightweight and warm. He was inspired after a near-death experience with hypothermia on a fishing trip. His invention greatly increased the popularity of puffy winter jackets, which remain a staple today.

Today, winter clothing combines fashion with advanced technology to create functional, stylish garments. Brands like PrimaLoft use synthetic fibers woven in layers to trap body heat while maintaining breathability. Materials have also become more sustainable, with more manufacturers using recycled down, polyester and cotton

Whether it is prehistoric clothing made of animal skins or puffy jackets made of synthetic fibers, the evolution of winter wear shows how humans have adapted to their environments and societies over time. The future of winter clothing will likely continue to blend style with technological advancements and sustainable practices.



Fullerton Mythic Dojo invites the public to try one class for FREE

WED & FRI from 9 AM Older Adult Training

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VIDEO OBSERVER

by Emerson Little © 2025

See videos on YouTube @emersonlittle1901

Pearson Park Has Roots in Anaheim History

Travelling a short way down Harbor Boulevard over the 91 Freeway from Fullerton to Anaheim, it's hard not to notice Pearson Park. With a brightly colored mural honoring Kobe and Gianna Bryant, a set of basketball courts, a public swimming pool, a beautiful cactus garden, and a spacious outdoor amphitheater, among other amenities, this nineteen-acre park has historic ties to Anaheim's past. The grounds stretch from Harbor to Lemon and also house one of Orange County's oldest examples of public art. On a weekend in late November, I visited Anaheim's first city park with my fam-

Pearson Park has been around long enough that the City of Anaheim and north Orange County were still a part of Los Angeles County when the park was first created with a 1920 bond issue, according to Voice of OC. This park was dedicated on July 15, 1927. Initially called "Anaheim City Park," the green space was renamed in 1960 to honor former Anaheim mayor Charles A. Pearson, who served from 1945 to 1959, according to the city's

The park's drought-resistant landscaping is also rooted in history. According to a sign posted within the cacti on one end of the park, the present-day cactus garden was originally designed by famed botanist and creator of the "boysenberry," Rudolph 'Rudy' Boysen, Superintendent of Anaheim City Parks from 1928 to 1949. I happened to learn about this earlier while watching a rerun of Huell Howser's "California's Gold" with my parents on PBS. While there isn't an exact date for when Rudy Boysen first started construction of the cactus garden, it is mentioned as early as February 1932 in the Anaheim Gazette.

Boysen helped find a variety of cacti for this garden, including several rare species. The city's sign reads, "With the help of fellow plant enthusiasts, specimens were collected during expeditions to Arizona, Mexico, and southern California deserts." A complete historic timeline of the cactus collection process can be read on the same sign.

Some of "Rudy's favorite specimens," including Queen Victoria Agave, Woolly Joint Prickly Pear, Bakersfield Cactus, Saguaro Cactus, and Blue Euphorbia, can be spotted throughout today's historic cactus garden. Black fences surround each area of the garden, which is walkable and wheelchair friendly.

A rock-lined pond populated by ducks sits a few feet away from the cactus garden, and stretches toward the park's northeast corner near the intersection of West Sycamore Street and Lemon. This pond dates back to the park's original plan, according to a 2020 story by Sandi Hemmerlein of PBS SoCal. City signs sticking out of the pond warn visitors to "please do not feed the wildlife" because "bread and other foods may harm or kill the wildlife and damage their habitat."

Some of the larger ducks on the grass around the pond seemed more aggressive than the smaller ones that were swimming in the water when my family walked by, so it may be best to observe them from afar. In fact, there are so many ducks at this park that the city has posted duck crossing signs.

Small stone bridges can be found along the pathways that wind next to and ballfield stadium grandstands were

the waterways connecting the park's ponds. Interestingly, sections of aquatic plant life growing in the middle sections of the ponds were netted off to keep the ducks out and preserve the wildlife. If you visit the park, watch where *leads straight* Southern California. The you're stepping since there's a lot of duck feces hidden in the grass and visible on the sidewalks in this area.

The long sidewalk adjacent to the ponds leads straight to one of the oldest examples of public art in Orange County. This double-sided statue came out of FDR's Works

Progress Administration and the California State Emergency Relief Administration in 1935, according to a well-worn plague at the base of the statue. One side features the likeness of Helena Modjeska, who had established an artists' colony in Anaheim in 1876. Helena Modjeska was not only a notable Orange County historical figure, but she was also a famous Shakespearean stage actor and Polish



Four Vineyard workers depicted on one of the oldest pieces of public art in Orange County Photo by Emerson Little

SoCal Wanderer article.

In the park today, Modjeska is depicted in statue form as playing Mary, Queen of Scots. Modjeska's likeness was sculpted by an artist named Eugene Maier-Krieg and her statue was dedicated September 15, 1935. On the reverse side are four vineyard workers representing "the agricultural nature of the original Anaheim colony," according to the plaque.

Pearson Park's historic amphitheater

both built in 1927, according to SoCal Landmarks. Since 1933, the Pearson Park Amphitheater has offered entertainment events in the park during the summer months for people all across structure was designed to replicate the city's Spanishstyle architecture with terracotta roof tiles. amphitheater area also features wisteria and bougainvillea growing on column-supported arbors, tall fan palms, pygmy date palms and color-

with engraved names can be seen lining the entrance walkway. Currently, the outdoor stadium can seat just over 2,000 people, according to the Services Community

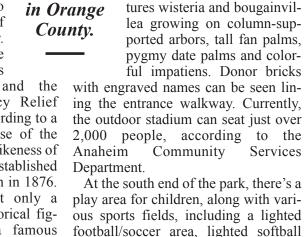
At the south end of the park, there's a play area for children, along with various sports fields, including a lighted football/soccer area, lighted softball fields, lighted tennis courts, a volley-

expatriate, according to a 2020 PBS ball court, and a public swimming pool. The historic ballpark stadium grandstands were still lit even in the middle of the day when I visited. A concession stand and restrooms sat nearby the stadium grandstands. I remember taking swimming lessons at Pearson Park's public pool when I was a kid, and was glad to see people still using the pool.

Close by the pool is a basketball court. Here, there's a double-sided piece of public art by Brian Peterson. One side features a butterfly-painted mural with text on it; the opposite side features a mural depicting the likenesses of Kobe and Gianna Bryant. Bold text that reads, "Be Better Everyday / Play Gigi's Way" is visible from Harbor.

Text on the butterfly painted side reads, "Anaheim holds a special place for the Bryant family. Vanessa Bryant attended St. Boniface Parochial School in Anaheim. She was a cheerleader at the school, which used Pearson Park as a venue for its football games. Vanessa chose to dedicate this Dream Court with Nancy Lieberman charities so the Anaheim community may share in continuing the legacy of Kobe and Gianna Bryant, who would be happy to know that boys and girls will now have the opportunity to compete, learn, and play through the game they loved so much."

Home to many pieces of Anaheim history, Pearson Park remains well used and well-loved today, and it was very crowded the weekend I visited. Pearson Park is located at 400 N. Harbor Boulevard in Anaheim. Park hours are 5:00 am to 10:30 pm, Monday through Sunday.



The long

sidewalk

adjacent

to the ponds

to one of

the oldest

examples

of public art







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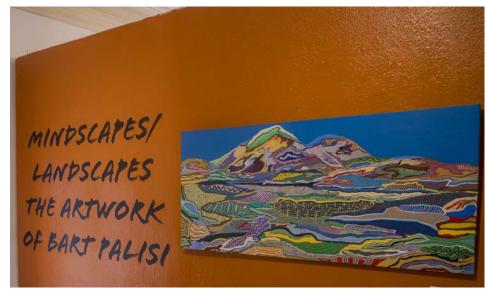
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Muckenthaler Cultural Center's **New Art Exhibit: Mindscapes/Landscapes**

PHOTO BY EMERSON LITTLE

The Muckenthaler Cultural Center understanding of various locations, has unveiled its latest art exhibit, "Mindscapes/Landscapes: The Artwork of Bart Palisi," which opened to the public on November 20 and will be on display until January 16, 2026.

Curated by Marsha Judd, this exhibit explores the intricate relationship between personal experience and the environment, inviting viewers to forge a deeper connection to the landscapes depicted in Palisi's work. Through his art, Palisi seeks to enrich the viewer's

prompting thoughtful reflection and emotional responses.

Located at 1201 W. Malvern Ave, Fullerton, the Muckenthaler Cultural Center encourages art enthusiasts and the community to engage with this evocative collection.

For more information contact the Muck at 714-738-6595 or via email at info@themuck.org. Or visit the website https://themuck.org/





HITS & MISSES

by Pamela Mason Wagner © 2025



RENTAL FAMILY: Two Hits

"Rental Family" is a sensory delight on every level. Shot in Japan by director Hikari (Mitsuyo Miyazaki), who knows the country intimately, the film reflects her deep roots.

Born in Osaka and trained at USC's Film School, she composes gorgeous frames that immerse us in Japan's food, religion, landscapes, and customs. Our guide into this world is the "gaijin," or outsider, Philip Vandarpleog, played with warmth and vulnerability by Brendan

Though deeply rooted in Japanese culture and told largely in Japanese with English subtitles, the film grapples with universal questions:

What does a real human connection look like?

Who are we when our memories fade?

Why do we hurt the people we're trying to protect?

Philip, a struggling actor, takes "extra" work as the resident "sad American" for an agency called Rental Family, which hires out surrogate relatives, coworkers, and companions. Alongside the brilliantly adaptable Taiko Nakajima (the excellent Mari Yamamoto), he plays everything from a hard-nosed journalist, to a dutiful son, to a mourner—even a groom for a bride desperate for an escape hatch.

The premise recalls "Peacock," a recent Austrian film about a "companion for hire" service in Vienna. But where "Peacock" takes a cynical, darkly comic approach, "Rental Family" offers a more sentimental, tear-jerking interpretation of the same emerging phenomenon.

That two such films appear simultaneously underscores our cultural obsession with authenticity in an era of curated online lives, and a wave of generational loneliness accelerated by

the pandemic.

Philip's primary clients are a single mother who needs a stand-in father to help her mixed-race daughter ace a private-school interview, and a daughter who hires him to pose as a Western journalist interviewing her father, Kikuo Hasegawa (Akira Emoto), a revered actor with dementia who fears he's been forgotten. Emoto, now 77, delivers a career-crowning perform-

"We sell emotion," Philip's boss (Takehiro Hira) tells him. "We help clients connect to what's missing.'

But if the relationship is paid for, is it truly real? And what do the actors themselves gain—if anything—from these borrowed connections?

Nakajima justifies the charade by saying, "They look us in the eye and remind us we exist."

Yet her most frequent role—playing the mistress who must apologize to the wife of an unfaithful husband, the agency's most requested service, slowly erodes her dignity. We cheer when she finally pushes back.

Philip's growing attachment to his two core clients prompts a warning from his boss: "That's how this business works. All relationships have to end." And when they do, the film's emotional force lands squarely.

In the final twenty minutes, a young man two rows in front of me wept openly. Afterward, he said the fatherson storyline hit him hard.

Like "Peacock," "Rental Family" treats the agency workers promulgating the deception with compassion. But this film places greater emphasis on Philip, along with his boss and coworkers, as they confront the voids in their own lives. How they do or don't fill those voids provides both surprising narrative turns and a tender, if sentimental, emotional payoff.

• Two Hits: Don't Miss it! • A HIT & A MISS: You Might Like it. • Two Misses: Don't Bother.



Certified Farmers Market at Independence Park

The popular Certified Farmers Market in Fullerton is located at 801 W. Valencia Drive, every Wednesday from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm.

Healthy Awareness by Jo Ann Brannock, Ph.D. © 2025

PREVENTING "CHILD ROAD RAGE" **BEFORE IT STARTS**

My daughter, who lives in San Francisco, recently saw a bus with the message "Stop Child Road Rage." Wait---what? Kids can't drive until they're at least 16, or sometimes 15 under special circumstances. So, what exactly is "child road rage"?

According to the advertisement, road rage begins as early as age 14 and becomes more pronounced when the child becomes a driver. But I believe it starts even earlier, sometimes as early as infancy. Behavior like throwing toys, holding their breath, or having tantrums can evolve into anger, emotional outbursts, and even aggression if not addressed early.

These behavioral issues stem from a complex interplay of environmental, biological, and psychological factors. These factors often interact with a child's developing social and emotional skills.

The good news is that children can be taught the skills to manage their emotions rather than be controlled by them. For infants, soothing touch — being held or comforted — helps them feel safe and calm. Children will emotionally match with parents, so stay calm and use breathing techniques. When the baby settles down, positive reinforcement through smiles or gentle praise encourages that calm behavior to continue. Rewarding positive behavior increases the chance it will happen again. Behavior therapy helps young children change their behaviors through parent training, positive reinforcement, and coping skills. Since children need support to change, parents and caregivers need to be involved, creating a positive environment and strengthening their relation-

For an older child, simple techniques like taking deep breaths or counting to ten can help them calm down. It is important to discuss what positive behavior looks like and to talk openly about feelings. This is called cognitivebehavioral therapy. Children need to learn that actions have consequences —and if a particular approach isn't working, it's okay to adjust it.

Caroline Lewczyk Boxmeyer, Ph.D., from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, a former resident of Fullerton, conducts research on anger and aggression. Her team successfully implements evidence-based cognitivebehavior therapy (CBT) with students from preschool through high school.

Parents should work together and stay consistent. If one parent is disciplining a child, the other shouldn't undermine that effort by excusing the behavior. Kids are quick learners -

they'll often turn to the "softer" parent for sympathy when facing discipline.

Boredom can also lead to acting out, as it creates a desire for stimulation and can cause feelings of restlessness, irritability, and agitation. This can manifest as impulsive or risky behaviors, aggression, and other forms of negative activity because the brain seeks to escape the feeling of monotony. Engaging in a new activity or skill, such as a hobby like painting or coding, or take a break by exercising or going for a walk. Connecting with others by calling a friend, starting a conversation, or volunteering can also help, as can creative outlets like writing or cooking a new recipe. Simply changing your environment and make

them feel valued can make a differ-

Raising children is both rewarding and challenging. The adolescent years, in particular, can test a parent's patience as teens search for their identity. If you're struggling, consider reaching out to your child's school counselor-many schools offer parent workshops, and you may find other parents facing similar challenges. If that's not enough, a therapist or psychologist who specializes in children can be a great resource.

Learning to manage anger is an essential life skill-and it starts in infancy. With guidance and consistency, maybe we really can stop "road rage" before it ever begins.

Balance & Change

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

Embracing Change During the Holidays

'Tis the season that I start writing columns about making the holidays meaningful. Yep, that time of the year when I encourage you to slow down and enjoy all the moments of the holidays. I ask you to create new traditions that are meaningful to you. I have done this every year for years! What shall I write about this time?!

This time it is about the people. Our holidays are looking different this year since so many of the people who are traditionally with us are not. We have lost many of the elders. We have had a family move. Our table, which is historically short on seats, is looking like fewer and fewer people can make it.

This is the normal pattern of families of constricting, then growing again. As we lose one generation, we begin to gain a new one. This year, while we may not see some of our cherished faces that we are used to, we are seeing some new ones that are becoming part of our family.

So, my yearly encouragement is to enjoy every moment of the holidays. Honor and tell stories about those who are not able to join. Get to know the new ones. Create time that makes all of this special. As always, enjoy the (holiday) journey!

OPINION: GIVING AUTISM A VOICE by Benjamin Hintz

Note about the author: the author of this article is diagnosed with high-functioning autism, as well as so-called mild combined-presentation ADHD. He received his diagnosis in May of 2023 and acknowledges and stresses that his experiences will be unique from those of other neurodivergent people.

Even in modern society, portrayals of autism by neurotypical individuals, especially in media such as journalism, education, and entertainment, can be patronizing. Shows like "The Big Bang Theory" and books like "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" often depict autistic characters as either emotionless or emotionally unstable, reinforcing stereotypes rather than presenting diverse experiences.

This reflects a broader misunderstanding of autism, including concepts like masking and the notion that all autistic individuals lack certain abilities. Such as the bookworm nerd sort of character (granted, that one does overlap with the experiences of many autistic people, to some extent—we'll get to that later).

In reality, as cliché as it is to say, autism is a spectrum, and experiences on that spectrum vary a lot between individuals.

I shall provide one such perspective-my own-below.

A shockingly vivid memory from my early childhood—I must have been seven or eight—was seeing an ad on TV describing a kid with autism. It was actually from the kid's perspective, too. I remember I latched onto what I heard, at least a little.

As someone on the autism spectrum, I remember watching a TV ad about a child with autism when I was around seven or eight. At the time, it didn't resonate with me strongly, but it planted a seed of awareness.

Growing up, I felt somewhat alien but not entirely abnor- All neurotypes

Contrary to the stereotype that autistic kids have no friends, I had friendships but struggled to understand jokes and differentiate between sarcasm and genuine emotion due to my

autism affecting pattern-recognition skills. This is because autism often targets pattern-recognition skills that emphasize "raw data."

In middle school, I noticed peers self-identifying as autistic based on superficial understandings of the condition. While some genuinely were, many incorrectly equated common

symptoms, like hyperfixation, with autism. It was disheartening to hear "autistic" used as an insult, prompting teachers to clarify that autism is not an insult or a disability but a distinct neurotype defined by specific cognitive patterns. This can mean how much of certain core chemicals like dopamine is produced, or how much, and of what type, of information the brain can and will process. I had a sneaking suspicions of my own autism the more I heard about it.

My official diagnosis of high-functioning autism came in high school, in

2023. "High-functioning" suggests that my autism won't impede my social interactions. However, this leads to discussions about masking—a behavior where individuals hide their true acknowledged selves to conform socially.

> Many autistic people engage in masking, which can create confusion about

their identity and experiences. This trait is far from exclusive to autistic people, but autistic people tend to exhibit it a lot. Masking is an action where someone hides a behavior, impulse, etc., that is perceived as socially wrong in some way, often replacing it with an equivalent behavior that is picked up from observation of others.

For example, using slang instead of formal language could be considered masking, especially for autistic people who may be more inclined to speak formally—perhaps because formal language tends to be more rigid and structured, or because it is what they are taught. Masking can sometimes cause people to question if others—or even they themselves—really are autistic.

This brings us back to the issues with stereotyping people on the autism spectrum, as it confines individuals to categories that hardly represent anyone's reality. I am medically autistic; from my hyperfixations to my vocal and social mannerisms, it shows (or so I'm told), but my experiences are far from what one might expect in someone growing up on the spectrum.

Does that in any way invalidate either my lived experience or my diagnosis? No, of course it doesn't. But knowing what my experience truly is has helped me get the help I need, understand that I'm not alone, and contextualize my own strengths and weaknesses.

All neurotypes deserve to have their individual experiences acknowledged and respected, as stereotyping, especially within the diverse autistic community, hinders progress and understanding.

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and respected.

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NEWS

Book Review by Amy, 11th Grade

A classic tale, Guy de Maupassant's short story "The Necklace" reveals the negative effects of materialism on society while incorporating motifs and symbols with deeper meaning.

The plot follows Mathilde Loisel, a beautiful middle-class woman dissatisfied with her modest position. After she and her husband receive an invitation to an exclusive ball, she borrows a friend's necklace since she has no suit-

At the ball, her wishes for luxury and splendor come true, but when she returns home, she realizes she has lost the necklace. Her life rapidly shifts as she buys an expensive diamond necklace to replace the borrowed one, forcing her and her husband into debt.

They live a difficult, impoverished life for ten years, which alters Mathilde's appearance and mannerisms. When Mathilde later sees her friend again, barely recognizable herself, she recounts her struggles. A plot twist follows when her friend tells her the necklace she borrowed was not diamond and cost only a fraction of what they paid.

Beauty and the Necklace:

At the start of the story, Mathilde is exceptionally beautiful but of ordinary social standing. Because she equates beauty with status, she feels entitled to the luxuries of higher-class women. This idea torments her, as she is bothered by things others of rank would not notice and often daydreams about a more lavish life.

The story shows her discontent is exaggerated since she and her husband can even afford a servant. Her husband, meanwhile, is comfortable and delighted by simple soup. Mathilde's dissatisfaction reveals how being overly concerned with material possessions leaves one unhappy with their own

The story changes once Mathilde loses the necklace and buys a replacement, plunging the couple into debt. They sacrifice their livelihood and live in relative poverty. After dismissing the maid, Mathilde is faced with arduous housework. At the end of ten years, struggle has taken its toll, and she no longer possesses the beauty she valued so highly.

This reversal shows how material things bring only temporary joy. The necklace she worked so hard to repay is revealed as fake, illustrating the deceptiveness of appearances. Mathilde's early situation reinforces the idea; her beauty and attire make her seem high class, but she is the wife of a humble clerk.

The Ball:

Mathilde's dreams

come true at the ball as her beauty brings attention and regard. At first, this seems to confirm her belief that beauty equals status. However, Maupassant describes her as being in a cloud of happiness, not grounded in reality, suggesting the superficiality of her pleasure.

At the end of the ball, Minister Loisel helps his wife into her modest wraps, and they ride home in a shabby nightcab, symbolizing the end of her illusioned happiness.

Mathilde's return to her harsher reality shows how embracing superficial ideals never leads to lasting happiness. Her temporary joy also shows how seeking solace in illusions worsens one's view of real life. When she returns home, she is more disillusioned than before, as "all was ended for her," and she is even more dissatisfied.

Materialism Today:

In today's consumer society, people often buy into materialism to enhance their appearance. Like Mathilde getting new garments for the ball, shopping for new clothing or changing one's look is often done to appear attractive to others rather than oneself.

As I grew older, I noticed how many people my age identify with Mathilde's perspective on beauty. For teenagers, appearances are extremely important, and those with attractive features are

Many support this outlook by praising or building relationships based on looks alone. Social media is often at fault for teenagers' focus on beauty and low self-esteem.

Influencers edit their content to create more favorable images while posting glamorized versions of their lives. Like Mathilde, people lose themselves in this "world of illusions" that measures self-worth through outward appearance and lifestyle. Teenagers, pressured to maintain a favorable image, compare themselves to idealized versions online.

Although this mindset often fades after adolescence, it teaches people to value superficial traits over what lies beneath. In the end, looks may be appealing, but one must see beyond surface-level qualities. Relying on the superficial for judgment is misleading and shallow while harming one's sense

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR SIFI FIBER OPTIC PROJECT

The City Council approved a new purchase order on November 18 for up to \$500,000 with Ardurra Group, Inc. to provide on-call construction inspection and management services for the SiFi Fiber Optic Network Project. This funding is critical to ensure the project's timely completion, expected by summer 2026.

The City plans to bill SiFi for all services, which means the upfront costs will not impact the General Fund. The current purchase order, valued at \$500,000, is nearly depleted, necessitating additional funds for ongoing inspection services.

In September 2023, the City Council awarded several on-call service contracts, including one to Ardurra, allowing \$200,000 annually for management in the project's success.

and inspection. A previous change order in May 2024 had already raised Ardurra's purchase order limit to \$500,000 due to increased project activities.

Delays in the SiFi Project have left the budget for Ardurra's services insufficient to cover inspections through project completion. Ardurra's familiarity with the project is seen as a key advantage for maintaining progress and reducing internal staff burdens.

The proposed purchase order will fund costs through June 2026, with the expectation of full reimbursement from SiFi, ensuring no financial impact on the City. Staff has recommended the approval of this additional purchase order, highlighting Ardurra's vital role

Bill to Amend Federal Small Businesses' Investing Practices Introduced in the House of Representatives by Benjamin Hintz

Act," aka H.R. 5788, introduced by California representative Derek Tran, has been reported out of the House Committee on Small Business.

The proposed "Risk Oversight Act", in brief, seeks to amend the Small Business Investment Act of 1958, establish Business the Small Administration, a federal independent agency that aims to boost economic growth by providing loan assistance to entrepreneurs and small businesses, providing counseling, and backing contracts by partnering with credit unions and banks.

The proposed bill adds an annual oversight report that would report on the risks taken on by various portfolios. This report would be presented to Congress, where committee members would make decisions, and then hand it to agency officials and development company bureaucrats to cut risky investments under certain conditions.

It should be noted that Sec 511, part b, paragraph 3, specifies that this report shall not contain the names of any businesses receiving loans. This oversight commission established by this bill intends to reduce fraud, wasteful government spending, and risky investments. Indeed, Section 511 contains provisions for reporting enforcement actions. Such provisions include "a report of the number and type of enforcement actions with respect to a loan made by a development company under this title recommended by the Administrator and the number and

The "504 Program Risk Oversight dollar amount of any civil monetary penalty assessed pursuant to an enforcement action described in paragraph 10." However, the bill lacks clear definitions of the legal frameworks for these penalties, potentially leading to ambiguity in enforcement if it is not interpreted to mean that the committee to which the report is presented will decide on monetary penal-

This may provide Americans with greater transparency into the government's investment activity while making concerted efforts not to show favoritism among businesses.

At the same time, the vague language can lead to more stringent restrictions that could cause investment directors to offer less assistance to American startups or to prioritize "safe" startups—potentially leading to further effects down the road, including limitations on competition.

Businesses seeking to penetrate a dense market are now even less likely to be supported; this could further fuel monopolization in some industries, and innovation by businesses whose models invite a level of risk but may lead to long-term benefits may not be financially supported if the risk seems too high.

The bill, its progress, and sponsors can be viewed at the link:

Congress.gov: H. R. 5788,

"504 Program Risk Oversight Act"

You can monitor this bill's progress through the legislative process on the webpage above.

Toastmasters Club Welcomes New Members and Guests

The Mid-Day Toastmasters Club, which is open to both members and guests, hosts regular meetings designed to foster growth and community.

The club meets on:

SATURDAYS

December 6 and December 20 from 7 to 8 AM

TUESDAYS

December 9 and December 23 from 8:30 to 9:30 AM

Meetings will be held online and

can be accessed through the link: https://tinyurl.com/zoomwithmidday

For more information, interested individuals can reach out to Jim Samuel at (855) 402-8255 or jsamuel12@comcast.net. Or visit Toastmasters International website at Toastmasters.org.

Guests are encouraged to attend and experience the supportive atmosphere of the Mid-Day Toastmasters Club, where everyone is welcome to improve their public speaking skills and grow as leaders.



City Council Notes by Gabby Rice

Meetings are on the first and third Tuesday of each month at 5:30 pm. Upcoming agenda information and streaming video of meetings are available at www.cityoffullerton.com click on meetings and agenda.

City Hall is located at 303 W. Commonwealth, Fullerton

Contact Council at (714) 738-6311 or council@cityoffullerton.com

Summary of the November 18 City Council meeting

At the November 18 City Council meeting, the Council discussed proposed changes to Fullerton's municipal water rates. No decisions were made during the session, but city staff presented a case for rate increases to address the urgent need to repipe 7 miles of aging water infrastructure each year. With over 200 miles of infrastructure in need of repairs, city officials detailed a 30-year plan to address these water system deficiencies.

In 2023, Fullerton replaced 9.7 miles of city piping infrastructure. In the fiscal year 2021 to 2022, the city budgeted \$11.5 million in capital spending for the water fund but spent \$14.5 million. Staff also noted that any future Council could revisit the proposed rate increases based on changes in revenue or costs

The regular session of the Council featured a presentation from the Illumination Foundation on its services for unhoused individuals, though some of its claims faced scrutiny during public comment. Community members expressed concerns about the need for closer oversight of operations at the navigation center. Additionally, tributes were paid to Todd Harrison, a community member who was deeply missed.

In regular business items, the Council expressed unanimous support for a pilot program of overnight parking permits for residents. Close to 650 households had already purchased the \$50 annual permits. The Council also reviewed the public information request process, approved penalties for illegal nitrous oxide sales, and designated a historic home under the Mills Act property tax program. After thoughtful dialogue, members decided that the Ad Hoc Fiscal Sustainability Committee should be involved in formulating potential sales tax ballot measures, rather than delegating this task to a subcommittee of Council members. An agenda item regarding public works department fees was postponed until January.

Tuesday, December 2

The next City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 2, with a closed session at 4 pm (subject to change) and an open session at 5:30 pm Upcoming discussions will include safer bike lane options for Associated Road. Residents are encouraged to participate in person or via Zoom.

Tuesday, December 16

On December 16, the Fullerton City Council is set to vote on the appointment of the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem for the year 2026. This vote comes amid growing calls to eliminate personal vendettas from the decision-making process, with residents emphasizing that Council Member Dr. Ahmad Zahra, representing District 5, deserves equitable treatment. Zahra has decided that 2026 will be his last year on the City Council.

COUNCIL MEMBER JAMIE VALENCIA FACES BACKLASH OVER VOTE AGAINST SUPPORT FUND FOR PEOPLE IMPACTED BY ICE

It is

concerning

to see

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and recast

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official

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of work

she neither

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During the City Council meeting on November 18, 2025, attendees questioned Council Member Jaime Valencia about her vote on November 4 against funding local nonprofits that support immigrant families affected by ICE. During council report about activities and information from boards the council members sit on Valencia spoke about events she attended and then said, "I also, over the weeks prior to the vote that took place two weeks ago, I was very much involved with a group of people that I pulled together.

"Blandy was there. Jason Phillips. There also met Bethany, I met I had Radiant Futures involved, Jay was there, Pathways was there, and it was a great conversation starter to get the community involved with the nonprofits to hear what everybody's doing and how we can collaborate better together. So I'm really excited for that motivation to continue on and see what we can do to work.

"Together, and I understand that some of you may disagree with me, and that's OK. My responsibility is not to please a select few, but to serve the entire community. I will continue making decisions based on facts. Integrity and what best supports all residents. Ultimately, the results of that work will speak louder than any criticism."

The following is the full response from Jody Agius Vallejo, a Professor of Sociology and American Studies and Ethnicity, and the Associate Director of the USC Equity Research Institute.

I am writing in response to Councilmember Jamie Valencia's remarks at the November 18 City Council meeting—comments I witnessed firsthand—which included misleading claims about her involvement with community organizations sup-

porting Fullerton's large and diverse immigrant community, as well as a perplexing explanation for why she voted "No" on a community-driven proposal for a city supported fund for immigrant families affected by ICE.

Part of the rationale for the city supported fund was that the nonprofits and legal clinics who work with immigrant families in Fullerton do not have funds to meet the growing demand for legal support and basic needs.

Councilmember Valencia stated that, in the two weeks before her "No" vote, she "was very much involved with a group of people that I pulled together," referring to nonprofits such as Radiant Futures,

Pathways of Hope, OC United, OCCCO, and others. Valencia did not "pull together" these groups or convene the meetings, nor was she "very involved;" she was invited to listen and learn. The nonprofits and community leaders she listed have been doing this work collaboratively for years—long before the last two weeks.

In reality, OCCCO and OC United organized the group meetings that Valencia now claims to have "pulled together," according to public social media posts. Community organizations invited Councilmember Valencia to join them in good faith, hoping to edu-

cate her about the social, economic, and mental-health crises that immigrants and their U.S. citizen children are experiencing in our city and in her district specifically.

It is concerning to see community labor erased and recast in a narrative that places an elected official at the center of work she neither initiated nor supported. These organizations have demonstrated extraordinary leadership, long-term collaboration, and deep care for immigrant families in Fullerton. They deserve accurate representation and real support, not revisionism to bolster Valencia's image.

Valencia also justified her "no" vote by stating: "My responsibility is not to please a select few but to serve the entire community." This is puzzling. Her voting record consistently aligns with an entirely different "select few": wealthy donors and institutions. And her insistence that it is her responsibility that whole community" rather than a "select few" underscores her lack of accountability for the decisions she's made. And her claim ignores how city governance actually works

Cities are comprised of diverse constituencies and responsible governments routinely direct resources to vulnerable groups with specific needs, such as unhoused neighbors, seniors, preschoolers, people with disabilities and other "select few" whose wellbeing strengthens the community as a whole. Pretending otherwise reflects a misunderstanding of how local government works and contradicts her voting record.

Valencia closed her public comments by saying: "I will continue making decisions based on facts, integrity, and what best supports all residents. Ultimately the results of that work will speak louder than any criticisms."

I will leave comments on integrity aside, but I can speak to the facts. As a

professor and researcher who specializes in immigration, I personally provided Councilmember Valencia, and the full council, with clear, evidence-based data derived from representative population surveys: one in six Fullertonians lives in a mixed-status family, and undocumented Fullerton residents are extremely long-settled, with three-quarters having lived in the U.S. a decade or more.

Valencia did not respond to my email, she did not engage with any of these facts, and she dismissed immigrant families in Fullerton by referring to them as a "select few." The fact that almost 20% of our Fullertonians are a part of mixed-status families is not a "select few."

For perspective, this share is larger than the 13% of Fullertonians who are seniors, almost double the proportion of residents with disabilities (9.2%), and more than 80 times the size of the unhoused population (272 people in the latest Point In Time count), groups that the city directs resources to. If these groups are not a "select few," then neither are immigrant families.

Good governance requires honesty, accountability, and respect for the people doing the hard work on the ground. It requires understanding the diverse segments of the community you are elected to serve—not just those you view as politically or ideologically deserving.

Public trust erodes when elected officials claim credit for efforts they did not lead, declare they make decisions "based on facts" without sharing the facts that shape their decisions, and misstate their engagement with community partners.

Fullerton deserves leaders who tell the truth, who respect the deep, co-created work of nonprofits and organizers, and who work to understand the communities they serve. We also deserve councilmembers who care for residents when they are hurting, recognizing that when one part of our city suffers, the entire community bears the cost.

Supporting residents in crisis is a basic function of local government, not a responsibility to be outsourced to volunteers or underfunded nonprofits, and not an opportunity to take credit for work you did not do. A council that understands this obligation invests in its people; a council that ignores it only demonstrates a disconnection from the community it claims to represent.





CITY COUNCIL APPROVES \$250,000 FOR VEHICLE DETECTION EQUIPMENT UPGRADE

\$250,000 purchase order to Iteris, Inc. for the replacement and installation of vehicle detection equipment at intersections citywide on November 18. This initiative is part of the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Capital Improvement Program Budget under Project 46027, aimed at enhancing traffic signal operations.

Iteris's vehicle detection systems, which utilize video and radar technologies, are crucial for effective traffic

The City Council approved a management. The City will upgrade outdated traffic detection loops and replace aging video systems.

> Unit costs range from \$28,000 to \$38,000, with plans to replace up to six units this fiscal year. Traffic Engineering has identified several intersections for these upgrades. Iteris products were chosen for their costeffectiveness and low maintenance. Eligible locations for upgrades will be determined based on ongoing projects and the condition of existing units.

Table 1: Proposed Plan of Water Rate Revenue Increases

5.0%
12.0%
12.0%
12.0%
7.0%

Table 2: Proposed Rates, Effective April 1, 2026 **Fixed Charges** Tiered Usage Rates (for Residential accounts)

Meter Size	Monthly Rate
5/8" & 3/4"	\$36.65
1"	\$58.35
1 1/2"	\$112.59
2"	\$177.68
3"	\$351.25
4"	\$546.53
6"	\$1,088.95
8"	\$1,739.86
10"	\$2,607.73
12"	\$3,665.45

Tier	Rate (per TGAL)	Single Family Monthly Allocation	Multi-Family Monthly Allocation			
1	\$3.80	11,900 gal.	5,000 gal.			
2	\$6.99	17,800 gal.	7,800 gal.			
3	\$7.52	All Add	. Usage			

Uniform Usage Rates (for Non-Residential accounts)

(\$ per TGAL)

DRAFT WATER RATE STUDY REPORT; MULTI-YEAR RATE INCREASE PROPOSED

The City of Fullerton has unveiled its draft 2025 Water Rate Study Report, which outlines a proposed multi-year rate increase to address pressing financial needs within the Water Fund. The report emphasizes the importance of maintaining the fund's self-sustainability without reliance on the General Fund for the next decade.

Fullerton's Water Division provides services to 144,000 customers across a 22.3-square-mile area through 32,144 service connections. The division oversees a robust infrastructure that includes 12 sub-zones, 4 main pressure zones, 15 reservoirs, 14 booster pump stations, and a pipeline network stretching approximately 430 miles.

The study warns that, without the proposed rate increases, the Water Fund could face a \$65 million deficit by 2031, driven by necessary improvements identified in the Water Master Plan. Initial increases are expected to generate approximately \$2.6 million in the first year and rise to \$30.5 million by Year 5. Various factors, including inflation and rising operational costs, have contributed to a revenue shortfall since the last rate adjustment in July 2023. The report highlights aging

infrastructure as a significant concern, with over half of the city's water distribution pipes exceeding 50 years old, resulting in over 100 annual water main breaks—the highest rate in Orange County and compliance with new environmental regulations concerning PFAS has intensified the need for capital investment.

City staff have evaluated several capital improvement programs from 2026 to 2035, totaling approximately \$269 million to address infrastructure needs. The proposed rate adjustment plan includes a 5% increase in Year 1 for all customer classes, equating to an increase of less than \$3 per month for the average single-family residence with a 5/8-inch meter.

The study by Stantec Consulting Services provides a framework for equitable cost distribution based on American Water Works Association principles, featuring a two-part rate structure that includes a Fixed Service Charge and a consumption-based rate. Detailed proposed rates will be implemented on April 1, 2026, with additional schedules through April 1, 2031, as outlined in the full report which was received and filed by council.

City Council Forms Ad Hoc Committee to Explore 1/2 cent Sales Tax Measures

In a move aimed at addressing the possible placement on a future ballot. long-term financial challenges facing the city, the City Council convened on May 13, 2025, for a Budget Study Session where they deliberated on recommendations put forth by the Fiscal Sustainability Ad Hoc Committee. The suggestions focused on potential solutions to improve the city's financial

Following this session, council members directed staff to develop potential "Add-On" sales tax measure options. which were subsequently presented at the May 20, 2025, City Council meeting.

In a unanimous decision, the council instructed staff to prepare two special sales tax measures: one half-cent tax earmarked for infrastructure and another half-cent for public safety. These measures were considered for

Recognizing the complexities involved in creating a new revenue measure—encompassing legal, financial, and community engagement aspects—the City Council agreed to establish an Ad Hoc Committee. Responsibilities included:

- Reviewing and providing feedback on proposed ballot measure language and fiscal analysis.
- Offering policy-level input on public outreach and community engagement strategies.
- · Evaluating timelines, communication plans, and coordination efforts with the city's legal and financial consultants.
- Ensuring that the proposed measures aligned with the City Council's priorities and fiscal sustainability goals.

CITY AWARDS CONTRACT FOR TEMPORARY PFAS TREATMENT PLANT

The City Council approved a contract \$935,349 with Contracting Corporation for the construction of a Temporary PFAS Treatment Plant at the Sunclipse Well 10 site. This decision responded to elevated PFAS contamination levels in the city's groundwater, which forced the shutdown of six out of nine active water wells to comply with EPA regulations.

With only three wells in operation, and two of those having been shut down recently, the city increased its reliance on purchasing water from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, raising concerns about emergency preparedness in the face of natural disasters like earthquakes and wildfires.

The Orange County Water District collaborated with city staff to set up treatment plants at the affected well sites. At that time, two plants were operational, with plans for additional plants to be online by late 2026 and

The Sunclipse Well 10 site served as a temporary solution while the city evaluated a long-term plan to connect contaminated water to the Kimberly Well 2 site, where a permanent treatment plant was under construction. The City Council had previously approved the purchase of treatment vessels for this project.

Following a bidding process, SCW Contracting Corporation was selected for offering the lowest bid, approximately 17.1% lower than the Engineer's Estimate of \$1,128,000. Construction was set to begin in January 2026 and was expected to be completed by July 2026. City staff planned to communicate with local businesses about the construction schedule and any potential impacts.

An environmental assessment confirmed that the project was exempt from California Environmental Quality Act review, enabling prompt action to address the PFAS contamination issue.

City Meetings

December 2 at 5:30pm City Council

December 8 at 6:30pm Parks and Recreation

December 9 at 11am Senior Advisory

December 10 at 6:30pm Planning commission

December 15 at 5pm Infrastructure

December 17 at 5:30pm **Active Transportation**

How to contact your District Representative

 Mayor District 1: Fred Jung (714) 738-6311 fred.jung@cityoffullerton.com

• Mayor Pro Tem District 3: Dr. Shana Charles (714) 738-6311

shana.charles@cityoffullerton.com

 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

CALL TO ARTISTS **FULLERTON MUSEUM CENTER Submission Deadline:** Saturday, January 10th Exhibiting: March 21, 2026 - July 5, 2026 The Fullerton Museum Center proudly presents OC Made, a new biennial juried exhibition celebrating the creativity and innovation of Orange County artists across a diverse range of media.

New CNG Crew Truck Approved

The City's Public Works Department requested approval for a purchase order of \$424,535 to CTEC Equipment for a new Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) crew truck equipped with a backhoe for the Water Operations Division. This acquisition was part of the City's Vehicle Replacement Program, with funding already allocated in the Fiscal Year 2025–26 Adopted Budget within the Equipment Replacement Fund (Fund 64).

The current CNG Crew Truck Unit No. 551C, essential for heavy-duty water service, had reached the end of its service life, leading to frequent repairs and downtime. The replacement was deemed urgent to maintain the City's water infrastructure and ensure quick responses to emergencies like water main breaks.

In the procurement process, staff contacted multiple vendors but could only identify a suitable replacement at CTEC Equipment. The department's recommendation was to bypass the usual competitive bidding process due to the immediate availability of the truck and the critical need to uphold city water services.

AIRPORT TERMINAL REHABILITATION PROJECT

The City Council awarded a \$198,000 construction contract to Koala Construction LLC for the Airport Terminal Building Tower Rehabilitation Project, as announced during the council meeting on November 18. This project was funded by a \$500,000 grant from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, requiring no financial contribution from the city.

The current budget covered all construction and related management expenses. Previous rehabilitation efforts in 2014 were supported by a \$600,000 FAA Airport Improvement Program grant. The project aimed to

improve the air traffic control tower, including new window seals, updated signage, fresh paint, flooring, and upgraded stairway handrails.

Koala Construction submitted the lowest bid among four proposals received on October 23, 2025, approximately 1% below the engineer's estimate of \$200,000. Construction was set to begin in early January 2026 and was expected to be completed by mid-February 2026. The city notified affected airport services about the construction schedule. An environmental assessment confirmed that the project was categorically exempt under California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines.

Full Cost Recovery of Public Works Services

The City of Fullerton proposed amendments to its Fiscal Year 2025-26 Master Fee and Charges Schedule, specifically for the Public Works Department, to achieve full cost recovery for engineering services. The changes aimed to reduce reliance on the General Fund, which had been subsidizing user fees for city services, and ensure that fees reflected the actual cost of service delivery.

The proposed adjustments introduced new user fees and modified existing fees, with the goal of generating nearly 100% cost recovery for these services. City officials emphasized the importance of a fee structure that held those benefiting from services accountable, rather than placing the financial burden on taxpayers.

initiative aligned Government Code Section 66014, which permitted municipalities to recover costs associated with development-related services. The last significant fee increase in Fullerton occurred in 2017. A comprehensive fee study, conducted by Willdan Financial Services, revealed that many public works fees were underpriced compared to the costs incurred.

City staff published notices to inform residents about the fee study as they prepared for an upcoming council meeting where they would recommend council approval of the changes. The city aimed to bring its public works fees in line with past economic conditions and eliminate the financial strain on the General Fund.

CITY COUNCIL APPROVES PURCHASE OF **NEW DUMP TRUCKS FOR STREET MAINTENANCE**

of two new 15-foot dump trucks for the Street Maintenance Division. This decision was made during the council meeting on November 18 as part of the City's Vehicle Replacement Program.

Funding for the dump trucks was available within the Fiscal Year 2025-Adopted Budget under the Equipment Replacement Fund (Fund 64). Since the replacement of these vehicles was already included in the fleet replacement schedule, no additional appropriation was required.

The Public Works Department relied on dump trucks for essential daily operations, including material hauling, debris removal, and transporting tools for emergency responses.

The current vehicles, Unit Number 562B and 565C, were increasingly prone to breakdowns, necessitating frequent repairs and risking operational delays.

The new dump trucks were expected

The City Council approved a purto improve operational reliability, chase order of \$831,139.92 to PB enhance fuel efficiency, and ensure Loader for the design and construction compliance with emissions and safety standards. The staff recommended procuring the trucks through PB Loader Corporation via the Sourcewell Cooperative Purchasing Contract No. 050625-PBL, which allowed for streamlined acquisition of goods and services at competitively bid prices.

This cooperative purchasing method complied with Fullerton Municipal Code Section 2.64 and aligned with the City's Procurement Policy, permitting the use of such agreements in lieu of formal bidding when contracts had been competitively solicited by other public agencies.

PB Loader Corporation was a current contract holder, ensuring that this procurement process met all applicable City rules while maintaining cost efficiency and operational readiness. The replacement of these dump trucks was vital for the Public Works Department to continue providing reliable services to residents, according to the report.

Fullerton Proposes New Ordinance to Combat Misuse of Nitrous Oxide

The City Council of Fullerton introduced a new ordinance aimed at banning the sale and distribution of nitrous oxide, commonly known as "laughing

The ordinance, which was read for the first time without further debate, sought to add Chapter 7.14 to the Fullerton Municipal Code under the title "Prohibition on Sale Distribution of Nitrous Oxide."

This move responded to mounting public health and safety concerns regarding the recreational misuse of nitrous oxide, which had been linked to significant health risks. Between January 2020 and October 2025, Fullerton saw a 328% increase in arrests related to nitrous oxide offenses and a 700% rise in traffic collisions involving the substance. Authorities also investigated at least one overdose death related to its use.

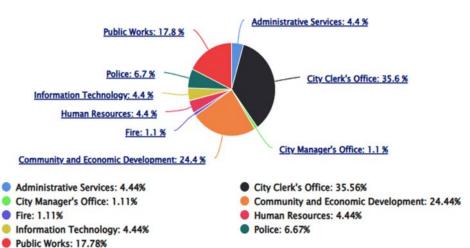
While California Penal Code Section 381 regulated nitrous oxide possession and sales, including making it illegal to possess it for intoxication or sell it to those under 18, local officials believed stricter regulations were necessary.

The proposed ordinance prohibited the sale, distribution, or provision of nitrous oxide and related devices, with exceptions for food products and legitimate medical uses, provided sellers were unaware of any intended misuse.

City officials hoped this ordinance would help address the surge in misuse and align Fullerton with other jurisdictions that had taken similar actions to protect public health and safety.

Open Requests by Assigned Department

Click the slices to view by Request Type



FULLERTON CITY COUNCIL REVIEWS PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS PROCESS

Fullerton's public records request process was under scrutiny following a call from Council Member Zahra, supported by Mayor Pro Tem Charles, for an informational presentation. The California Public Records Act (CPRA), enacted in 1968, mandated government agencies to respond to public records requests within ten days, with an option for a 14-day extension for complex cases. However, certain exemptions, such as personnel files and attorney-client communications, applied.

A report by Granicus indicated a dramatic increase in public records requests, which rose 161% since 2018, with their complexity increasing by 72%. This surge was driven by greater public engagement and increased media inquiries. A 2017 court ruling clarified that public officials had to disclose relevant communications from personal accounts, complicating the records retrieval process.

To address these challenges, Fullerton implemented a records request management application in FY 2020-21, allowing residents to submit and track requests online. Despite this, the Deputy City Clerk spent about 85% of their time managing these requests, coordinating with department records coordinators and ensuring compliance with the City Attorney.

At that time, the city had between 25 and 40 open requests at any given moment, an increase from prior years. While many requests were straightforward, complexities arose, particularly with electronic communications. Requests for emails often involved extensive reviews to ensure compliance, extending the time required for processing.

As public demand for transparency grew, the city worked to refine its processes to better manage resources while fulfilling its obligations under

Two-Year Legal Services Contract

The City Council approved a twoyear contract for legal services with three firms: Atkinson, Andelson, Loya, Ruud & Romo; Y&L Law, LLP; and Karlin, Hiura & LaSota, LLP, during a meeting on November 18. The contract, in a form approved by the City Attorney, designated Mark Lee, a partner at Y&L Law, as the City's Counsel.

Under this agreement, the consultant provided limited legal services for the defense of workers' compensation claims, with the City's approval required for any additional personnel involvement. The consultant was restricted from subcontracting services or transferring interests in the contract without the City's explicit consent.

As an independent contractor, the

consultant maintained a non-exclusive relationship with the City, recognizing that the City worked with other legal firms for similar services. The legal services included the preparation of court documents, legal research, attendance at hearings, and other necessary litigation activities.

The City was expected to cooperate with the consultant, keep it informed of relevant developments, fulfill obligations outlined in the agreement, and ensure timely payment for services rendered. The consultant committed to providing skilled personnel and adhering to professional standards while staying informed of any legal changes that may have impacted the contract's execution.

Two things

stand out

though it's

still unclear

if this is

a tragedy

or a farce.

Another day

to remember

broken lives,

broken promises

and

outright lies.

in this story-



OPINION: Out of My Mind

by Jon Dobrer © 2025 Jonathandobrer.substack.com

The Salami Sandwich Guy & Governmental Baloney

If anyone was ever overcharged for a Subway sandwich, it's surely Sean Dunn. He wasn't ripped off by the shop but by his government, which coincidentally is also supposed to be "our" government.

The saga of the sandwich guy shows and says a lot about our society, our values and the credibility of just about everyone. I no longer believe government spokes-folk—of either party. I no longer delude myself that any political promises are real promises or that any testimony, even when given under oath, is any more sure and certain than babble spewed from a random word generator.

We have seen ICE and DHS beat, arrest and charge protestors, media, members of Congress and at least one Senator. They drag randomly captured protestors before judges and try to charge them with assaulting federal officers or impeding an official operation or conspiracy to defend democracy (Ok, I'm editorializing here).

They are unconsciously replaying an old joke from the 60s when we characterized some charges against civil rights and anti-war protestors as being for assaulting billyclubs with our

The Sandwich Guy or the Footlong Felon, the Giro Hero or Sub Subversive was acquitted by a jury of misdemeanor charges of assault and interference. The government originally tried to get a felony indictment, but the grand jury balked.

They might, as the cliché goes, "indict a ham sand-wich," but they couldn't convict the salami sandwich from Subway. Had it been from Chipotle, with its record of food poisoning

incidents, it might have been charged as an attack with a dangerous weapon.

Two things stand out in this story though it's still unclear if this is a tragedy or a farce.

One is the ridiculous attempt at overcharging. There was no sense of proportion. This reflects the governmental

position, expressed often, passionately and with stunning hypocrisy by lawand-order bribe-taking, Tom Homan, who said, "If we find someone who is not legally allowed to be here, we'll arrest them. They're lawbreakers." Our government is looking not for justice but to intimidate those who don't fall in line. They create and deploy widely the Platonic form of selective and vindictive prosecution.

If the eventual charge against Dunn was ridiculous, that is only half the

> problem. The testimony against him was perjurious—and perjury is (at least theoretically) against the law. The victim of this assault by a sandwich, border agent Greg Lairmore, testified that he could feel the hurled hoagie hit him through his bulletproof vest.

> At 15 ounces, this was probably not as much of a threat to life and limb as actually eating it would have been. He further perjured

that the savage sub had "exploded on him," and he "could smell the mustard and onions." Well wow! That's really paying attention and concentrating in a crisis. When in a mob and all around you people are losing their heads, at least Lairmore stopped to smell not the roses but the mustard and onions. The problem with this not very creative fiction is that he was impeached on crossexamination when the defense produced a photo of the relevant sandwich on the ground still fully wrapped and intact—more intact than the credibility of the federal officer on the stand.

The jury did its job and acquitted Dunn. However, will justice be served and Lairmore, not to mention prosecutors John Parron and Michael DiLorenzo, be charged with perjury and suborning perjury? Don't be silly. You know the answer. Not even Jeanine Pirro, the useless idiot and former Fox star, will be charged with abuse of prosecutorial discretion for bringing these charges and trying to overcharge such a frivolous case. She was, as they said in the Nuremberg War Crimes trials, only "following orders." Whose orders? Don't be silly. You know the answer.

The salami sandwich didn't fall apart, but the government's case did. More importantly, is the willingness of this government to bend, fold, spindle and mutilate the truth. This demonstrates a reckless disregard of Truth, Justice and the American Way. To pursue not justice but intimidation, the government misspent its resources, our money and its own credibility. It turned a salami sub into pure baloney that neither the jury nor we could possibly swallow.

OPINION: AT HOME WITH THE HOMELESS

by Andrew Williams © 2025

WWW.PATREON.COM/C/THEEOPINIONATOR

Another Thanksgiving. Another Meal.

And now we have had Thanksgiving, the least commercial of all the winter festivities. Can you name ten Christmas songs? Easy-peasy. But try naming even one Thanksgiving song. The only one you'll come up with is Arlo Guthrie's classic "Alice's Restaurant." (But if you want to get really obscure, how about a rousing rendition of the "Thanksgiving" movement from Charles Ives' Holidays Symphony?) So, so far, the giving of thanks has escaped the fate of Whitsuntide, buried under "flash and filigree" (in Terry Southern's apt phrase). May it always be so.

Here's what Thanksgiving looks and feels like for the unhoused. It is one of a handful of days on the calendar in which the resourceful can get a free meal and perhaps a social service or three thrown in for good measure, when Christian charity rears its comely coif and produces cornucopias of turkey, stuffing, jellied cranberries and other seasonal fruits and vegetables. Another day to remember broken lives, broken promises and outright lies. An echo of disappointments.

So, no offense, do-gooders, but don't expect us to kiss your feet just because you gave us a plate of food and maybe some free dental work. One day a year of such largesse is nice, but it's a tiny drop in a very large bucket. It's also why the argument that private charity can take the place of government charity fails: no institution, no matter how well-intentioned, can even try to be all things to all people without government assistance. It was tried earlier this century. It failed miserably. As much as you may argue about the shortcomings of government-organized food and medical assistance, it still works better than any alternative,

If our society expects to rewrite the unhoused equation, it's going to have to open its hearts (not wallets) a lot wider. For a start, NIMBYism must

end. You can't lay claim to giving Christian service while chanting "Not in my backyard, you don't," thus denying homes to people without homes. We are not asking for mansions where

a studio apartment or tiny house would do. We are struggling to become whole, and a home is where wholeness can begin. So help us. Don't dismiss us. We are where you could end up. All it takes is a month's missed salary, or getting fired, or any number of bad breaks. We are willing, most of us,

to do what it takes to have a roof over our heads. We're willing to work to pay for what we're given. All any of us are asking for is another chance. And if American society can't meet that squarely, then you should take your holiday meals and throw them in the

"Oh, Andrew, you're so ungrateful! Look at all we've done for you and others like you!" To which I reply with two words: minimal compliance. That's what social services do, or are forced to do: the bare minimum according to their own guidelines. The idea of going above and beyond has become anathema. Expediting the delivery of needed medicines, visual and hearing aids? No can do. You'll have to wait until the paperwork clears. Weeks, maybe months. And yes, I'm not unmindful that people with good jobs and insurance can experience the same difficulties. That also needs to

Unfortunately, there's been more emphasis on cutting the number of employees doing social work, while culling food stamps and Medicare rolls, and less on reducing or cutting through the redundancies in paperwork. Somehow, it's easier to hurt people by depriving them of food and

medicine than it is to remove bureaucratic obstacles to get those resources to them. "Eliminate the middleman" should be the motto, not "Move fast and break things."

But all of this seems like a tempest in a teapot compared to the situation in Tanzania, where, after the election of Samia Sululu Hussein as President with a preposterous claim of 98 percent

of the vote in her favor, Tanzanian police and security forces have gone on a literal rampage, killing hundreds of unarmed protestors. Meanwhile, the opposition candidate, Tundu Lissu, has been lan-April on the highly suspicious charge of treason.

Besides the utter barbarity of these killings, with bodies literally stacked like cordwood in front of morgues and hospitals, Tanzania may have given us a glimpse of our own future if Donald Trump is not removed

from office. So far, US security forces have been content to tear apart families, take sick children from their mothers, and pepperfog priests. But what if Tom Homan, Kristi Noem and Stephen Miller say "F- it" and let slip the dogs of war? Can you imagine turning on the news and seeing the crumpled bodies of protestors lying in the streets of American cities?

And what of the six Congresspersons who had the temerity, the utter gall, to remind US armed forces members that part of their duty and responsibility is to disobey unjust orders? What if they were summarily executed by the President of the United States? He's already called for that. It can happen guishing in prison since here-just as Sinclair Lewis and Stanley Milgram warned us.

(Quick reminder: If you love the writing – if it touches you – and you'd like to help this starving scrivener, you can go to patreon.com and make a donation to Andrew Cameron Williams, aka Thee Opinionator. Peace and blessings.)



Barbara Murphy Mieger 1936-2025

Barbara Murphy born Mieger, September 20, 1936, passed away peacefully on November 15, 2025, at the age of 89.

As a proud graduate of Fullerton High School, Barbara led a life full of adventure and cherished memories.

She had a passion for travel, particularly enjoy-

husband, Gerald Mieger. Together, they created countless memories,



including attending tennis matches around the world.

Barbara was predeceased by her husband, Gerald, and two sons. She is survived by her cousin, Frankie Sue Kelly, who will honor her memory always.

A committal service will be held at Loma Vista Memorial Park,

ing trips to Ireland with her beloved located at 701 E Bastanchury Rd, Fullerton, on Monday, November 24, at 11 am.

That (Tod) Huu Dang 1947-2025



The Celebration of the Life of That (Tod) Huu Dang, son of Thieu and Khoi Dang, and older brother of Sinh, Minh, and Tieng Dang of Fullerton, took place on November 8, 2025. His daughter Sonia Kostura, and sons Peter, Ted, and Huey Dang, and two of his grandchildren Tiana Kostura and Christian Dang told stories of their father and grandfather that had the over a hundred family and friends congregated both laughing and crying. His wife, Nina Nga-Mi Ly, sang several of his favorite songs. Other participants in the tribute included friends, musicians, and several pastors. All later enjoyed lunch under an enormous tent at Kindred Community Church. Excerpts from the eulogy given in his honor by son Ted, are printed below:

"That (Tod) Huu Dang came from a humble Vietnamese family and rose to the rank of a well-educated, successful, first generation immigrant in America. He was a loving husband, father, brother, and friend. Tod was the first of four children from a village in Thua Thien, Vietnam. His parents were farmers who worked very hard to ensure their children were fed, clothed, and educated..."

"In his senior year, following the Vietnamese government's severe persecution of Buddhists, students walked out of schools in civil disobedience and protested in streets and parks. At night, Tod snuck out to join the protesters and was stabbed by the secret service... In 1967, he passed his high school exam and headed to Saigon to attend university but was selected for USAID's Leadership Students program and was sent to the US to prepare to be part of the future technical leadership of Vietnam. Tod attended Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, and graduated in 1971 with a Bachelor's Degree in Electrical Engineering... It was also during college that his mother died. His girlfriend Qui comforted him in his grief. After graduation, Tod returned to Vietnam to work and help heal his war-torn country. He taught at a college in Saigon in order to be closer to Qui."

"Tod and Qui were married in 1973

after Tod got back from a year of military service in the South Vietnamese Army, as the war raged on. In April 1975, with his wife and 6-month old baby Huey, they were evacuated from Saigon to the Philippines, then onto a refugee camp in Arkansas, finally ending up in Southern California where Tod found a job. The life of an immigrant family was difficult, but my parents worked hard and sacrificed themselves to make our lives much easier by comparison."

"Tod grew up as a Buddhist, but in his mid-20s, gave his life to Christ... His wife Qui converted Christianity in her later years and they were both baptized in 2016, attending Kindred Community Church."

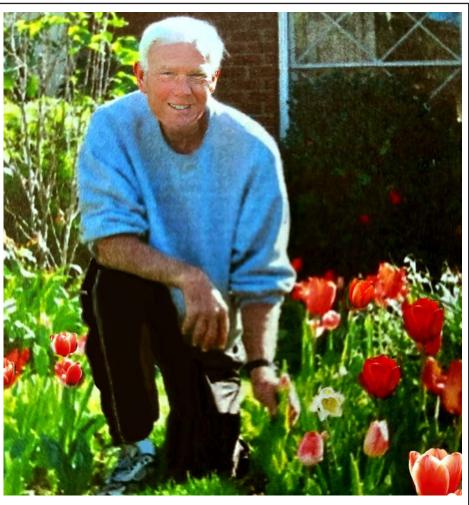
"As Tod's children grew into adulthood, he and his wife had more time to rediscover their own social lives... Tod and Qui also got more involved in real estate, flipping houses, and building a townhome complex in Placentia. Even after Qui got sick they traveled the country together and had new adventures."

"...There was a lot of laughter and he loved and enjoyed each of his grandchildren very much: Mike & Sonia's children Tiana & Aliyah; Huey & Susan's children Isabella, Christian, & Sophia; Peter & Jessica's children Josephine & Tobias. He enjoyed attending each of their sports activities, recitals, performances, graduations, and major life events.'

"Tod was a loving and dedicated husband to Qui, devoted to caring for her in sickness, and mourning her loss when she passed away in 2017. After 44 years of marriage, with his children grown, life was very lonely for Tod and his late wife knew he would remarry."

"Tod began dating Nina in late 2018 and they were married in 2022... As Nina's husband, Tod not only gained a wife, but also step-children in John and Mimi Wilson and step-grandchildren with Brett and Levi, and many other family and friends. Tod and Nina's marriage was filled with love, music, adventure, fun, silliness, singing, and so much travel!"

"Tod passed away peacefully the morning of October 24th, 2025 succumbing to the glioblastoma multiforme that ravaged his brain and body. The night he passed, Pastor Johnny and his wife Pearl from One Church Irvine joined our family to sing together, read the Bible, and anoint my father with oil. Nina, and his sister Sinh, sang to him in his final earthly moments. Now he is with Jesus in heaven. His cup overflows."



Wayne E. Daniels 1936-2025

April 2, 1936, and passed away peacefully in Anaheim on November 15, 2025.

Wayne spent his early years in Whittier, California, where he developed a love for education and nature. A proud graduate of Whittier College, he later earned a degree from Brigham Young University.

Wayne dedicated his life to teaching, sharing his passion for biology at Fullerton High School from 1962 until his retirement in 1993. Even after retiring, he continued to inspire students as a substitute teacher for many years.

Affectionately known as "The Tulip Man of Fullerton," Wayne delighted the community by planting 3,000 to Emerald Court in Anaheim

Wayne was born in Los Angeles on 4,000 tulip bulbs annually in his front yard on N. Woods in Fullerton. His passion for gardening extended to his active involvement with local arbore-

> Wayne also developed an interest in antiques after spending a summer with relatives in South Dakota, bringing back a trailer full of collectibles that enriched his home. Known for his generosity, he was a beloved friend and neighbor in Fullerton.

> Wayne is survived by his cousin, Dennis Daniels, in Palm Desert, as well as relatives in the Dakotas and the extended family of the Santa Maria's.

> In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Christmas fund at

Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works. (I Chronicles 16)



Sunday Service & Sunday school at 10:00 a.m. Wednesday Testimony Meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Reading Room: Mon-Wed & Fri and 2nd & 3rd Sat from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

First Church of Christ, Scientist 1300 N. Raymond Avenue, Fullerton 92831 ■ Office (714) 525-4062 Reading Room (714) 525-2649 christiansciencefullerton.com csfullerton@sbcglobal.net

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City of Fullerton Employment

303 W. Commonwealth Ave, Fullerton, CA 92832 https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/fullerton

Ambulance Operator

Salary: \$20.00 Hourly Location: 303 W Commonwealth Job Type: Non-Regular (At Will/Non-

Benefited)

Job Number: 2025 - Ambulance Oper

Department: Fire

Join the Fullerton Fire Department and become part of a proud tradition of service, where we invest in our community, protect our people, and work together to shape a safer, stronger future.

Community Services Leader Series Youth Services Division

Salary: \$16.50 - \$17.00 Hourly Job Type: Non-Regular (At Will/Non-Benefited)

Job Number: 01 - Youth Srvcs Div Department: Parks and Recreation

Applicants will have an opportunities to make an impact in the lives of children and families participating in the City's many after-school, teen, and summer programs. Duties in this division cover a broad range of experience, and may include a lead role in planning and implementing special events, creating marketing publications and social media posts, coordinating donations, planning and supervising youth and teen programming, data collection and analysis, and coordinating the work of City volunteers.

Civil Engineer

Salary: \$107K - \$136K Annually Location: City of Fullerton, CA Job Type: Regular Full-Time Job Number: 2025-CVENG Department: Public Works

The current vacancy is in CIP Development and Administration. However, the eligible list established by this recruitment is valid for one year and may be used to fill future Civil Engineer vacancies within the department. Future general salary increases include: 3% Increase effective July 2026

Community Services Specialist Series -**Community Center**

Salary: \$17.50 - \$18.50 Hourly Location: City of Fullerton, CA Job Type: Non-Regular (At Will/Non-Benefited)

Job Number: 02 - Community Ctr. Department: Parks and Recreation Closing Date: Continuous

Duties include preparing various facilities and event spaces for recreational classes and private events, interfacing with members of the general public and responding to their various needs and requests, and developing effective communication methods to ensure the deliverance of the highest quality service and programs the City has to offer. Staff will assist with programming.



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We will creat a layout and calculate the various discounts. Once you approve, we will send an invoice and publish.

OUR TOWN CROSSWORD © 2025

ANSWER KEY TO "BRIEFLY" on pg 7:



Valerie Brickey was born in **Fullerton** and returned to raise her family here. She has contributed puzzles since 2014. This is the 230th puzzle.

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A STORY OF READINESS AND RESILIENCE

by Alicia Hsieh, contributing writer for Troy Preparedness Club

When it comes to emergencies, most people believe they'll never face one. But as Parks Junior High health teacher Mark Sonny knows, disasters and accidents can strike when you least expect them. "First aid emergencies tend to happen when you least expect them," he said. "That's why you have to be ready anytime."

For Mark, this lesson became clear on his wedding day in 1990: a day that started with celebration but turned into an unforgettable test of composure and preparedness. While sitting with his new wife on her mother's porch, they witnessed a bicyclist crash head-on into a car. "He hit the side of the car full speed," Mark recalled. "We saw the whole thing."

Rushing to help, Mark and his wife drew upon the first aid training they'd taken together in college. "The number one step in first aid is to try and remain calm," he explained. "That way, you can keep the victim calm, too." The cyclist's injuries were severe: a deep gash across his cheek and a damaged knee, but Mark staved focused. Using a towel from a nearby neighbor, he applied direct pressure to stop the bleeding and elevated the man's head and leg until paramedics arrived. His quick thinking may have saved the

Mark's story highlights an important truth: emergencies don't just happen in hospitals or natural disasters; they can happen anywhere, to anyone. Whether it's a bicycle accident, a workplace injury, or a home emergency, knowing



Mark Sonny

what to do can make a life-changing difference. "Just knowing the basics helps you in emergency situations," Mark said. "It can be very simple — elevating things, putting ice on things, putting direct pressure on bleeding wounds."

At school, Mark's training has also proven invaluable. He's helped

injured students and even assisted an office worker who tripped and cut her face. His experience reinforces the idea that preparedness isn't limited to professionals; it's a skill everyone should have.

Schools, too, play an important role. Parks Junior High regularly conducts earthquake and safety drills, helping students and staff practice what to do in case of an emergency. Still, as Mark pointed out, "You can plan for emergencies all the time, but when you're planning, sometimes they don't happen. That's why you have to be ready anytime."

From his wedding day to the classroom, Mark Sonny's message remains the same: preparedness saves lives. Whether it's first aid, fire safety, or natural disaster response, staying calm, alert, and ready to act can turn panic into purpose and make all the difference when it matters most.



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.











FULLERTON COLLEGE THEATRE ARTS Presents Anon(ymous) by Naomi Iizuka

Fullerton College Theatre Arts is set to stage the compelling production of "Anon(ymous)," a play by Naomi Iizuka that offers a modern interpretation of Homer's "The Odyssey." Under the direction of Teddy Alexis Rodriguez, PhD, this adaptation tells the poignant story of a young refugee's quest for identity, belonging, and a sense of home.

The protagonist, a young boy named Anon, is separated from his mother and navigates the complexities of life in the United States. His journey brings him face-to-face with a range of characters, from sinister figures to compassionate souls, as he strives to reunite with his family.

Through his struggles, Anon traverses a chaotic American landscape filled with stark realities, including sweatshops and barrooms—a reflection of the challenges faced by many displaced individuals today.

Rodriguez, who has a deep interest in mythology and global storytelling,

highlights the play's rich narrative.
"In Anon(ymous)," we embark on a journey alongside Anon as he searches for his mother—drifting through oceans, slipping between realms, and encountering worlds shaped by longing and survival," Rodriguez said.

This production incorporates a diverse array of cultural influences, weaving in elements from Taíno and Yorùbá mythologies, infusing the story with depth and historical significance.

"Our process has been fueled by joy, curiosity, and deep collaboration," Rodriguez added. "Through Anon's odyssey, I hope to illuminate the experiences of the displaced, the migrant, and the refugee—to honor lives too

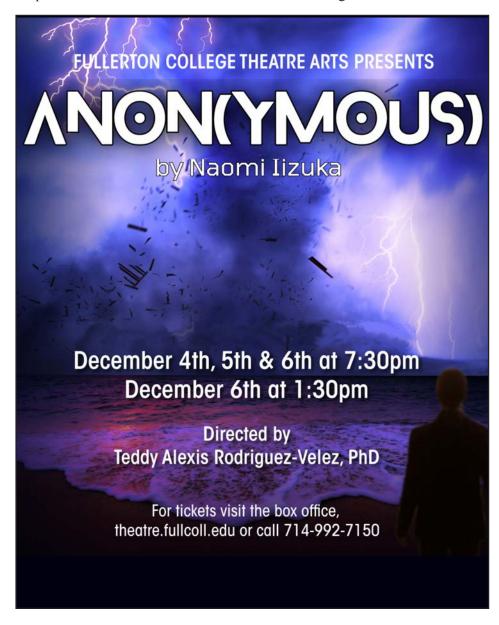
often unheard."

The play aims to resonate with contemporary issues surrounding identity and migration, serving as a reflective audience. mirror for the "Anon(ymous)" promises to be not only a moving theatrical experience but also a conversation starter on the themes of resilience and community.

Performances are scheduled for December 4, 5, and 6 at 7:30 PM, with an additional matinee on December 6 at 1:30 PM, all taking place at the Dodson Theatre.

For more information on performance dates and ticket reservations, the public is encouraged to contact Fullerton College Theatre Arts Department's box office at theatre.fullcoll.edu or call (714) 992-7150.





Legal Insights: by Kate, 9th grade

Lochner v. New York

In 1905, the U.S. Supreme Court Critics argued that it delivered a landmark ruling in Lochner v. New York, striking down a state law that limited bakers to a 10-hour workday. The Court's 5 to 4 decision ruled that the law violated the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause, which protects "freedom of contract," the right of employers and employees to negotiate working conditions without government interference.

The case originated in Rochester, New York, where Joseph Lochner, a bakery owner, was fined for allowing an employee to work more than 60 hours per week. Lochner argued that the state law was unconstitutional because it interfered with his ability to make private contracts. The Supreme Court agreed, holding that the state had overstepped its authority. Justice Samuel F. Peckham, writing the majority opinion, claimed that limiting work hours for bakers was not justified as a public health measure and violated the fundamental liberty to contract freely.

The ruling was met with controversy. Supporters praised it as a victory for economic freedom and personal liberty, emphasizing that individuals should be able to make their own choices without government interference.

prioritized business interests over worker safety, leaving laborers vulnerable to

exploitation amid industrial growth, long hours, and dangerous conditions.

Lochner v. New York came to symbolize the "Lochner Era," during which the Supreme Court frequently struck down social and labor regulations. It shaped debates over the balance between individual liberty and government regulation for decades. The decision was eventually overturned in spirit by later rulings, such as West Coast Hotel Co. v. Parrish (1937), which upheld minimum wage laws and marked a shift toward giving states more power to regulate labor.

Today, Lochner v. New York is often cited as a warning of judicial overreach. It raises questions about the role of the courts in shaping economic policy, the limits of personal liberty, and the responsibility of the government to protect workers. While it no longer governs labor law, its legacy continues to influence debates about freedom, regulation, and the proper balance between private rights and public wel-