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Loving Our Immigrant Neighbors by Deborah Langenbacher, PhD Amando a Nuestros Vecinos Inmigrantes

A panel on local immigration concerns and ways to support our local immigrant community was hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fullerton and First Christian Church on February 22. The panel included Dr. Jody Agius Vallejo, a Professor of Sociology at USC, Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk-Silva, and various local organizations working to support immigrant families in Fullerton.

Some key points from Dr. Vallejo's: Over 20% of Orange County immigrant residents are undocumented; most undocumented residents have been in this country for over 10 years; and undocumented immigrants contribute over \$5 billion to our economy and over \$1 billion in taxes annually. During this Trump administration, there has been a 75% increase in detention of immigrants, many of whom have legal papers or are naturalized US citizens, and 93% of whom have no criminal record.

Continue reading on page 3

El 22 de febrero, la Congregación Unitaria Universalista de Fullerton y la Primera Iglesia Cristiana organizaron un panel sobre las preocupaciones locales en materia de inmigración y las maneras de apoyar a nuestra comunidad inmigrante. El panel contó con la participación de la Dra. Jody Agius Vallejo, profesora de Sociología en la USC, la asambleísta Sharon Quirk-Silva y diversas organizaciones locales que trabajan para apoyar a las familias inmigrantes en Fullerton.

Algunos puntos clave de la Dra. Vallejo: Más del 20% de los residentes

inmigrantes del Condado de Orange son indocumentados; la mayoría de los residentes indocumentados llevan más de 10 años en este país; y los inmigrantes indocumentados contribuyen con más de 5 mil millones de dólares a nuestra economía y más de mil millones de dólares en impuestos anualmente. Durante la administración Trump, la detención de inmigrantes ha aumentado un 75%, muchos de los cuales tienen documentos legales o son ciudadanos estadounidenses naturalizados, y el 93% no tiene antecedentes penales. *Continúa en la página 3*

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RACE FOR CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR NARROWS AS CANDIDATES BEGIN TO SOLIDIFY SUPPORT

The race for California governor has narrowed to nine Democrats and two Republicans, according to a recent Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) poll. Candidate support ranges from 10% to 14%, with several candidates in single digits.

The poll's timing is noteworthy as it was conducted just after San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan entered the race on February 3. Mahan currently appears in the lower polling tiers but is anticipated to be a strong contender with financial backing from Silicon Valley.

Among the leading candidates, Republican Steve Hilton tops the poll at 14%, followed by fellow Republican Chad Bianco at 12%. Given California's Democratic majority, the likelihood of a Republican winning the governorship is low, but within the Democratic Party, concerns remain that a divided field may benefit Republicans.

Katie Porter, a former member of Congress, ranks as the highest-ranking Democrat in the poll at 13%, likely due to her previous Senate campaign experience. The June primary will be a key moment for candidates to assert their positions.

Find the full poll stats at:
<https://www.ppic.org/publication/ppic-statewide-survey-californians-and-their-government-february-2026/>

US and Israel Launch Airstrikes Against Iran

President Trump announced early Saturday, February 28, 2026, that the US has bombed Iran in what is being called "Operation Epic Fury." The joint US/Israeli attacks came as continuing negotiations were scheduled for next week. Iran retaliated hours after the strikes by firing missiles and drones toward Israel and US military bases in the region. Up to 40,000 US soldiers are stationed at bases overseas. Visit www.fullertonobserver.com for live updates from Associated Press.

For live updates, visit Associated Press at:

<https://apnews.com/live/live-updates-israel-iran-february-28-2026>

Free OLLI Event: "Iran & Why This Country is Going Backwards" presentation by Morteza Rahmatian, PhD.

Tuesday, March 3, 12:15pm in CSUF Mackey Auditorium, 800 N State College Blvd, Fullerton

DA DECLARES NO CRIMINAL CHARGES IN 2024 FULLERTON POLICE SHOOTING OF ALEJANDRO CAMPOS RIOS by Saskia Kennedy

The Orange County District Attorney's Office has concluded its investigation into the March 6, 2024, fatal officer-involved shooting of 50-year-old Alejandro Campos Rios in Fullerton, determining that no criminal charges will be filed according to a letter sent to Fullerton Police Chief Jon Radas.

Police were dispatched at approximately 2:55 am after an employee reported two men appearing to be under the influence of drugs near the restaurant entrance. The caller said she feared for coworkers arriving for work and reported seeing a small torch but no weapons.

Responding officers encountered Campos Rios, who was shirtless and holding a black nylon belt with a metal buckle. Authorities said he yelled, sang and swung the belt while ignoring repeated commands in English and

Spanish to drop the belt and sit down.

Additional officers arrived, including Cpl. Nicholas Jarvis, who retrieved a 12-gauge less-lethal shotgun from his patrol vehicle. Officers attempted to gain compliance using verbal commands, a Taser and "dry spark" warnings, investigators said.

According to the district attorney's summary, Campos Rios advanced toward officers while swinging the belt. After a Taser deployment appeared ineffective, Cpl. Jarvis fired multiple bean bag rounds. On the fifth discharge, a round penetrated Campos Rios's chest. Officers immediately requested paramedics and began life-saving efforts.

Campos Rios was transported to the University of California, Irvine Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead at 3:55 am.

Continue reading on page 7

LETTERS TO EDITOR

RE: Young Observers

"Archeology" by Betty

I want to compliment Betty on her poem Archaeology. It brought to mind stunning images while reading her amazing work. Please, Betty, I want more! I elect her to be the Observer's Poet Laureate!

Lissa LaMorte Fullerton

Thank you

Thank you Saskia and Fullerton Observer staff for keeping us informed.

Bobby Melendez Fullerton

E-bikes

A great source to include in the e-bike discussion is the American Academy of Pediatrics, which you can find on the Internet. They recommend against having e-bikes or scooters on sidewalks. They prefer 16 as the minimum age for motorized bikes and scooters. They make recommendations for a variety of situations, but solidly advocate that "school-age" children should not ride a motorized bike or scooter that goes more than 10mph. Their reporting on e-bike accidents is eye-opening.

Across the Pond, the European Union and the United Kingdom both set a minimum age of 14 for e-bike users, but they must stick to bike trails and bike lanes. In the UK, e-scooters are not legal to ride anywhere except on private property with the owner's permission.

Constance Spenger

Subscriber 40 years, Big Pine

RE: A Senior's Journey to Independence without a Car

It is unconscionable that our society is so car-dependent that anyone has to choose between driving – even when it's no longer safe – and independence. Sadly, though, this conflict is all too real because we make it impossible to get around without a car.

We need comprehensive public transit, bike lanes, usable sidewalks, denser housing, and mixed zoning that makes it possible for people to access most of their daily needs without a car.

Sadly, far too many people spend their lives advocating against these things, only to find themselves in a situation of their own making when they can no longer drive.

I am glad the author of this article was able to live a full life without a car. I hope we can change how we build cities to enable everyone to live full lives regardless of their mode of transportation.

Amy A. Fullerton

You are lucky to live where you can walk to things and that you have a daughter to help and enough money for Uber when she can't. Not every old person has that.

That is why the city participation in the reduced fee taxi program is so great and why we should keep it. And it keeps unsafe drivers off the streets.

I applaud you that you stopped driving when you saw you were getting shaky and I plan to do that too when it comes time for me to stop. It really is a safety issue for everyone. For those who don't know about the free and reduced taxi service – you can sign up at the Community Center across from City Hall.

Sharon Kennedy Fullerton

Why Local Journalists Matter More Than Ever

by Saskia Kennedy

"...I consider the media to be indispensable to democracy. That we need an independent media to hold people like me to account. I mean, power can be very addictive, and it can be corrosive and it's important for the media to call to account people who abuse their power, whether it be here or elsewhere." - George W. Bush 2017

In an era dominated by global news and algorithm-driven headlines, local journalists covering school board meetings, city council votes, and zoning disputes often go unnoticed. However, they play a crucial role in American democracy by providing essential coverage of decisions that impact daily life, from property taxes to education.

Unfortunately, many local newspapers have shut down or downsized, leading to the creation of "news deserts" where professional reporters are absent to monitor public institutions. This gap weakens accountability and fosters misinformation, as civic

participation declines and government borrowing costs increase.

Local journalism is deeply embedded in communities, focusing on issues like budgets and public safety that matter to residents. While economic challenges, such as declining advertising revenue and shrinking subscriptions, threaten these local outlets, the solution lies not in nostalgia but in investment. Supporting local journalism through subscriptions, nonprofit funding, or community ownership is vital for maintaining our civic infrastructure.

Without local reporters to ask tough questions and provide context, democracy suffers due to a lack of reliable information. In a media landscape often focused on national outrage, local journalists do the essential work of documenting, verifying, and connecting the dots in citizens' lives. To ensure accountable government and informed communities, it is crucial to support those who show up, notebook in hand.

Fullerton Observer

OUR COMMUNITY. OUR COVERAGE. OUR FUTURE.

For many communities, the future of local news is uncertain. But for the Fullerton Observer, our path is clear: to remain an editorially independent voice for our community. We are not owned by a distant hedge fund. We are a part of this community, committed to delivering the essential reporting that matters most.

From town halls to school boards, our reporters are on the ground, keeping you informed and holding power accountable. This work is vital for you, your children and everyone who wants to see our community thrive.

While subscribers, advertisers and donor support have sustained our daily operations, traditional revenue streams don't cover price hikes and modernization.

Your support helps ensure that this community newspaper continues for everyone who calls Fullerton home - not just for today, but for generations to come.

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A meaningful investment in the future of community journalism. Lifetime access plus two complimentary annual subscriptions to gift (or one two-year subscription). Special recognition that you helped ensure the Fullerton Observer survives and thrives for generations, or anonymous listing if you prefer.

These aren't just subscriptions. They're an investment in the future of volunteer community journalism.

Only a limited number of lifetime subscriptions will be offered.

To subscribe or learn more, contact Publisher and Editor Saskia Kennedy at contact@fullertonobserver.com or at P.O. Box 7051, Fullerton, CA 92834. **Thank you for supporting local journalism.**

There is no tax deduction to be gained from your contributions.

The Fullerton Observer is a NOT-for-profit venture. All of your contributions will go to printing, mailing costs, overhead and help all the volunteers give you, your family and the whole community news that changes lives, changes policies by alerting everyone, and keeps us connected.

Fullerton Observer

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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Getting to Know Your Neighbors

A Powerful Lesson in Grassroots Advocacy

by Saskia Kennedy



In the early hours or late at night under fluorescent lights, Daryl Terrell represents California's working-class spirit as he balances two jobs. For 15 years, he has been a cashier at Lowe's and, for nearly three years, a courtesy clerk at Stater Bros. in Moreno Valley, where he bags groceries and collects carts.

However, outside his day-to-day responsibilities, Terrell has emerged as

a vocal leader in a growing movement to combat catalytic converter theft, a crime increasingly plaguing the working class.

The catalyst for Terrell's advocacy was a troubling incident in a parking lot when a co-worker's catalytic converter was stolen in broad daylight. The subsequent repair bill posed a significant threat to his co-worker's livelihood, raising alarm bells for Terrell. "People were missing work. Seniors were afraid to park outside. Families were hit with expenses they weren't prepared for," Terrell recounted. "I recognized a gap in the law and knew I had to act."

At that time, California's laws provided little recourse for victims of catalytic converter theft, as detaining individuals in possession of these stolen parts required a direct link to a specific victim. On May 17, 2022, Terrell took action, urging the Riverside County

Board of Supervisors to adopt an ordinance against unlawful possession of catalytic converters.

His persistence paid off nearly a year later when Riverside County adopted Ordinance 987. This landmark measure positioned Riverside alongside San Bernardino County as one of the first regions in California to implement strong regulations targeting this widespread theft problem.

Terrell has been an outspoken critic of California state laws, particularly Assembly Bill 641, which applies only when an individual possesses 9 or more detached catalytic converters.

Since the enactment of Ordinance 987, Terrell has broadened his advocacy efforts across Southern and Central California. He has promoted similar ordinances at county meetings in Ventura, Kern, Fresno, Kings, and Orange Counties. He has addressed city councils in Rialto, Bakersfield, Long Beach, and Beverly Hills. Following his grassroots efforts, cities like Clovis and Colton have enacted their own local measures.

In Los Angeles County, while 18 cities have passed catalytic converter

possession ordinances, the County has yet to establish a countywide measure, leaving many unincorporated areas unprotected under state law. Recent statistics from the Los Angeles Police Department reveal that over 2,400 catalytic converter thefts were reported in recent years, highlighting the persistent nature of the issue.

For Terrell, this fight transcends mere statistics. "This isn't just property crime," he emphasized. "It's about public safety and dignity. When someone can steal a part off your car in broad daylight and walk away without consequences, that affects how people feel in their own neighborhoods."

Terrell insists that his advocacy stems from a sense of civic duty rather than political ambition. "Policy doesn't only belong to insiders," he stated. "If you're willing to show up, study the issue, and keep pushing, you can make a difference."

Daryl Terrell's journey is a powerful lesson in grassroots advocacy: meaningful change can emerge not from the corridors of power but from the determination of an individual unwilling to look the other way.

FAST Masters Swimmer Bob Bergstrom Wins National One Hour Swim Title

by Leslie Brown

Age Group	Place	First Name	Last Name	Distance
85-89	1	Robert	Bergstrom	2,825
85-89	2	Neil	Topliffe	2,710
85-89	3	Santiago	Tapia-Perez	2,475
85-89	4	Lothar	Loehr	2,415
85-89	5	Dean	Paxson	2,130

A longtime member of the Fullerton Aquatics Sports Team (FAST) Masters program has earned national recognition for an extraordinary achievement in the pool.

Bob Bergstrom, 85, placed first in the nation in the annual One Hour Swim competition, covering an impressive 2,825 yards in 60 minutes. The event, held each January, challenges swimmers across the country to see who can swim

the greatest distance in one hour. Bergstrom topped the field in the 85-89 age group.

Bergstrom has been swimming with FAST for 48 years. The team trains at the Janet Evans Swim Complex, located in Independence Park. Over nearly five decades, he has remained a dedicated presence in the program and continues to demonstrate that competitive spirit has no age limit.

The FAST Masters program welcomes swimmers of varying abilities. Participation in competitions is optional, and many members join simply to stay fit, improve their technique, and enjoy the camaraderie of team workouts.

For more information about FAST programs at the Janet Evans Swim Complex including Masters swimming, swim lessons, lap swimming, and Summer League visit www.fullertonaquatics.org or contact Lauren Morford at LMorford@fastswimming.net



continuación de página principal

Amando a Nuestros Vecinos Inmigrantes

por la Dra. Deborah Langenbacher

La asambleísta Sharon Quirk-Silva destacó la reciente legislación para proteger a los inmigrantes, como la prohibición estatal de que los agentes de ICE usen mascarillas y un sitio web estatal para ayudar a quienes buscan información sobre las personas detenidas.

En cuanto a los servicios locales de apoyo a la comunidad inmigrante, Bethany Anderson, directora ejecutiva de Camino Immigration Services, habló sobre sus servicios legales gratuitos para ayudar a los inmigrantes a completar trámites, solicitar visas, exenciones y documentos relacionados, y asistirlos con las comparecencias ante el tribunal de inmigración.

El Clero y Laicos Unidos por la Justicia Económica (CLUE) estuvo representado por la reverenda Sithy Bin, quien habló sobre su programa de acompañamiento judicial y sus observaciones en el Tribunal de Inmigración de Santa Ana. Rossana Fonseca y el superintendente interino, Dr. Chad Hammitt, hablaron sobre cómo el Distrito Escolar de Fullerton apoya a las familias inmigrantes y garantiza la seguridad de los niños en la escuela.

El distrito ofrece talleres para padres, asistencia mutua y muchos otros servi-



cios para apoyar a estas familias. La Organización Congregacional Comunitaria del Condado de Orange (OCCCO), representada por María Valencia, organizadora de OCCCO, está brindando "círculos de sanación" para familias afectadas por ICE en varias iglesias en Fullerton y abogando en las reuniones del Concejo Municipal de Fullerton para que la ciudad apoye a las familias inmigrantes locales.

The full panel presentation can be viewed at/ para ver el video:

[youtube.com/@uufullerton](https://www.youtube.com/@uufullerton)

Local resources/ recursos locales: Camino Immigration Services:

www.caminoimmigrationservices.org/

CLUE: JCoria@cluejustice.org &

Sbin@cluejustice.org

FSD: www.fullertonsd.org/

parents/immigration-information

OCCCO: blandy@occcopico.org &

maria@occcopico.org

California Contigo:

Immigration Resources Hub/

Centro de Recursos de Inmigración:

<https://cacontigo.asmdc.org/>

Loving Our Immigrant Neighbors

continued from front page

Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk-Silva highlighted recent legislation to protect immigrants, such as a state prohibition on ICE agents wearing masks and a state website to assist those seeking information about those who have been detained.

Regarding local services to support the immigrant community, Bethany Anderson, Executive Director of Camino Immigration Services, spoke about their free legal services to help immigrants complete paperwork, apply for visas, waivers, and related documents, and assist with immigration court appearances.

Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE) was represented by Rev. Sithy Bin, who spoke about their court accompaniment pro-

gram and observations at the Santa Ana Immigration Court. Rossana Fonseca and interim superintendent Dr. Chad Hammitt spoke about how the Fullerton School District is supporting immigrant families and ensuring that children are safe at school.

The district provides workshops for parents, mutual aid assistance, and many other services to support these families.

Orange County Community Congregation Organization (OCCCO), represented by María Valencia, an OCCCO organizer, is providing "healing circles" for families affected by ICE at various churches in Fullerton and advocating at Fullerton City Council meetings for the city to support local immigrant families.

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FJUHSD Student Board Members

by Vivien Moreno

FJUHSD students wishing to serve as a 2026/27 School Board Member may submit applications to the Administration and Student Advisory Council until March 23 this year. See Announcements on the home page at www.fjuhsd.org.

At first glance, the Student Board Member position appears largely ceremonial, as students cannot participate in confidential board business and can only offer nonbinding votes on public board issues. FJUHSD Student Board Members (SBM), however, have important and ongoing communication with board members and district administration, discussing their peers' priorities and issues.

FJUHSD board members have commented over the years that they feel the SBM's perspective is vital to understanding student perspectives. For the last six years, many of the SBMs have used their access to shift board focus, update board policy, and illuminate issues important to their classmates that are not always the board's highest priority.

After the COVID-19 lockdown, Sunny Hills High School senior SBM Jenna Beining prioritized addressing student trauma stemming from lockdowns, asking trustees to fund wellness centers and make emotional well-

being care available to all students as they returned to in-person learning environments.

In 2022, Buena Park High School senior SBM Grace Lee noticed inconsistencies in the dress code across district high schools after students returned to in-person learning. She led a year-long ad hoc committee of students and administrators to redesign the dress code, last updated in 1978.

Grace's student-led committee established a district-wide uniform student code that focused on creating a safe and academically professional environment and removed the previous focus on punishments for wearing inappropriate clothing.

The new dress code is one of six board policies out of over 500 that were not changed during the board policy update two years ago. In 2025, SBM Noelle Lidyoff worked to secure a stipend for the SBM office to reflect the additional hours students spend in their expanded leadership roles.

During the February 10 FJUHSD board meeting, current SBM Arianna Machado shared her new Cookie Connections Project.

Here she describes the program (edited for length):

Cookie Connections is a student-led initiative I launched with one clear

goal: to ensure that every student, especially those who may not typically speak up, feels heard and valued. Since its launch, we have successfully hosted five Cookie Connections meetings across five different high school campuses.

As a student leader, I often saw the same voices represented in meetings, activities, and decision-making spaces. While those voices matter, I realized that many of our "quieter" students were not being intentionally included in conversations about campus climate.

I believe that if we truly want inclusive schools, we must actively listen to those who are not always heard. Cookie Connections is made possible through collaboration with ASB Directors and the use of 5-Star data to identify students with lower levels of campus engagement.

Audrina Gomez and I personally invite these students to join us in a safe, relaxed setting where we provide cookies and create a welcoming environment for honest dialogue. Students are encouraged to speak openly about what makes them feel connected and excluded, and what changes they would like to see on their campus. We provide opportunities to share feedback anonymously.

Most importantly, there are no adults present in the room. This was an intentional decision to ensure students feel

comfortable sharing their authentic thoughts without fear of judgment or repercussions. After each meeting, we compile and organize the feedback and share it directly with each school's ASB, allowing student leaders to plan events, improve communication, and implement changes better reflecting the needs and interests of the entire student body.

Through Cookie Connections, many students said this was the first time they truly felt listened to; some shared that they had never been directly asked about their school experience before. Seeing students leave feeling validated and more connected to their campus reinforced why this initiative matters. By intentionally creating space for quieter voices, we are working toward a culture where every student feels seen, heard, and answered.

SBMs spend long hours meeting with other school leaders district-wide, consulting with administrators, and sharing priorities and issues with board members. Many recent SBMs focused their efforts on making real changes to district policies and school environment that directly affect students' day-to-day high school experience. Student led programs, like Cookie Connections, respect student voices and cultivate greater engagement for all students.

The next scheduled FSD board meeting is on March 10.



FSD Launches Informative YouTube Series called "FSD 3 in 3"

by Vivien Moreno

In an effort to keep the community informed, Fullerton School District (FSD) Interim Superintendent Dr. Chad Hammett recently introduced a weekly YouTube video series titled "FSD 3 in 3." The series aims to deliver concise information on timely topics, offering viewers a glimpse into various aspects of the district and encouraging them to seek further details on the Fullerton School District website at www.myfsd.org.

The inaugural episode aired on February 8, focusing on how potential and current FSD families can schedule school tours. Although open enrollment for the 2026-2027 school year closed on February 13, the district remains open to hosting tours throughout the year for families interested in special programs, such as dual-language and multi-age options.

Episode #2 features an engaging exploration of Nicolas Junior High School, led by Principal José Varela. The episode highlights the school's robust STEM academic programs and Career Technical Education initiatives, including innovative courses in robot-



ics, 3D printing, and the unique Tiny House Construction site, where students acquire essential plumbing, electrical, and construction skills.

The third installment of the series takes viewers through Bond N projects currently underway within the district. This episode details the introduction of 31 new playgrounds equipped with modern facilities and safer surfacing options, the installation of eight new marquees, and the construction of two new Arts and Recreation Centers (ARCs) at Nicolas and Parks Junior High Schools.

All episodes of "FSD 3 in 3" are available for viewing on FSD TV on YouTube, providing an accessible resource for families and community members to engage with the Fullerton School District.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCc-0JXv7j8OnLni0uloSqJg>



Disaster Preparedness for the Youth

by Alicia, 8th Grade, writer for Troy Preparedness Club

Imagine this: you are scrolling through your phone or finishing your homework when suddenly the lights flicker, the house shakes, or an emergency alert appears. Earthquakes, wildfires, hurricanes, and power outages happen fairly often in real life, even though they might seem like scenes from a movie.

Emergencies are not just for adults to manage; kids and teenagers should learn what to do as well. Disaster preparedness means being ready to protect yourself and make smart decisions when something unexpected occurs.

When young people learn these skills, they often gain more confidence and are less likely to panic. When you understand the steps to take, such as where to go, who to talk to, and how to stay safe, you are less likely to panic or make risky decisions during stressful situations.

One important reason kids and teens should learn disaster preparedness is that they are often away from their parents during emergencies, such as when they are at school or participating in activities. Knowing basic safety tips, such as "drop, cover, and hold on" during an earthquake or how to get out fast in a fire, can save lives. Schools run drills for a reason, and when students understand why those steps matter, they are more likely to respond seriously and act quickly.

Being ready helps you learn how to take charge and guide others. Older kids and teens can step up to support younger siblings, classmates, or even adults when situations feel confusing or scary.

Staying calm, having a plan, and being there for others are what make you someone people can count on when an emergency happens. These

are skills you can rely on both during disasters and in your everyday life.

Another important part of being ready is communication. Kids and teens should remember key phone numbers, know how to call or text for help, and understand where to go if they get separated from their family. Having a simple emergency plan at home, like choosing a place to meet or someone to call outside your area, helps everyone stay connected and keeps things calm when something goes wrong.

Being prepared means having basic supplies ready, including water, snacks, flashlights, and a first-aid kit. Knowing how to handle these items safely is a useful skill to have. For teens, knowing where to find news from trusted sources or emergency alerts can help them make smarter choices.

The key is that knowing about disaster preparedness can change fear into confidence. Disasters can be frightening, but having a plan helps you stay calm and understand what to do when things get confusing. Instead of feeling helpless, you realize that you have the tools and knowledge to protect yourself.

In the end, disaster preparedness is something everyone should think about, not just adults. Everyone, including kids and teens, should learn it. Being prepared means knowing how to stay safe and help others when they need it, which is a useful skill at any age.



Women in Wartime and Beyond

by Yoyo, 8th Grade

For much of human history, the duty of defending one's nation has often been seen as a male responsibility. However, women have played crucial roles in times of conflict, both at home and in military service.

Ann Caracristi, for example, was a cryptanalyst (codebreaker) whose code-breaking work changed the trajectory of World War II. In 1942, she was recruited out of college to work for the Signals Intelligence Service. Despite being unfamiliar with Japanese, Ann was assigned to decrypt Japanese address systems. These

decrypted systems provided crucial information about enemy army units throughout the Pacific.

The most significant breakthrough by Ann and her team was cracking the Water Transport Code, which allowed the Allies to track vessel positions, routes, and cargo.

In an interview with reporter Leslie Sewell for the Library of Congress, Ann reflected on her work, stating, "Yes, I felt it was a very important and exciting thing to be doing...it made a



big difference in the winning of the war in the Pacific. And we were aware of that." Her cryptanalytic work was an integral component of the United States' eventual success in the war.

Other courageous women in wartime include the "Hello Girls," a group of 233 women who served as telephone operators in the U.S. Army Signal Corps in France during World War I. Recruited by General John J. Pershing to improve communication, these women were known for their efficiency and bilingual skills in French and English. They were instrumental in coordinating army movements, handling countless calls at the climax of the war.

Despite their vital contributions, the

"Hello Girls" were denied benefits and honorable discharges, leading to a sixty-year struggle for recognition. It was not until 1977 that they were officially categorized as veterans, and surviving members received their medals two years later, in 1979.

These examples represent only a few of the many brilliant women whose work has shaped history. Female contributions are not limited to wartime efforts.

March is Women's History Month, celebrating the vital role of women across various fields in American history. Whether in combat, science, literature, or activism, women have been essential in driving progress, and their achievements deserve recognition.

Walkout for What Matters

by Christian, 11th Grade

On the morning of February 6 at approximately 10:30 am, students from across the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District staged a coordinated walkout in protest of statements and positions attributed to school board member Leandra Blades. Participants came primarily from Valencia High School and El Dorado High School, gathering to voice concerns over immigration policy and district leadership.

Four students, who requested anonymity for privacy reasons, shared their motivations for taking part in the demonstration.

"Because we're all equal and don't deserve this," one student said, criticizing the actions of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). They argued that the treatment of immigrant communities is unjust and fundamentally at odds with the principle of equal rights.

A second student cited information circulating on social media as motiva-

tion. "I'm here protesting because I've seen on many sources online ... that many immigrants are getting taken illegally by ICE," they said. Highlighting specific grievances regarding ICE's operations, the student alleged that enforcement actions were being carried out improperly, claiming that veterans and U.S. citizens, not just individuals with criminal records, have been detained. They called for significant changes to the agency's practices and potentially its disbandment.

For another participant, the issue was deeply personal. "My family fought really hard to come here," the student said, describing repeated deportations faced by relatives seeking better opportunities. "No one should be illegal and no one should be deported and taken away from their families." The student emphasized the resilience of their own family and the psychological and



social tolls of family separation, framing their stance as a broader rejection of the concept of "illegal" status and deportation.

A fourth student offered a broader and more controversial critique. They argued that immigration enforcement serves as a distraction from what they described as systemic corruption among political and economic elites.

The student suggested that leaders from both major parties play a role in preserving the current immigration system, asserting that support for agencies like ICE is not limited to one side of the political spectrum. Rather than framing the issue as a strictly Republican versus Democratic divide, they characterized today's political climate as one in which those in power,

regardless of party, work to uphold structures that benefit them.

The student further argued that immigration enforcement is part of a broader pattern in which political and economic elites prioritize retaining influence and stability within the current system. These comments reflected the student's personal perspective and included serious allegations that were not independently verified.

Despite differing perspectives, these students stood for their beliefs on February 6 and continue to do so. The walkout marks one of the most visible instances of student-led activism in the district this academic year, underscoring the ongoing debate within the community over immigration policy, governance and civic participation.

A Charming But Inaccurate Adaptation

by Amy, 11th Grade

"Pride and Prejudice", Jane Austen's classic novel from 1813, has left a legacy that endures over 200 years later. Austen's writing balances romance and witty commentary, which "Pride and Prejudice" embodies.

The story centers on Elizabeth Bennet, an intelligent and lively gentlewoman, and Mr. Darcy, a wealthy, arrogant landowner. As they learn to see beyond each other's superficial traits, they overcome their initial indignation.

Though a timeless classic, "Pride and Prejudice" has gained renewed popularity partly due to multiple TV adaptations. The 2005 movie, one of the most popular versions, introduced many fans to the novel.

Directed by Joe Wright, the film stars Keira Knightley as Elizabeth Bennet and Matthew Macfadyen as Fitzwilliam Darcy. Representing a youth-oriented approach, the film is often a favorite among Jane Austen fans.

Its beautiful cinematography and romantic elements make it charming, but it changes the essence of Austen's work. The film's visuals add significantly to its atmosphere. Natural landscapes such as the lake by Longbourn, the Peak District, and lush fields create an enchanting, romantic aspect.

Picturesque camera shots, including

those weaving around Darcy's mansion, provide panoramic views that immerse the viewer in the story. The natural beauty adds a charming ambience to unfolding events. Color palettes are deliberately combined to enhance mood.

Warm tones signify moving and happy moments, while cool tones give scenes a somber undertone. During Darcy's first proposal, for instance, rainy, gray weather and dull blue and green landscapes heighten the despondent atmosphere of the failed offer.

When Elizabeth later visits Darcy and his sister at Pemberley, warm tones provide an earnest, endearing atmosphere as they draw closer. At the film's end, a dreary mist shrouds Elizabeth in a field, contrasting with the sunrise that illuminates her reunion and second proposal with orange and yellow light.

Music also plays a crucial storytelling role. At the Meryton ball, all music and chatter pause as Darcy and his party arrive, highlighting his formidable presence. A delicate piano tune played by Georgiana during Elizabeth's first visit to Pemberley signals the hope of repaired connections. This recurring piece underscores the comforting familiarity and pleasure of love.

The chemistry between Darcy and



Elizabeth captivates viewers. When Darcy helps Elizabeth into her carriage, they exchange a lingering glance and subtle gestures that hint at underlying tension.

Dramatic tension peaks during Darcy's first proposal amid a downpour, with storm sounds, dismal lighting, and soaked clothing intensifying the scene. Their fixed, bitter stares heighten the emotional stakes.

Despite the film's charm, its intense approach diverges from Austen's spirit. While minor changes are understandable, the movie overdramatizes key events.

For example, Elizabeth's realization that Darcy separated Bingley from her sister is shown with suspenseful music, stormy weather, and rapid camera cuts, exaggerating her emotional response.

In Austen's novel, Elizabeth reviews Jane's letters and contemplates the matter thoughtfully. Similarly, the first rejection of Darcy's proposal becomes a heated shouting match, amplifying

passion beyond the book's tone.

Even the final proposal, with romantic fog and dramatic shots, feels inconsistent with Austen's realistic, sophisticated style. Nature-filled cinematography adds dreaminess but strays from the novel's grounded tone.

Characters are also slightly misrepresented. Elizabeth's liveliness is emphasized to appeal to modern audiences, but her quips and antics sometimes make her seem brash and immature. Darcy is portrayed as introverted and relatable rather than proud, diminishing a key aspect of his character. While minor modifications are expected, these changes shift the novel's essence.

The 2005 film is still enjoyable, with exceptional aesthetics and captivating chemistry. However, its emphasis on cinematic shots, dramatic tension, and nature scenes presents a rose-tinted version of "Pride and Prejudice" while altering characters' personalities. Charming though it is, the adaptation misrepresents Austen's original work.



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PART I OF III: Interview with Council Member Dr. Ahmad Zahra: Donor Influence, Campaign Finance & Political Courage



In a recent discussion, I spoke with Fullerton City Council Member Ahmad Zahra about his role and responsibilities. We engaged in a Q&A session that delved into the challenges and rewards of serving the community at the municipal level. This is a three-part series.

Q: What advice do you have for your successor on standing up to influential donors?

Zahra: You have to believe in the power of the community and know they have your back. Don't be afraid. I faced significant attacks from special interests, but I prevailed in both my elections while they failed. When you support the community's needs, the community supports you.

When criticism is valid—about trash pickup or neighborhood concerns—you address it directly. That can turn frustration into support. But politically motivated attacks are different. Those require wisdom and thick skin. Ultimately, you must have the courage to do the right thing.

Q: What campaign finance reforms could reduce the dominance of big donors?

Zahra: Donation caps exist at the state and city levels, but donors can bypass them through political action committees (PACs), especially after the Citizens United Supreme Court decision. PACs can raise unlimited funds. So while a community-focused candidate is limited, their opponent might benefit from massive independent spending.

My advice to voters: follow the money. Ask who is funding PACs and campaigns. Are these groups or individuals with financial interests that conflict with community interests?

At the local level, we can strengthen transparency by requiring more frequent financial disclosures. We also have conflict-of-interest laws requiring elected officials to recuse themselves if they received more than \$250 from a donor during their campaign—but there's a loophole allowing candidates to return the money just before a vote and participate anyway. A willing council could close these loopholes.

Heavy spending doesn't guarantee victory. In my last reelection, more money was spent against me than for me—and I still won. Elections are about rallying genuine support.

Q: Are you in favor of ranked choice voting?

Zahra: I haven't experienced ranked choice voting personally, so I can't firmly support or oppose it. Any system can be manipulated. What matters most is ensuring voters can easily vet candidates and their financial backers and that we curb unethical PAC practices.

Kaiser Nurses End Strike

Nurses and health care workers represented by the United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals (UNAC/UHCP) have returned to work after concluding a historic strike against Kaiser Permanente, a \$76 billion health care company. The strike, lasted four weeks. Driven by issues beyond wages, it centered on patient safety and staffing standards.

Union members achieved significant victories, including a 21.5% wage increase, which was part of a broader package aimed at improving staffing levels and retention. Kaiser's tactics, including walking away from negotiations and delaying discussions, prompted the union to lock in these gains through enforceable contract language.

Key wins for the nurses include:

1. Elimination of "Paper Staffing": Nurses fought to ensure that charge nurses or break relief nurses could not

be counted toward patient ratios, guaranteeing that every patient has a dedicated nurse.

2. Addressing Staffing Shortages: The establishment of an internal nurse registry to deploy RNs to units experiencing short-staffing, particularly during critical times.

3. Preservation of Protections:

The union successfully maintained existing staffing protections and extended safer standards into clinics and outpatient settings.

UNAC/UHCP President Charmaine S. Morales emphasized that the strike was about patient safety and accountability from Kaiser, stating, "We didn't let that happen. We won real protections for our patients."

Kaiser representatives labeled the strike "unnecessary" and accused the union of using patients as leverage. However, the union argued that it was advocating for safer working conditions and better patient care.

Arboretum Receives \$2.35 Million Gift

The Arboretum and Botanical Garden at Cal State Fullerton has received a \$2.35 million donation to enhance its facilities and support conservation efforts in Southern California. The funding comprises a \$2 million planned gift and a \$70,000 annual commitment over five years, which will cover repairs and maintenance for the greenhouse and irrigation system.

Greg Pongetti, the arboretum's curator, highlighted the significance of the donation, stating that it will facilitate physical upgrades, enable long-term budget planning, and, hopefully, inspire further community support.

The anonymous benefactor, a longtime resident of Fullerton, expressed a desire to support a local initiative that

benefits the community. The arboretum provides opportunities for families, students, and seniors to connect with nature.

Recognized as one of only 4 arboreta in California and 45 globally with Level IV ArbNet accreditation, the 26-acre site features rare and endangered plant species. It also propagates plants for sale to other institutions and the public.

In addition to its conservation efforts, the arboretum offers hands-on internships for students to address pressing environmental issues such as climate change and plant conservation. Through a partnership with Associated Students Inc., it also supplies the campus Food Pantry with fresh produce from surplus harvests.

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April 10 from 12 - 4pm
April 11 from 9am- 3pm
April 12 from 10am- 2pm

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**Unitarian Universalist
Congregation in Fullerton**

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SAYS THERE ARE NO CRIMINAL CHARGES IN THE 2024

FULLERTON POLICE SHOOTING *continued from front page*

An autopsy conducted by the Orange County Sheriff-Coroner determined the cause of death was a penetrating chest injury to the heart with bilateral hemothorax. The manner of death was classified as homicide, a medical-legal term indicating death at the hands of another person, not a legal determination of criminal liability.

The District Attorney's Office said investigators conducted 18 witness interviews and reviewed body-worn camera footage, dispatch recordings, forensic evidence, autopsy and toxicology reports, and other materials. Jarvis provided a voluntary statement on

March 12, 2024.

In its legal analysis, the office cited California law and U.S. Supreme Court precedent governing police use of force, including standards requiring that force be objectively reasonable based on the totality of the circumstances.

After reviewing the evidence, prosecutors concluded there was insufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Cpl. Jarvis acted unlawfully. The review was limited to potential criminal liability and did not address departmental policy, tactics or civil liability.

Police Activity *by David Spargur*

Longtime Fullerton residents may remember that, decades ago, motorcycle cops with speed guns seemed to be all over the city, on streets like Bastanchury or Euclid. Those same residents may now wonder whether traffic citations are still issued.

Those motorcycle cops were not figments of residents' imagination. In 2008, Fullerton had 15 motor officers, according to Kristy Wells, Fullerton Police Public Information specialist. For the last year, we have had two motor officers. So things are improving.

DUI checkpoints funded by a grant from the the California Office of Traffic and Safety will become more common. FPD conducted one on Friday, February 20, on Harbor Boulevard. Wells said there will be at least four per year going forward.

Wells said that, since the number of patrol officers is limited, they depend on residents and workers to be their "eyes and ears." If there is an emergency or an actual crime in progress, she said residents can call 911. Otherwise, the nonemergency number (714) 738-6800 should be used. Detailed information about a crime or suspect is critically important. Physical characteristics such as age, race, build, and clothes help. If a vehicle is involved, then a license plate number or at least a car description is invaluable.

Wells recommends the phone app "MyFullerton" for reporting a wide variety of things. On the app, you can report nonemergency things such as parking and traffic violations, illegal dumping, graffiti, vandalism, and code violations. Common violations include neglected, unpainted, or dangerous structures; overgrown vegetation; trash/debris accumulation; unpermitted construction, peeling paint, inoperable vehicles, dead trees, and hoarding.

Other categories include potholes, limbs down on city streets, malfunctioning traffic signals, flooded streets, homeless issues (not involving law enforcement), or damaged street signs and street lights. The app is available on the Apple App Store and Google Play.

This year, both Lent and Ramadan coincidentally began on the same day.

Perhaps the traditions embodied in these weeks of spirituality, sacrifice, and holiness will affect crime. Let's hope so!

ARRESTS OVERVIEW

Between February 9 and 23, the following arrests occurred:

- 22 DUIs
- 45 drug-related offenses
- 24 violence-related offenses
- 14 theft-related offenses
- 37 incidents related to homelessness
- 44 miscellaneous offenses (such as failure to appear in court, driving with a suspended license, parole violation, vandalism, etc.)

Notable arrests include:

February 9: residents alerted the police about a suspect who was looking into vehicles. The police charged the individual with possession of burglary tools and theft of parts from a vehicle.

February 13: during a traffic stop, an officer noticed the handle of a firearm visible inside a vehicle while questioning the occupant about any firearms. The suspect was subsequently charged with illegally carrying a firearm in a vehicle and possessing a large-capacity ammunition magazine.

February 16: the police responded to a report of shoplifting and arrested the suspect for both shoplifting and possession of a controlled substance.

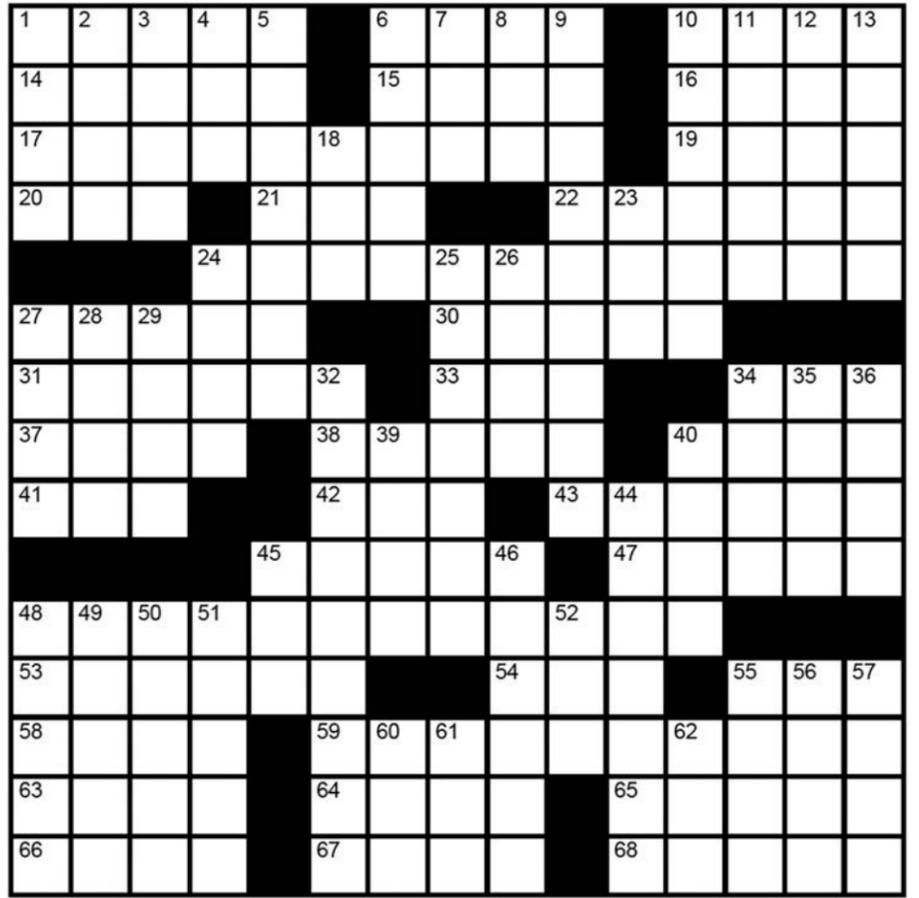
February 20: employees of a business on the 2400 block of East Chapman reported a break-in after following the suspect. The police arrested the individual for felony burglary (breaking and entering). The charge was elevated from a misdemeanor to a felony, possibly due to prior convictions or clear intent.

February 11: Police were called after a suspect broke the windows of a business. This same suspect had been arrested on February 7 for illegal camping, impeding traffic, and public intoxication. The police charged him with felony vandalism due to damage exceeding \$400.

February 21: a man called the police because his friend was behaving erratically, breaking windows, and was extremely intoxicated. The police charged him with burglary, resisting arrest, attacking a police officer and a police dog, and felony vandalism.

OUR TOWN CROSSWORD © 2026

"MARCH (PART I)" by Valerie Brickey (answer key on page 15)



ACROSS

- 1. Classic Ford
- 6. Guinness logo
- 10. Like Alice from "The Brady Bunch"
- 14. "If I Had Legs I'd Kick You" actress Rose
- 15. Busy as ___
- 16. ___ gobi: potato and cauliflower dish
- 17. *Awed by the rich and famous
- 19. French film
- 20. Confident crossword solver's tool
- 21. Easy mark
- 22. Shortly
- 24. *Sub
- 27. "Rumor has it"
- 30. "Animal House" party wear
- 31. Bad Bunny, at birth
- 33. Suffix with press or script
- 34. Slalom segment
- 37. Arab ruler
- 38. Actress Chloe and basketball star Spud
- 40. Pull an all-nighter
- 41. "Freaks" director ___ Browning
- 42. Ultimate degree
- 43. Friend of Jerry and George
- 45. Locale
- 47. Corpulent
- 48. *Red Lobster offering
- 53. ___ about him (unpretentious)
- 54. Quarterback Manning
- 55. Org. for 54-Across
- 58. Sicilian resort, one letter off from 39-Down
- 59. *High-fat dairy product
- 63. "March comes in like a ___..." and a hint to the starts of the starred clues
- 64. Skye of "Say Anything"
- 65. Insurance giant
- 66. Endure
- 67. "Milk" actor Sean
- 68. Role for Sudekis

DOWN

- 1. "Wizard of Oz" lion Bert
- 2. Wings: Lat.
- 3. PBS science series on season 53
- 4. 24 years, for Donald and Melania
- 5. Longed (for)
- 6. Anonymous John
- 7. Opened ___ of worms
- 8. Tomei of "My Cousin Vinny"
- 9. Lantern fuel
- 10. Dutch ___
- 11. Borscht vegetable
- 12. Prefix with morph
- 17. Oct. contest whose winner goes to the World Series
- 18. Russell of "Black Widow"
- 24. Goatee site
- 26. "___ be a cold day..."
- 27. ___ apso (dog)
- 29. Jazz trumpeter Ziggy
- 30. Bridget Fonda, to Jane
- 31. It's a sin
- 32. Female deer
- 33. ___ Tzu (dog)
- 34. Dole (out)
- 35. "Welcome, ___ mortals, to the Haunted Mansion"
- 38. Latin phrase meaning "rare bird"
- 39. Explosives and a cable channel
- 40. When repeated, "You get the idea"
- 45. Tulsa Drillers, for one
- 46. Opposite of slack
- 47. "___ Grade" (2018 Bo Burnham film)
- 50. Boardgame with a Longest Road card
- 51. Shells, e.g.
- 52. Bridges of "Matlock"
- 53. Very dry, as wine
- 55. Wan
- 57. ___ Minor
- 58. Soaks (up)
- 59. Recipe abbr.
- 62. Nutritional fig.

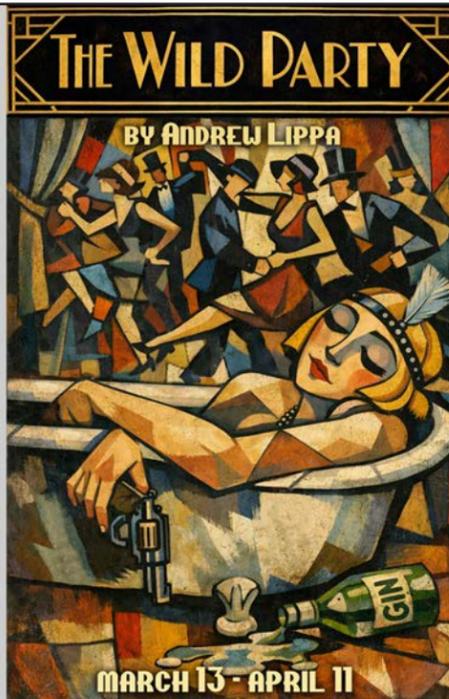


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The Maverick Theater
 110 E. Walnut, Fullerton
www.mavericktheater.com
 714-526-7070

The Wild Party, a dark, jazz-infused musical by Andrew Lipppa based on Joseph Moncure March's 1928 narrative poem, set during the Roaring Twenties. This immersive production directed by Mackenzie Griener is sure to be a fantastic new experience for fans and newcomers alike. Audiences are welcome to wear their jazziest outfits to fit the atmosphere. Recommended for 18+: Show does cover triggering topics, domestic violence, suicide, etc. Performances are Fridays & Saturdays at 8 pm, Sundays at 7 pm. General Admission Seats - \$40.



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8:00 AM-1:00 PM
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MARCH 7 **MAY 2**
AUGUST 1 **OCTOBER 3**

Women's Festival

Saturday March 7
 from 2 to 6 pm

This empowering event will showcase the remarkable accomplishments and talents of women from diverse backgrounds and fields, offering a platform for inspiration, education, and celebration. This event will be an unforgettable celebration of local and regional women entertainers, artists, musicians, and 50+ women owned or led vendors! Along with our signature Beer Garden and FREE Photo Booth, courtesy of Savvy Booth.

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41st Annual Fullerton Prayer Breakfast
 Breakfast: 6:45 - 7:30am | Hope International University | Program: 7:30 - 9:00am
Friday, May 1, 2026

Keynote Speaker
GEORGE GREGORY
 Team Chaplain for the Los Angeles Chargers
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 Best Selling Author

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Fullerton College
14th ANNUAL: FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL
SAVE THE DATE
April 7 - April 8, 2026

The **Woman's Club of Fullerton**
 The Power of Women
 invites you to attend

Empty Bowls
 to benefit Meals on Wheels of Fullerton

Enjoy a simple meal of soup & bread donated by local restaurants and **keep a local potter's handcrafted bowl** as a reminder that you've helped feed a homebound Fullerton resident.

SAVE THE DATE!
Saturday, Mar 7, 2026
 11:00 am - 2:00 pm
 St. Paul Lutheran Church • 111 West Las Palmas Dr., Fullerton
 Tickets are \$30, both online and at the door.
<https://wcof.club/empty-bowls-wcof/>

Purchase online for a free DOOR PRIZE entry | Easy parking

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Mardi Gras
Sunday, March 8, 5 PM
Fullerton Elks Lodge #1993, Fullerton, CA

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HITS & MISSES
 by Pamela Mason Wagner © 2026



SECRET AGENT: TWO HITS

The opening scene in “Secret Agent” serves as a bravura prelude to the world we are about to enter: Brazil, 1977, under a military dictatorship where life is cheap. A bearded hippie (Wagner Moura) tries to gas up his yellow 1960s Beetle while avoiding a dead body at the filling station. When the police arrive, they ignore the corpse and instead search his glove box for contraband.

Why are they harassing him? What is he running from? In its first five minutes, the film establishes the paranoid logic of a corrupt police state.

Writer-director Kleber Mendonça Filho grew up in Recife, the setting for this tour de force. Steeped in memory and shot on Panavision, the film is so richly textured—with crowds, cars, and period detail—that it’s easy to forget this 1970s world was painstakingly recreated.

The story brims with memorable faces, sharp character turns, and unexpected pivots, making its 138-minute runtime fly by. Four Oscar nominations, including one for casting, are well deserved.

We follow Marcello, also known as Armando (a star turn by Moura), as he “disappears” into the political underground of this northeastern beach town. He hides out in a hostel filled with political fugitives, whose kindness and solidarity stand in stark contrast to the brutality outside. There, corrupt hitmen, police chiefs, and captains of industry casually orchestrate murders, dump bodies from bridges, and terrorize gay people, and students—anyone deemed subversive. Yet Mendonça Filho never reduces his characters to types.

Good or evil, they are fully human:

sometimes funny, always believable, riddled with contradictions.

Hovering over the entire story is Carnival, the charged period leading up to Lent. Every night promises revelry, yet the film withholds the pleasure of entering the fray until late, after we’ve come to know nearly all the players. When Carnival finally erupts onscreen, enemies and allies alike dance and drink. The celebration is a great equalizer, offering a note of hope amid otherwise dire circumstances.

It’s 1977, so “Jaws” is playing in local cinemas. Marcello’s young son, Fernando, living with his grandfather after his mother’s death, begs to see it. A real shark later appears, having swallowed a human leg—likely from someone the police have disappeared. Is the shark a metaphor for the authoritarian state, devouring lives as it presses relentlessly forward?

Periodically, the film flashes ahead to a contemporary archive, where two researchers listen to old audio tapes—some made deliberately by revolutionaries, others secretly recorded by surveillance officers. Initially hired simply as transcribers, one researcher becomes absorbed by the story and seeks out descendants, needing to know how Marcello’s story ends. A final, poignant scene with Fernando, Marcello’s now middle-aged son, leaves more questions than answers. That Fernando works in a blood bank housed in a former cinema feels deeply symbolic.

The film’s enduring power lies there: in the necessity of telling stories, of remembering the past so as not to repeat it. Beautiful, funny, and urgent, “Secret Agent” salutes the commonplace people who resist the depredations of uncontrolled power.

- **TWO HITS: Don't Miss it!**
- **A HIT & A MISS: You Might Like it.**
- **TWO MISSES: Don't Bother.**



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

OC Supervisors Board Member Chaffee Highlights Innovative Community Policing Program

Doug Chaffee, Chair of the Orange County Board of Supervisors, presented to the Fullerton City Council on February 17 detailing a behavioral health-focused community policing program. He traced its origins to efforts aimed at improving trust between police and residents, hindered by the 2011 murder of Kelly Thomas by police officers.

Chaffee emphasized that the integration of social services within police departments should enhance communi-

ty support. Partnering with Orange County Behavioral Health and CSU-Fullerton, the city embedded behavioral health specialists within the Fullerton Police Department as employees, not contractors.

Data from the program indicates success: from November 2024 to December 2025, Behavioral Health Co-Responders addressed 1,011 mental health-related calls, with 43% resulting in formal mental health evaluations. The majority of calls led to

immediate resources, support, or referrals.

The initiative aimed to alleviate fear among homeless individuals by utilizing uniforms and vehicles that were clearly distinct from those of the police.

Chaffee's goals include expanding access to services, improving public safety, and supporting officer well-being. He announced plans for statewide recognition of the program.

Councilmember Zahra raised con-

cerns about nighttime services for the homeless, to which Chaffee responded with potential solutions, including a proposed "street medicine" initiative with CalOptima Health.

Councilmember Charles highlighted public health strategies in public safety and advocated for partnerships with local nonprofits.

Chaffee discussed potential internship opportunities with CSU-Fullerton, to provide practical experience in policing.

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

February 17 City Council meeting

Residents Raise Concerns Over Homeless Services, Immigration, Finances and Preservation

A broad range of issues — from homelessness services and immigration enforcement to city finances and historic preservation — were raised during public comment at the recent City Council meeting.

One resident emphasized the importance of respectful civic dialogue, encouraging speakers to consider whether their remarks are "true, kind and necessary." The speaker thanked Councilmember Ahmad Zahra for supporting expanded council discussion rights and called for improved nighttime and weekend services for people experiencing homelessness, including emergency cold-weather shelters. The resident also urged Councilmember Jamie Valencia to reconsider her position on funding legal aid for families impacted by immigration enforcement.

Harry Langenbacher invited councilmembers to attend a bilingual immigration forum hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fullerton and the First Christian Church of Fullerton, which will raise funds for Camino Immigration Services. He also stressed the need to provide safe shelter during cold and rainy weather for those living outdoors.

Fiscal concerns were also highlighted. Jose Casteneda urged the council to prioritize upcoming sales tax measures in November, noting that a similar measure failed in 2020. He warned that city expenditures continue to outpace revenues and called on councilmembers to set aside political differences to protect the city's long-term financial stability.

Curtis Gamble advocated for expanded homeless services and suggested exploring the Rancho La Paz

Mobile Home Park site — partially zoned for emergency shelter use — as a potential location for recuperative care beds. He also called for continued street repairs and encouraged greater unity among councilmembers.

Aaron Pearl, a Gingerwood Circle resident, raised concerns about heavy truck traffic staging along Associated Road between Imperial Highway and Bastanchury Road. While thanking the city for recent infrastructure improvements, he warned that the trucks could damage newly repaired streets and sewer lines and requested enforcement action.

A Zoom caller named Andrew expressed concern that immigration enforcement activity could negatively impact local sales tax revenues. He urged the council to present a clearer financial strategy and vision for the city before asking voters to approve additional tax measures.

Yolanda Harrison reflected on the legacy of her late husband, Todd Harrison, and his advocacy work in Fullerton. She thanked residents who continue speaking on behalf of vulnerable community members and asked the city not to forget his contributions. She noted that some of his ashes were placed along the Union Pacific Trail.

Finally, Jensen Hallstrom called for restoration of the deteriorating World War II Memorial at Hillcrest Park. He said he has sought action since 2018 and recently repainted several faded names himself. The memorial, created from a 2,000-year-old giant sequoia branch donated in 1946, honors 52 local servicemen. Hallstrom questioned why no formal preservation plan has been implemented.

Trip Count	Purpose Code	Miles	Trip Duration (Min)	Rate (\$)	Hours
3	A – Cultural Arts Center	11.00	36	\$51.00	0.60
11	B – Beach/Park	46.00	126	\$236.00	2.10
114	C – Church	510.20	1,273	\$2,860.00	21.22
2	D – Funeral/Memorial	56.00	131	\$180.00	2.18
9	E – Amusement Park	51.00	161	\$234.50	2.68
371	F – Family/Friends	2,225.30	5,677	\$10,092.75	94.62
47	K – Government Office/Services	198.30	564	\$966.00	9.40
23	L – Library/Museum	89.50	310	\$467.00	5.17
3265	M – Medical	15,346.50	43,418	\$90,307.25	723.63
8425	N – Nutrition	20,877.36	79,418	\$169,271.50	1,323.63
171	O – Other	825.30	2,122	\$5,083.25	35.37
1139	P – Personal Care	4,687.27	13,550	\$26,280.18	225.83
1060	S – Shopping	3,798.70	11,925	\$21,376.50	198.75
7	T – Movies/Theaters/Concerts	22.00	83	\$157.50	1.38
14,647	TOTAL	48,744.43	158,794	\$327,563.43	2,646.57

Fullerton's Senior Transportation

At a recent city council meeting on February 17, the Fullerton City Council voted 3-2 (Charles and Zahra "no") in favor of cutting the Senior Mobility Program, which provides essential transportation services to elderly residents. The decision comes as the program has exceeded its projected budget for the current fiscal year, prompting the city to impose a limit of 30 rides per month to the Fullerton Community Center for the remainder of the year.

Deputy City Manager Daisy Perez reported that she has reallocated funds to cover half of the program's shortfall. However, the anticipated budget cuts for the upcoming fiscal year are expected to be even more severe.

Transportation plays a critical role for seniors, who often lose the ability to drive as they age, making access to medical care, grocery shopping, and social activities challenging. The lack of reliable transportation options can lead to social isolation, which is linked to higher rates of depression and chronic health issues among older adults.

The Senior Mobility Program, previously relying on taxi vouchers, is now facing significant reductions that could jeopardize the well-being of Fullerton's elderly population. The council's decision to cut funding is set to take effect in July, with advocates warning that neglecting the needs of older adults could shift costs to emergency healthcare services instead of providing a cost-effective solution.

Supporters of the program argue that city-funded transportation initiatives, such as shuttle services and subsidized rides, are essential to helping seniors maintain their independence and dignity. These services not only comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) but also strive to exceed its minimum requirements, ensuring that older adults can actively engage with their communities.

Fullerton has been a participant in this funding program since 2006. Prioritizing transportation for older adults is more than just a budgetary concern; it is a matter of equity and recognition of the valuable contributions seniors make to the community.

CITY MEETINGS 2026

March 2 at 6:00pm Transportation & Circulation	March 16 at 5:30pm Infrastructure and Natural Resources	March 24 at 6:30pm Community Development Citizens'	April 6 at 4:00pm Transportation & Circulation
March 3 at 5:30pm City Council	March 18 at 5:30pm Active Transportation Committee	March 25 at 6:30pm Planning Commission	April 7 at 5:30pm City Council
March 9 at 6:30pm Parks and Recreation	March 23 at 6:00pm Youth Advisory Committee	March 26 at 6:00pm Library Board of Trustees	April 8 at 6:30pm Planning Commission

How to contact your District Representative

• Chair District 1: Fred Jung (714) 738-6311 fred.jung@cityoffullerton.com	• Vice Chair District 2: Nicholas Dunlap (714) 738-6311 nicholas.dunlap@cityoffullerton.com	• District 3: Dr. Shana Charles (714) 738-6311 shana.charles@cityoffullerton.com	• District 4: Jamie Valencia (714) 738-6311 jamie.valencia@cityoffullerton.com	• District 5: Dr. Ahmad Zahra (714) 738-6311 ahmadz@cityoffullerton.com
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Fullerton Fire Department Launches City-Operated Ambulance Program

The City of Fullerton has launched a City-operated ambulance service, transitioning from a third-party contractor to the Fullerton Fire Department managing the entire emergency response. Fire Chief Adam Loeser emphasized that this change ensures direct oversight of patient care from the 9-1-1 call to hospital transport, improving response times and care. To implement this service, 32 Ambulance Operators were hired and refurbished ambulances have been deployed, with seven new custom units on the way. This transition allows for better allocation of resources. There will be no disruption in service, as the Fire Department will continue to work with private ambulance providers to ensure comprehensive coverage.

ORANGE COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT

Connecting Orange County to LAX: Evaluating Transportation Options

A new report from the Orange County Grand Jury identifies crucial gaps in public transportation options between Orange County (OC) and Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). It cites issues of efficiency, congestion, and emissions affecting millions of travelers.

The analysis points out that while there are affordable transit options, direct service from five specific locations in OC could reduce travel times by 30 minutes or more. The study found that many local travelers still choose LAX over John Wayne Airport (SNA) due to lower fares and broader service options. Anaheim, particularly near Disneyland, is the primary departure point for travelers to LAX, but public transit usage for airport trips is low. Most passengers rely on personal vehicles or ride-hailing services, which contributes to freeway congestion.

The report evaluated ten transportation options, concluding that Metrolink or Amtrak combined with the FlyAway® bus is the most reliable public transit choice, typically taking under two hours. However, as of September 2025, the FlyAway® service accounted for only 0.2% of the

vehicle traffic entering LAX.

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is restricted by federal regulations from establishing direct bus routes to specific destinations like LAX. Still, the agency is crucial in regional transit operations.

Potential sites for new direct services include the Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center, Irvine Transportation Center, Fullerton Park & Ride, and other redevelopment areas. Establishing these services could reduce travel times, costs, and emissions.

Since 2014, the percentage of households without cars in Orange County has risen, while solo car commuting has decreased. However, most airport trips still depend on personal vehicles. The report also highlights ongoing infrastructure projects at LAX aimed at improving access and reducing congestion.

The Grand Jury's recommendations emphasize the need for direct public transportation to LAX, similar to other major metropolitan areas. Addressing these gaps will require commitment from regional agencies and airport officials.

Fullerton's Inclement Weather Shelter

The City of Fullerton's Inclement Weather Shelter program serves individuals experiencing homelessness who are verified as having ties to the City of Fullerton and operates through coordinated referrals with the HOPE Center, Fullerton Police Department Homeless Liaison Officers, and the City's Outreach Team. Inclement weather shelter beds are used only when standard shelter capacity has been met. For more information, please visit the City's website at www.cityoffullerton.com or call (714) 738-6544.



Storm Causes Tree to Crash onto House

by David Spargur

In the early hours of February 17, a storm resulted in an incident for Rashad Sharif and his wife, who were awakened by a 40-foot pine tree falling onto their home. The couple had been asleep around 2 am when the storm's intensity escalated.

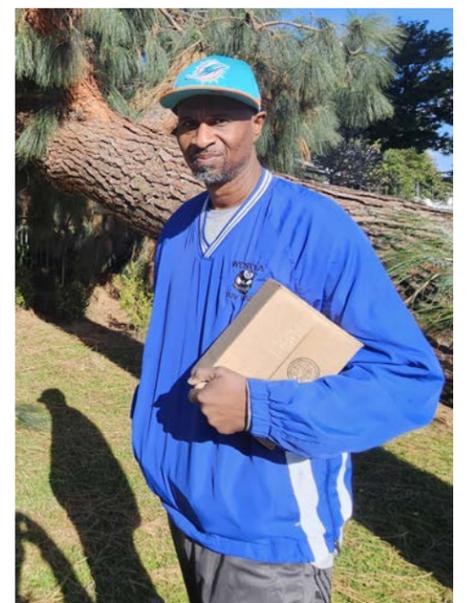
"I heard a loud noise like wind, but then I heard a BOOM BOOM," Mr. Sharif recounted. "I didn't know at the time if it was an earthquake or if someone had driven into the house."

He discovered that one of the 40-foot pine trees in front of his house had crashed into his roof. Mr. Sharif, the owner of the house at 1573 West Amerige, noted that the damage was mostly to the south side, where the living room was located. The tree lifted an approximately 15-foot-wide section of the curb, along with its 3-foot footing, as it tipped over onto the house.

"I couldn't call the City because it was 2 am," stated Mr. Sharif. The police arrived around 3:30 am and took his information. He called the insurance company, and they sent someone by within 3 hours.

Mr. Sharif also called his own contractor to discuss repairs to the house, which was built in the 1940s.

Mario Gonzalez, Area Manager for



West Coast Arborists, confirmed that the City had called upon his team to safely remove the fallen tree and secure the surrounding area for residents. As of 3 pm on Wednesday, his team had cordoned off the area and was prepared to commence their work.

Due to the high winds and heavy rain, the city received an increased number of reports of property damage. The top priority was keeping roads clear and safe. Crews were actively removing debris and fallen branches from streets in sections to ensure thorough cleanup.

To report downed trees/limbs please call: (714) 738-6987.

SENIOR TAXI TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

The City of Fullerton offers no cost and/or subsidized transportation options for Fullerton residents ages 60+.

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(Donation of \$1 per day can be accepted by the front desk)

To cancel or modify a scheduled trip call the Front Desk at 714-738-6575

Make sure to provide the following information:

Name, phone number, date and time of your scheduled trip.

Non-Emergency Medical Trips *

To schedule your medical trips call Yellow Cab directly at (855)362-4756.

\$3 per ride to trips within the City of Fullerton

\$7 per ride to selected satellite locations outside of Fullerton:

Limit 8 trips per month (4 round trips)

Selected Satellite Locations:

*Please contact the Front Desk

*Passengers are responsible for calling the taxi company directly to arrange their ride and to make any cancellations for non-emergency medical trips.

*All services are available Monday through Friday. Obtain your application at the Fullerton Community Center front desk or by calling 714-738-6575.



The Senior Mobility Program is provided in partnership with the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) and paid for by Project U, 1% of Measure M2 funds.





OPINION: Out of My Mind

by Jon Dobrer © 2026 Jonathandobrer.substack.com

Iran War? No! Middle Eastern War

The war we all saw coming has arrived. A week ago, I predicted it would launch last Tuesday and be announced in the State of the Union. I was off by three days. It has been clear that this was coming. All the signs were present for all to see. We were sending ships, hell, fleets and armadas to the region. Iran closed its airspace last week and also, if only briefly, the Straits of Hormuz. We announced that the families of diplomatic personnel in Lebanon and Israel were free to leave. Finally, our Israeli Ambassador told people to get out. Then the airspace closed.

All the while, Trump pretended that war was avoidable and that while he preferred diplomacy, he was ready to fight. Trump pretended to negotiate when he actually believed that there was no diplomatic solution. So, as there were further talks scheduled when Trump launched an attack on Iran on June 22, 2025, he launched last night (PST) with more talks scheduled.

The United States and Israel launched in daylight hours, which is unusual. Normally, there is less anti-aircraft fire and more terror with night

attacks. We chose daytime because the first strikes, led by Israel, were to take out (Kill) Iran's leaders—both religious and secular. We believed they would be gathered in several vulnerable working groups. We don't know the result yet. Iran says they survived, but Iran is not credible. We say that we don't know, which I think is true.

Was Trump pretending to negotiate in bad faith or smart? Well, the tactic is smart. However, the war is not so smart. The "Peace President," lusting for the Nobel Peace Prize and still drunk on the easy success of the Venezuelan operation, jumped into the already roiled waters of the Middle East.

How will it end? "Ay, there's the rub." No one knows. No one ever knows the outcome of just about any war (Save our invasion of Grenada). However intelligently or cunningly we might plan, and whatever assurances the generals might give, the battleplan disappears after the first shot. Generals give leaders bad information, information aimed to please rather than to

inform.

Please note Putin's planned two-week invasion of Ukraine, now in its 5th year. Or take our rapid invasion of Iraq that fell apart in 8 years of fighting, or how our quick conquest of Afghanistan deteriorated into failure, chaos and tragedy over a 20-year period.

We are already facing a very large miscalculation, though it may end up in our favor. Trump and Vance have promised no long wars and no boots on the ground. They promised not really a war but a kind of Putinesque "Special Operation—in and out as in Venezuela. Trump believed that this would be a simple and limited joint operation with Israel and would not become a wider war.

Wrong! It is already a regional war expanding in less than 24 hours all over the Middle East. We knew Iran would try to retaliate against Israel and had our anti-missile defenses deployed. We thought that Iran would attack some American targets in the region—bases in Iraq and our naval base in Bahrain. We were right. They did. But then they surprised us and struck Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain.

This was, on Iran's part, a terrible miscalculation. The Arab world was divided and not committed either to the US or Iran. Now, after being attacked,

they will move towards neutrality or outright support. Iran's ill-advised violence may indicate that, indeed, its professional military and political leadership might have been diminished or even destroyed.

Yes, we have indeed "Let slip the dogs of war." Now will we cry? I am already crying. I'm crying, "Why?" Are we fighting because Iran is an immediate existential threat? No one believes the immediacy of the threat, though the threat is real. Are we fighting as a distraction for Trump to change the focus from Epstein? A possibility. Is Netanyahu egging us on as a distraction from his legal and political problems? Almost certainly.

Whatever Trump's or Netanyahu's motives, we are at war. We launched this war without congressional approval (pretty normal). Worse, we launched without bringing the American people on board and giving us an understanding of the threat, our goals or the anticipated costs in lives, treasure and reputation. Maybe Trump's calculation is that you can't lose public support if you never sought it. Not, in my view, smart.

So, where to now? We don't know. A quick in and out or a slog? We don't know. What we do know is that once we let slip the Dogs of War, they won't easily return to their kennels and when they do, they will be forever changed by the blood they drew and the blood they shed.

**"Cry 'Havoc!'
and let slip
the dogs of war"**

OPINION: AT HOME WITH THE HOMELESS

by Andrew Williams © 2026 WWW.PATREON.COM/C/THEEOPINIONATOR

Concentration camps: coming soon to a town near you.

One of the disgraceful parts of America's history that my generation didn't learn about in school was the POW camps established during the Civil War—Andersonville being the most infamous—that inspired the Nazis in their creation of concentration camps as the primary engines in their inhuman desire to kill every Jewish person on the planet. The fact that they came so close to succeeding in their pogrom against Jews should terrify every sentient being.

And it shouldn't surprise any thinking sapient that CNN, MSNBC, Faux Noise and Newsmin aren't going to tell you that Trump's Department of Homeland Insecurity is building "detention camps" throughout the U.S. Twenty-four cities have been targeted so far. Sam Seder, Brittany Page, and Kyle Kulinski have brought us reports from the ground in Gainesville, GA, and north Salt Lake City, where new construction is underway, or existing buildings are being repurposed.

Their primary stated purpose—so far—is to house the unhoused and undocumented. Detention camps, internment camps, any type of forced, coerced, involuntary internment—concentration camps by any other name, and they will smell just as fetid. Thankfully, the word is getting out via YouTube and social media, and some of the targeted cities are pushing back.

Last week, a video was posted on Facebook showing citizens in Roxbury, NJ, at a town council meeting, demanding that their city council reject the placement of an ICE "containment" facility in their city.

"Oh, but Trump said they'll be bringing in doctors, psychiatrists, and addiction specialists to help the homeless, so that's good, isn't it?" Really? I mean, sure, the Nazi camps had doctors as well—like Josef Mengele. And all those nameless Nazi camp doctors whose idea of treatment was more forced labor for men and women already weakened by malnutrition and abuse. Because work makes you free, right? Right? And as for mental health, the only psychiatrists in the camps were among the inhabitants, like Viktor Frankl.

Do you really believe that Trump cares enough to give adequate mental and physical medical care to anyone, much less the unhoused? If so, I'd like to talk to you—starting by ripping those rose-colored glasses off your face.

And the most horrifying part is that each "camp" will have incinerators—ostensibly for disposing of hazardous medical waste (used hypodermics, linens, etc.) Do you not like that word? Would you prefer, say, crematoria?

And do you really think they would just be used to dispose of used needles and bedsheets? And what on God's green earth makes you think that the population of these camps will be restricted to the unhoused and other 'undesirables'? We know they'll go after anybody who badmouths their Gestapo—Minnesota proved that.

You want documentation. I understand that. Even though it's easy to believe that Trump would actually do such things, arguments against this insanity must be bolstered by evidence. As they used to say on The X-Files, the truth is out there. Besides the podcasts by Seder, Page and Kulinski on YouTube, here's a historic precedent that also isn't mentioned in the syllabus. Two words: REX 84. That was

the program created under Ronald Reagan—thankfully never authorized, funded or implemented—which proposed a similar solution to the problem of inconvenient people.

According to Google's AI, which checks with my research notes from that time, "REX 84, or Readiness Exercise 1984, was a classified U.S. government plan and drill created in 1984 under the Reagan administration.

The plan tested the government's ability to detain large numbers of U.S. residents considered "national security threats" during a national emergency, such as significant domestic opposition to a U.S. invasion in Central America." It wouldn't be surprising if one of the architects of Project 2025 dug up those old briefing books, dusted them off, and added some nefarious ideas of their own.

Speaking of REX 84...37 years ago, I made my first attempt at writing a multi-issue comic book. This was around the time when the term "graphic novel" emerged to describe books with serious adult themes, like *Vendetta*, *Watchmen*, *The Dark*

Knight, and *The Sandman*.

My artist friend Dale Rawlings handled the artwork, while I wrote the script. The basic premise was that in some future America, a fascist state is being created, and one of the first things the new President does is create camps for dissidents to be housed in. Once the dissidents are rounded up, they are sent to these camps—mostly in the Midwest—where they are imprisoned and killed if they try to escape. Sound familiar?

We didn't get very far with the project, so I only ended up writing a script for the first issue, with rough ideas for the others. Also, I didn't get into any of the real down and dirty parts, like what was done with the bodies of dissidents who were killed for rebelling and attempting escape. The very time this was created—late 1980s/early 1990s, the end of the "Reagan Revulsion"—colored the whole presentation. Then Clinton was elected, and we abandoned the idea. In hindsight, it was clearly not one of my best decisions.

It's a chilling thing to see a work of fiction come to life before your eyes. One can only imagine the reactions of George Orwell and Sinclair Lewis if they were brought back to life in 2026 America. Anger and horror, surely. And Margaret Atwood—while she lived to see "The Handmaid's Tale" become a TV show, how much worse to see her novel turned into a twisted playbook for incels with too much power and damned-up libidos.

Once you criminalize homelessness—as has been done quite successfully out here in the West, post-Grants Pass—you can pretty much do what you want with the unhoused. And Trump et al. clearly have some seriously dystopian ideas in mind. They can call it "human thriving," or "work-conditioned housing," or whatever hideous neologism they can conjure by contorting the English language. I say it's Trump's Newspeak used to justify the creation of concentration camps, and I say, "Hell with it." So should you.



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Balance & Change

by Michelle Gottlieb, Psy.D., MFT, LPCC © 2026

Adventures Abroad: Mumbai to Shanghai

My last column was about adventures. Well, I just got back from a big one! I was invited to present, along with a colleague, at Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) Asia, a conference held in Mumbai. After that, we ventured to Shanghai for another training session.

Traveling to different countries is truly such an amazing way to broaden our perspectives. We got to discover new food, navigated different modes of transport, and had many of our assumptions challenged along the way. We got to see how people live, from the extremely wealthy to the extremely poor. We saw huge cities and tiny villages.

My most significant takeaway from the whole trip was the remarkable

nature of the people. Everywhere we went, from those big cities to those small villages, the people were gracious and generous. In fact, my suitcase couldn't handle the sheer volume of thoughtful gifts we received!

No matter where we were, I was struck by how kind people were. Truly kind. The people we met were always willing to answer questions or simply sit down and chat, making us feel welcome. Everywhere we went, people wanted to talk and connect. Because we were doing trauma trainings, we were reminded how universal trauma is in this world, but also how healing can happen everywhere.

It was a trip of a lifetime. One that I will always remember. Thank you to all who made it happen!

Healthy Awareness

by Jo Ann Brannock, Ph.D. © 2026

Psychology of Altruism



As an undergraduate at CSU-Fullerton, I worked as a teacher's assistant for Deanna Kuhn in her developmental and experimental psychology classes.

The labs she directed centered on one theme: altruism. Like many students, I found myself asking:

What exactly is altruism?

According to Webster's Dictionary, altruism is the unselfish regard for or devotion to the welfare of others.

Over the years, researchers have proposed several explanations for why we help others. Here are the top three.

1) The evolutionary model suggests that altruism promotes the survival of humanity. Helping others strengthens the group and increases the chances that our species will thrive. Supporting this idea, neuroscience shows that the prefrontal cortex—the part of the brain most developed in humans—is highly active when we think or behave socially.

2) The egoistic model proposes that we help others because doing so increases our self-esteem and helps us avoid stress or guilt. In this view, altruism benefits the helper as much as the recipient.

3) The empathy model suggests that when we put ourselves in another person's "shoes," we are moved to help because we genuinely feel their distress (Huffman, Sanderson, & Kowdell, 2025).

A tragic real-life case that shaped our understanding of altruism occurred in 1964 with the murder of Kitty Genovese in New York City. Reports indicated that numerous witnesses heard or saw parts of the attack, yet no one intervened immediately.

The case prompted a national conversation on safety and helped spark the

creation of the 911 emergency system. In 1968, psychologists Bibb Latané and John Darley studied the incident and conducted experiments to understand why people sometimes fail to help. They identified what is now called the bystander effect: the greater the number of people present, the less likely any one person is to feel responsible for helping. Responsibility becomes diffused among the group.

Their research identified five essential steps that must take place before a bystander intervenes in an emergency. A bystander must:

- 1) Notice the situation
- 2) Interpret it as an emergency
- 3) Accept personal responsibility
- 4) Know how to help
- 5) Decide to take action

If even one step breaks down, help may never come.

Today, we face countless situations that call for courage and compassion.

Would you intervene if someone were being detained or attacked?

Would you donate an organ to a stranger? Join a protest?

Hide a family in danger, as some did during the Holocaust?

Contribute money to support a cause you believe in?

How far are we willing to go?

Some people help quietly, without reward or recognition. They act simply because it is right. To me, that is true altruism. Fear, however, can hold us back.

As President Franklin D. Roosevelt famously reminded us, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

Perhaps the question is not whether altruism exists, but whether we will choose it when the moment comes.



The Science Behind It

by Yuvika Salman © 2026

AI in Medicine

By now, you've probably seen headlines about artificial intelligence weaving its way into nearly everything, from self-driving cars to automated food deliveries. But AI hasn't just entered consumer tech. It has quietly made its way into medicine, embedded in the tools that physicians use every day.

When experts talk about AI in healthcare, they are referring to systems trained on massive datasets that assist physicians in making more informed decisions. This ranges from diagnosing disease to predicting risk or planning treatments. Peer-reviewed research shows that AI can improve diagnostic accuracy and efficiency by integrating electronic health records, imaging, genomics, and other clinical data at a scale no individual clinician could process alone. Unlike the cinematic version of AI, the real transformation in medicine is subtle and data-driven, helping to reshape how doctors evaluate and intervene.

Here in Orange County, that shift isn't theoretical. Local hospitals are already integrating robotic surgical platforms, AI-assisted imaging tools, and predictive analytics into routine patient care. The question is no longer whether AI will influence medicine, but rather how quickly and safely it will redefine clinical practice.

At its best, AI helps physicians detect subtle patterns in imaging and lab results, identify and prioritize high-risk patients earlier, and tailor treatments to individual needs. However, its integration also raises concerns, including algorithmic bias, limitations in data quality, and the risk of overreliance on imperfect systems. National conversations around fairness and equity in medical AI underscore the importance of implementing these tools responsibly.

Robot-assisted surgery is becoming common in Orange County hospitals like Hoag, MemorialCare, and UCI Health, which use systems like the da Vinci Surgical System. Although these surgeries are fully surgeon-controlled, they offer enhanced precision and dexterity, allowing for smaller incisions. This leads to less postoperative pain, reduced scarring, shorter hospital stays, and quicker recoveries compared to traditional open surgery.

In some settings, robotic platforms are paired with advanced imaging and data-guided insights, representing a step toward more AI-enhanced surgical

workflows. Early research suggests that integrating AI into robotic systems may eventually improve efficiency and surgical outcomes, though this technology remains in development. For now, these tools augment rather than replace the expertise of the operating surgeon.

The influence of AI extends beyond the operating room. Many of its most impactful applications occur before and after surgery. AI is widely used in diagnostic imaging to assist radiologists in detecting abnormalities on X-rays, CT scans, and MRIs with higher sensitivity and consistency.

Clinical decision support systems analyze patient data to help predict complications and guide personalized treatment strategies. Even large language model technologies (like ChatGPT and other research systems specifically catered to medicine) have demonstrated the ability to assist with medical reasoning tasks, functioning as sophisticated decision-support tools rather than substitutes for physician judgment.

Together, these tools shape surgical planning, intraoperative strategy, and postoperative care, embedding AI into the broader continuum of care rather than treating it as just a robot in the OR.

There is no doubt that the future of AI in surgery is advancing rapidly. Research teams have already demonstrated autonomous robotic systems successfully performing complex tasks in controlled settings.

This is only a testament to how fast this field is moving. Still, translating those breakthroughs into routine clinical practice, particularly in Orange County hospitals, will take time. Regulatory hurdles, ethical concerns, rigorous safety validation, training requirements, and the inherent unpredictability of human biology all slow the path to autonomy.

In the near term, the trajectory is clear. AI will increasingly enhance surgeons' precision and decision-making, improving outcomes, reducing complications, and personalizing care without replacing the critical role of human expertise at the center of medicine.

In our community, we are witnessing the early stages of a technological evolution, one where AI empowers and expands what physicians can do, improves patient outcomes, and reshapes clinical workflows. But despite the headlines, medicine remains deeply human. That future may be approaching quickly, but it has not replaced the people behind the practice.

AI will increasingly enhance surgeons' precision and decision-making, improving outcomes and personalizing care without replacing the critical role of human expertise at the center of medicine.

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Donald Peek 1957-2025

Donald was born on November 23, 1957, to Robert Peek Sr. and Eva Peek in Fullerton.

He remained in Fullerton, where he attended Maple Elementary and Wilshire Junior High School, and graduated from Fullerton Union High School.

Donald enjoyed playing sports, but his passion was music and throwing parties. Multiple parties encouraged Donald, his brothers and friends to form a group called "All The Way Live Brothers." Donald loved hanging out with his family and friends.



Donald is preceded in death by his beloved parents, Eva and Robert Peek Sr.; his brother, Robert (Bobby) Peek Jr.; and his sisters, Glenora Peek Owens and Janet Peek.

Donald is survived by his siblings, Julia Peek McCoy, Stevie Peek, Laraine Peek

Hegstad, Randall Peek, Calvin Peek, Andre Peek and a host of nieces, nephews, extended family and friends who will miss him dearly.

Please join us as we remember and honor a wonderful man whose spirit will live on in our hearts.

Kathleen Kerrigan Dasney 1942-2025

Kathleen Dasney, a beloved member of the Fullerton community, passed away peacefully on December 9, 2025, surrounded by her loving family. In accordance with her wishes, there was no formal funeral service. Instead, friends and family visited the Fullerton Public Library.



Voters, Fullerton Heritage, Fullerton Museum Center, and Fullerton Arboretum.

As a resident of Fullerton for 50 years, Kathy also dedicated 25 years of her career to serving as a librarian for the City of Fullerton. Her love for literature and education has left a

lasting impact on the community she cherished.

Kathy was a passionate advocate for children and devoted much of her life to community service. She was a devoted member of St. Angela's Roman Catholic Church in Brea. She participated in numerous local organizations, including League of Women

In honor of her memory, donations may be made to the Fullerton Public Library Foundation or The Friends of the Library, located at 353 West Commonwealth Avenue, Fullerton, CA, 92832.

Minard Duncan 1933-2026

Minard Duncan, a cherished educator and community leader, passed away on February 12 in Fullerton. He is remembered for his dedication to education and service.

Born in Anaheim, he attended public school, served in the Korean War, and earned his B.A., K-8 teaching credential, and M.A. at CSU-Long Beach.

His 41-year career in the Fullerton School District included teaching at Commonwealth School and Ladera Vista Junior High, followed by leadership roles as principal at Pacific Drive, Rolling Hills, and Richman Schools.

Upon his retirement, Minard continued his dedication to education by supervising student teachers and teaching a seminar at CSU-Fullerton. His passion for community service was evident through his involvement with various organizations, including the Fullerton Interfaith Emergency Service, Fullerton Collaborative, Fullerton School District Educational Foundation, and Phi Delta Kappa - CSUF Chapter. He contributed to the Fullerton Chamber of Commerce Education Committee, the Fullerton School District Science Advocacy Council, and the Rotary Club of Fullerton - Main.



Minard was recognized at the First Annual OC Business Educators Conference for fostering connections between education and local businesses. He received the PTA Honorary Service Award multiple times and was named Educator of the Year by the Fullerton Chamber of Commerce in 1998. In 2001, the Association of California Administrators honored him for his community volunteer work.

Minard believed every child deserves a quality education in a safe environment, advocating for a broad curriculum that included basic skills, art, science, social studies, and physical education. He supported English language development and initiatives in computer, library, and media to prepare students as socially responsible citizens.

Outside of his professional life, Minard enjoyed reading, camping, and playing golf. His spirit of kindness, commitment to education, and love for his family will be cherished and remembered by all who knew him.

He is survived by his children, Phil and Denise, and his three grandchildren.

March 14 will be celebration of life.

Trudy Harwell Gray 1952-2026

In the early morning hours of February 3, we said goodbye to an unwavering source of warmth and love. Trudy Harwell Gray was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in early December. She died in her home, surrounded by the love of her daughters, husband, and brother, a brief two months later. The speed and aggression with which the disease ravaged her was dizzying but also a blessing, as her pain was short-lived.

Trudy was born in Philadelphia to Pat (née Patey) and Payton Oliver "Po" Harwell. Po was a career naval Commander whose job took the family up and down the East Coast, where they lived in places as diverse as NY, PA, VA, MD, FL, and DE. This nomadic upbringing imbued Trudy with an outgoing, personable demeanor; she was able to befriend anyone and feel comfortable in any setting throughout her life.

In 1965, when Trudy was in Junior High, the family made their final move to Orange, CA. Trudy and her brother Bill attended Villa Park High School, and Trudy later earned her BA in Sociology from Cal State Fullerton. While in college, she was hired at Crown Stationers, a local



office supply and gift store. Trudy and the store's owner, Jerry Gray, quickly fell in love and married the week after Trudy's graduation. Their romance endured for thirty years as they raised two daughters, Alison and Amy, and modeled a marriage built on love, respect, and shared humor.

A deeply empathetic soul, Trudy didn't just care about others; she felt a responsibility to help in any way she could. Her philanthropic sensibilities ensured that she always made time for volunteer work. She was active in the PTA and as a room parent for both daughters, she delivered Meals on Wheels, she participated in National Charity League with her girls, and she was a member of the League of Women Voters. Whenever she could, she donated to organizations close to her heart.

When Crown closed, Trudy took a job as a scheduler for St. Jude Heritage Medical Group. During her time there, she worked her way up to Office Manager while still lavishing love and attention on her marriage and family, maintaining her social life, and remaining active in her volunteer work. Jerry called her Wonder Woman.

Trudy lost Jerry in 2004, her grief was crushing, but she remained strong for her girls, who were then in their 20s. Her brother Bill, with whom she had always been close, was her rock. While she never

stopped mourning Jerry, she was always grateful for him and the life they built together.

As a social butterfly who was still too young to resign herself to widow's weeds, she found love again with John West, to whom she remained married until her passing. When Trudy retired from St. Jude Heritage, she and John traveled, enjoyed wine tasting, and hosted parties and dinners for their many friends.

Over many years, Trudy's kidney function had declined due to the renal disease that runs in her family. By 2006, her kidneys were nearly useless and she was advised to start dialysis. But her best friend Jeanne decided to donate one of her kidneys, giving Trudy the ability to see her girls through two weddings and one divorce, and allowing her to be a Gigi to three grandchildren whom she

absolutely adored. Family was always the most important thing to her; her love for them was fierce and unconditional.

Always defying doctors' expectations, Trudy's donated kidney lasted nearly 20 years, only starting to shut down shortly before her death. Doctors told us that

she only had two days, but Trudy stubbornly held on long enough for John to get her home from the nursing facility. She spent her final days in her own house with her favorite things: her family and her cats, her kitchen and her music and her art.

Trudy is survived by her husband, John; her daughters, Alison and Amy (Ed); her grandchildren, Holden, Ella, and Oliver; her brother, Bill (Judi); and hernieces and nephews.

"Mom was my moral compass, my feminist icon, the angel on my shoulder and the voice in my head. She is the truest example of kindness, grace, and strength I will ever know. She navigated me through the darkest times in my life with empathy. She was Amy's and my most ardent cheerleader, and she made sacrifices for our comfort and well-being that far exceed maternal responsibility. She worked to make everyone else happy and she has earned her rest. But I know I'm not the only one who feels like she's taken a piece of my heart with her," said Alison.

A funeral service was held at McAulay & Wallace Mortuary in Fullerton on February 28 at 2pm. A Celebration of Life will be planned at a later date, as Trudy wanted a party to celebrate a life well lived. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Labradors and Friends Dog Rescue Group, the American Cancer Society, or the ACLU.

"WE HAVE KNOWN AND BELIEVED THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US. GOD IS LOVE;"

I John



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ANSWER KEY TO "MARCH (PART I)" from page 7:



PUZZLE MASTER
Valerie Brickey
was born in Fullerton and returned to raise her family here. She has contributed puzzles since 2014.

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Location: City of Fullerton
Job Type: Regular Full-Time
Job Number: 2026-PO-Lateral
Department: Police

Fleet Lead Worker

Salary: \$73,944 - \$94,371 Annually
Location: City of Fullerton
Job Type: Regular Full-Time
Job Number: 2026-00157
Department: Public Works

Water Lead Worker

Salary: \$69,586 - \$88,809 Annually
Location: City of Fullerton
Job Type: Regular Full-Time
Job Number: 2026-WLW Dist
Department: Public Works



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Exploring State Parks with a Free Pass from the Fullerton Public Library

Buried within the Fullerton Public Library’s website homepage, I noticed a digital flyer that read, “It’s not just for Summer! When you check out a State Parks Pass, you’ll get two weeks (per checkout) to explore State Parks!” This intrigued me, especially since after recent rainstorms, the plant life on both the city’s hiking trails, parks, and surrounding hills has been looking greener compared to this time last year. So, I visited the Fullerton Public Library (FPL). With my library card in hand, I walked up to the front desk, asked a librarian if I could borrow a California State Parks Pass, and after they scanned my card, I received a green and gold-colored rectangular pass that enabled me to enter any participating state park for free.

Along with the pass, I also received a receipt, much like you would when checking out a library book, notifying me that this pass was due back to the public library in two weeks. What’s worth noting is that the Parks Pass is only available to adults with a valid, physical-use library card (excluding children’s cards, temporary, or limited-use library card types). According to FPL librarians, patrons like me are allowed to renew the pass only once, and if the Parks Pass is not returned, a \$10 lost fee would be applied to my library account. As long as the fee remained on the account, I would not be allowed to check out additional physical materials from the library; however, this fee would be automatically waived once the pass is returned.

The librarians at the FPL also supplied me with a helpful printout of participating CA State Parks in both Orange and Los Angeles Counties. Interestingly, the three state parks closest to Fullerton are Bolsa Chica State Park, Chino Hills State Park and Huntington State Beach. I decided to check out Chino Hills State Park, as it has been a couple of years since I last visited.

Reaching out to the City of Fullerton, I asked when the FPL first started collaborating with the California State Library Parks Pass Program and received a response via email from Kim Chaudhry, Senior Administrative Analyst for the City of Fullerton.

Chaudhry wrote, “The California

State Parks Pass Program began at the Fullerton Public Library in May 2022. Prior to the official launch, our library was closely involved as part of a working group of library professionals throughout California who collaboratively developed the pass program and helped bring it to libraries statewide.”

She said, “The passes have been a wonderful resource for our community. Patrons have shared that they’re visiting the outdoors and the library more often because of the passes. When the program first launched, we only had two passes available. Today, we offer more than 270 passes, creating a more sustainable and accessible experience for patrons and ensuring there is rarely, if ever, a wait to check one out. We’ve also recently enabled auto-renewal for one additional checkout period each time a pass is borrowed, making access even easier for our community.”

According to the City of Fullerton, since the program began, the library has checked out passes more than 4,000 times. This month, my family was one of many who had borrowed a pass to visit nearby Chino Hills State Park, which has an entrance off Carbon Canyon Road less than a mile away from the Carbon Canyon Regional Park entry booth. My parents and I pulled into the parking lot by the sign for Chino Hills State Park Discovery Center, displaying the FPL’s Parks Pass from our front dashboard mirror as we drove in. It’s worth noting that the colorful side of the pass must be visible from the outside of the vehicle when parked, so that you don’t get ticketed.

It’s rather impressive that there’s so much preserved, natural green space in this park between our area of North Orange County and Chino Hills. Stepping inside the Chino Hills State Park Discovery Center, I could look out through wide windows and see a panoramic view of the area surrounded by hills with spring wildflowers starting to bloom. I also observed a line of people in green t-shirts hiking out to a closed-off area along the trail to complete plant restoration work. The Discovery Center is an

awesome spot to begin any hike because you can get advice from a park ranger, look at a miniature museum of taxidermied predatory animals that you might encounter out on the trail, view a 3D map of the entire state park land or read about the many types of bird species that frequent the park. There are many displays explaining the science behind the plants one might encounter while out on the trails, which are definitely worth reading. Restrooms and drinking fountains can also be found here.

From a large-scale map of Chino Hills State Park, I learned that there are three entrances: the Brea entry point through Carbon Canyon Rd, a second one located at the end of Rimcrest Drive in Yorba Linda, and a third off Soquel Canyon Parkway in Chino Hills.

On this visit, I started hiking on the Discovery Trail found beneath the park’s visitor center, where I saw many plants grown from seeds and cuttings collected throughout the park. Reading signage posted at the start of the path, I learned that two important woodlands exist in Chino Hills State Park: the coast live oak woodland and the southern California black walnut woodland. Walnut woodlands, which are a rare and endangered habitat, take up hundreds of the 1,500 acres of permanently protected land, while broad branches in the oak woodlands provide much-needed shade for both plants and animals alike.

After making a loop on the

Discovery trail, I hiked along a gravel lot on the side of the Discovery Center to connect to the dirt pathway of the North Ridge Trail, which led my family and me to Soquel Canyon. We walked by the eight mile marker and heard a lot of different types of bird calls while hiking on this trail. Since we left early in the morning, we didn’t encounter too many other hikers or bicyclists along the trail. Interestingly, a portion of this path appeared as if it were once an old California highway since a small section of it was paved with crumbling asphalt and had a white concrete bridge. The hills were all green and thriving, and some even had flowers blooming on them. By the end of our hike, my family encountered more bicyclists and other people taking advantage of the warm late February weather to walk through nature.

At the end of the day, every adult with a Fullerton Public Library card can check out a California State Library Parks Pass Program and see what the different CA State Parks in our area have to offer. Chaudhry said, “We love this program, as do our patrons... We would especially like the public to know that any time of year is an ideal time to take advantage of a pass. They’re not just for summer and can be enjoyed year-round. A favorite state beach feels completely different in January than it does in July, so using the park passes throughout the year is a great way to experience California’s diverse landscapes in every season.”

For more information about the library’s CA State Parks Pass program, please visit: www.fullertonlibrary.org/parkspass.

It’s impressive that there’s so much preserved, natural green space in this park between our area of North Orange County and Chino Hills.

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