



### SPRING FORWARD

Set your clocks ahead one hour this Sunday morning



**PAGING DR. FRISCHER**  
The benefits of milk

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**NEWS**  
Carpenters statue in Downey?

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**ENTERTAINMENT**  
A chance to conduct a symphony

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## Trujillo promises to fight sports bar

■ Councilman Mario Trujillo says Ojos Locos, a sports bar that ignited controversy for dressing its waitresses in skimpy uniforms, is not welcome in Downey, setting up a potential legal battle.

By Alex Dominguez  
Staff Writer

**DOWNEY** – The arrival of Ojos Locos sports bar received further pushback from the community this week, culminating in a protest and a clear message from Downey Councilmember Mario Trujillo: “You’re not welcome here.”

Ojos Locos, anticipated to take over the former Denny’s property on Firestone Boulevard, has drawn the ire of residents over safety concerns and the provocative attire of its waitresses.

This caught the attention of City Council members, most of which have been open about their displeasure with the incoming business.

None have been more outspoken than Trujillo, who on Tuesday said that Ojos Locos should “take their tax dollars elsewhere.”

“You try to keep your daughter off the pole,” said Trujillo. “I’m offended that this corporation wants to come here because I know what they do in Texas.”

Trujillo later told the Downey Patriot that he was “just not comfortable doing business with an organization that objectifies women like that.”

Officials, however, remain with their hands effectively tied legally, as while they can impose mandates and regulations for businesses to adhere to, they cannot prevent a business from establishing itself in the city.

The City Council did take some action to curtail concerns on Tuesday, voting to regulate the attire of waiters and waitresses city-wide.

Under the new ordinance, food handlers are not able to expose any portion of the midriff, any portion of the chest three inches below the clavicle, and/or any portion of the leg less than three inches below the buttocks.

Violators – which could include the establishment and the employee themselves – are subject to fines of \$500 for a first offense, \$1,000 for a second offense, and \$2,000 for any following offenses.

It’s a move that may draw legal action from Ojos Locos, which has said that the lingerie images seen on the chain’s other restaurant social media platforms is not what they intended to bring to California.

However, the proposed uniform – likened to that of a cheerleader – would still not meet the new criteria set by the city. According to officials, Ojos Locos has already vocalized a willingness to sue Downey over the matter.

These comments echoed statements Trujillo made to protestors outside city hall Tuesday, where he said that while he was committed to fighting the arrival of Ojos Locos, he needed them to understand that “we’re going to end up in litigation.”

When asked if Downey was headed to court over the matter, Trujillo clarified, saying “it’s premature at this point.”

“It’s going to come down to whether we enforce the new regulation against this business,” said Trujillo. “If we start enforcing this regulation against them, that’s the point where they may sue us.”

“Based on what the attorneys have told us, it’s premature to say that we’re headed for court, but it’s clear that we’re drawing the line.”

The city has also been specific about the kinds of events or entertainment it will allow at Ojos Locos, allowing for only a DJ and PPV showings.

Continued on page 2

# Warren High students mourn classmate killed in car crash

■ Jaylon Connish, a 17-year-old football player, died in the solo vehicle collision Saturday night.

Two other students remain hospitalized.

By Alex Dominguez  
Staff Writer

**DOWNEY** – Students gathered at a memorial outside of Warren High School on Monday after a single-vehicle car crash left one dead and two others injured over the weekend.

Jaylon Connish, 17, of Carson, was killed Saturday night when a gray 2010 Nissan Altima overturned off the southbound 5 freeway, north of the 605 freeway, rolling approximately 200 yards down into an embankment.

Officials say that only the driver, identified by CHP as 17-year-old Dajon Hancox from Compton, was wearing a seatbelt. Connish, along with third passenger Juan Wilson, were ejected from the vehicle.

All three were transported to a local trauma center.

Wilson remains in critical condition, according to reports.

The identities of the students – along with their conditions – were reported by CBS Los Angeles.

A steady crowd began to form around the makeshift memorial outside Warren High’s security gate shortly after classes let out Monday. Students shed tears and embraced as they remembered their friend.

“His smile alone could brighten up somebody’s day,” said Kylan Bennett, a 17-year-old teammate of Connish. “He was always positive; it was never a bad time. That’s somebody I could honestly say I looked up to. If it was something he was doing, I know that I needed to be doing it; if he wasn’t doing it, I knew I shouldn’t be doing it. If he was doing it, I knew it was right to follow along, no questions asked.”

Ximena Pescio, 16, said that Connish – called “Jaycon” and “Smiley” by friends – was “a blessing.”

“He was a light,” said Pescio. “His smile, his spirit, he would always find a way to uplift everybody.”

Pescio found out about her friend’s passing Sunday morning.

## Norwalk mayor criticizes IHOP for mask policy

■ Norwalk Mayor Rick Ramirez criticized the restaurant after it denied service to a family for refusing to wear masks.

By Vincent Medina  
Contributor

**NORWALK** – The Norwalk IHOP denied service to an unidentified family of four on Sunday after the group refused to wear masks inside the restaurant for protection against COVID-19.

LA County Department of Public Health adjusted its mask policy on March 4, lifting the mask requirement for indoor public settings but strongly recommending people continue to wear them. The statement also said businesses may continue requiring masks for employees and patrons.



General manager Marisol



(Photos by Alex Dominguez)



“At first I thought it was a lie, I thought, ‘They’re probably just trolling,’” said Pescio. “When I saw everybody else post it, I knew it was real, and that’s when I found out Jaycon passed.”

She added that the loss would be felt beyond the Warren campus.

“To be honest, it’s not just here, it’s everywhere; everywhere Jaycon was, and all the people he knew,” said Pescio. “It’s impacted all of us, each and every one of us in its own way. It’s hurt me, it’s really been devastating for me.”

Connish had committed to play football at Western New Mexico University. According to a post on the Warren Athletics Instagram page, he intended to study business and accounting.

Warren Athletic Director Samantha Miyahara described Connish as “a remarkable young man.”

“He always did things right, and he was such a mature young man,” said Miyahara. “He worked really hard. He knew his own deficiencies – and there weren’t many of them – and so he went after those, and he really held himself accountable for everything.”

She added that he was a good friend, a good teammate, and was loyal.

“I think he just epitomized

everything we want a student athlete to be,” said Miyahara. “He worked hard, he took care of business in the classroom, he did everything he could to be a great football player, but I think most importantly he was just a remarkable young man.”

Downey Unified released a statement after the accident, saying in part:

“Our Downey Unified family is heartbroken that we have lost one of our Warren High School students, a young man with a bright future ahead of him who has been such a big part of our Downey Unified family. Our prayers are with our two students who are currently fighting and, as a Downey Unified family, we will rally around them and their families to support them during this extremely challenging time.”

Mental health professionals were on the Warren High campus this week for students and staff who needed it.

A candlelight vigil is planned for Friday, March 11, from 6-7 pm in the Warren High stadium.

## Alvarez selected to be Downey mayor pro tem

■ With Mayor Blanca Pacheco casting the swing vote, Catherine Alvarez was promoted to mayor pro tem.

Councilwoman Claudia Frometa alleges “corruption.”

By Alex Dominguez  
Staff Writer

**DOWNEY** – Councilwoman Catherine Alvarez will serve as Downey’s mayor pro tem for the remainder of the year.

Alvarez secured the title at Tuesday’s council meeting on a 3-1 vote, with Councilwoman Claudia M. Frometa opposed and Councilman Sean Ashton abstaining.

Per usual city council policy, the mayor pro tem seat should rotate to “the newest council member who has not yet served as mayor.” This transition usually occurs in December during the annual council restructuring.

As of now, only Councilman Mario Trujillo and Alvarez have not served as mayor yet.

Trujillo was the first council person nominated but declined the appointment. Frometa followed by nominating herself for the position but that motion failed on a 2-2-1 vote with Alvarez and Trujillo opposed and Ashton abstaining.

A largely symbolic and ceremonial role, the mayor pro tem is expected to fill in at community events, ribbon cuttings, and run council meetings when the mayor – currently Blanca Pacheco – is unavailable. It is also commonly accepted that the mayor pro tem is the next in line to serve as mayor, though that is not always the case.

Shortly after the vote making Alvarez mayor pro tem, Frometa took to social media to voice her displeasure, pointing to Alvarez’s criminal history and making some serious claims about the integrity of the final vote.

Alvarez’s criminal past includes convictions for welfare fraud, lying under oath, and shoplifting from the Michaels store at Downey Landing.

Continued on page 7

## Weekend at a Glance

Friday 76°

Saturday 79°

Sunday 72°

### THINGS TO DO



**A Conversation with Bob Odenkirk**  
Sunday, 4 pm

“Breaking Bad” actor Bob Odenkirk discusses his memoir, “Comedy, Comedy, Comedy, Drama,” with Jack Black in this virtual event. Tickets are \$40 and include an autographed copy of Odenkirk’s book.

### ON THIS DAY

**1496:** Christopher Columbus concluded his second visit to the Western Hemisphere as he left Hispaniola for Spain.

**1848:** The Senate ratified the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ending the war with Mexico.

**1864:** Ulysses S. Grant became commander of the Union armies during the Civil War.

**1922:** Mahatma Gandhi was arrested in India, tried for sedition, and sentenced to six years in prison



**1933:** A magnitude 6.4 earthquake centered in Long Beach killed an estimated 120 people throughout Southern California.

**1965:** Neil Simon’s play “The Odd Couple” opened on Broadway. The production would later be adapted for a film, three TV sitcoms, and even a cartoon.

**1969:** James Earl Ray pleaded guilty in Memphis, Tenn., to the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. He was sentenced to 99 years in prison.

**1993:** Dr. David Gunn, a physician who provided OB/GYN and abortion services, was shot to death outside his Florida clinic.

**1997:** “Buffy the Vampire Slayer,” the supernatural TV series starring Sarah Michelle Gellar, debuted on the WB network.



**2000:** The dot com bubble peaked with the NASDAQ Composite stock market index reaching 5,048.62.

**2008:** New York Gov. Eliot Spitzer apologized after allegations surfaced that he had paid thousands of dollars for a high-end call girl, a scandal which eventually led to his resignation.

### Birthdays

Action star **Chuck Norris** (82), actress **Sharon Stone** (64), actor **Jon Hamm** (51), music producer **Timbaland** (50), R&B singer **Robin Thicke** (45), country singer **Carrie Underwood** (39), actor **Olivia Wilde** (38), and reggaeton star **Bad Bunny** (28).

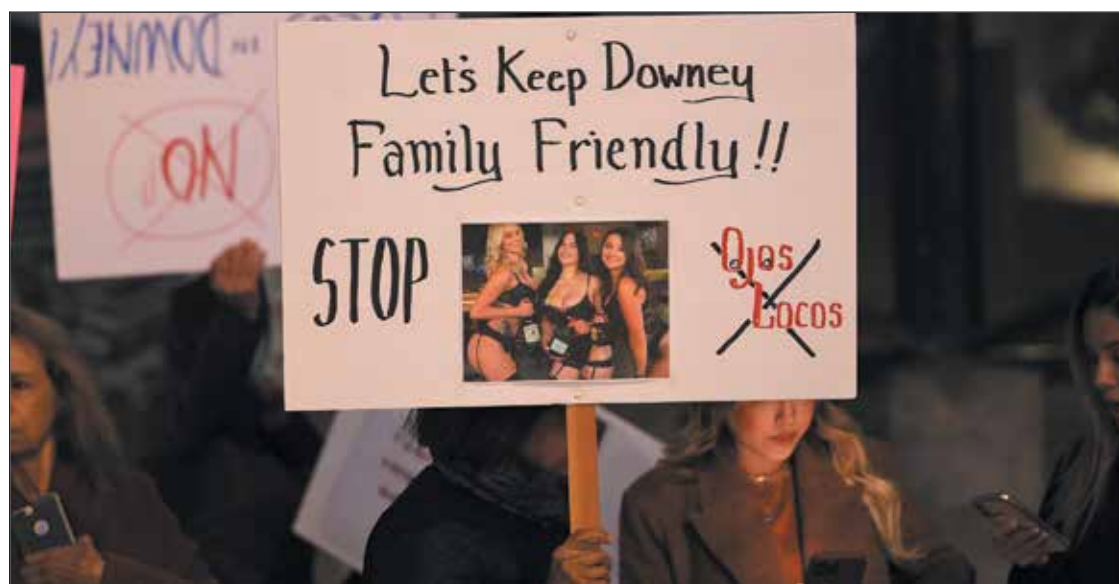


Photo by Alex Dominguez

## Residents rally against incoming sports bar

Continued from page 1

In the meantime, Trujillo says that he plans to rally constituents.

“My next course of action is to organize the community, and hopefully through community outcry get a message to the owners that they’re not welcome here, that we don’t want them here,” said Trujillo.

Residents have already started to band together in a unified showing of disapproval of the business, having held two protests, including outside of this week’s council meeting.

Along with the attire issue,

many have raised the alarm over alleged criminal activity that other Ojos Locos establishments have attracted, as well as the restaurant’s proximity to Downey schools, churches, and elderly homes.

“For some it’s a moral issue, and for some it’s a criminal issue. For many of us, it’s both,” said Jennifer Alvarez, a longtime resident and teacher in the city.

Alvarez said her biggest concern was with the effect on children.

“Our kids are always over there; anybody who’s been at the dollar tree after school or CVS [knows] our kids rush there for candy and snacks,” said Alvarez.

“They’re going to be mixing with drunk patrons coming and going, and that’s not fair to them.”

Among the crowd was planning commissioner Horacio Ortiz, who was the sole vote against the project in the planning commission’s decision.

Ortiz said he stood behind his vote.

“I just feel like it’s right next to a high school, right next to our kids and that should not be near our kids,” said Ortiz. “I think that we need to prioritize our family values, and that’s the core of what Downey is.”

He added that it was “not safe for our community.”

## Trujillo pushes for Carpenters statue

**DOWNEY** – Councilman Mario Trujillo recently made public his desire to erect a statue in honor of the Carpenters within the city.

At a special city council meeting held Feb. 24, Trujillo announced his intention to establish a monument to the iconic pop musical duo, who hailed from Downey. He asked city staff to begin looking into the cost, funding, details, and potential locations for the project at Tuesday’s council meeting.

“Pop music has got to be one of the greatest contributions the United States has made to the arts in the world,” Trujillo told the Downey Patriot. “When you have an international pop group – because for the time they were still pop – from here, I think that’s something we haven’t tapped into.”

Trujillo aims to make Downey a “destination city” while still “preserving the sanctity of our neighborhoods.” He said he believes the addition of a Carpenters statue could not only help in that mission, but also make the city a hub for Carpenters fans worldwide.

“I think the statue is going to bring people from across maybe the world, but definitely the United States,” said Trujillo. “I want it to be somewhere where it’s accessible, market friendly, because it’s going to be on social media and hopefully people will tag us.”

Logistics around the project are non-existent at this point in time but Trujillo said he hopes to have something in front of the council to consider by the end of the year.

Alex Dominguez, staff writer

## Downey schools drop mask mandates

**DOWNEY** – Downey Unified School District has announced that it will align itself with current Los Angeles County guidelines, strongly recommending indoor mask wearing, but not requiring it in school settings.

The transition officially occurs on Saturday, March 12.

Students and staff will now have the option to wear masks or not while on campus or at the district office.

“I want to be sure that we are understanding that, again, masks continue to be recommended, but they are not mandatory,” said Superintendent Dr. John Garcia in a video released on Wednesday. “I want to remind all of us that regardless of whatever personal choice that a student or a family makes to continue to be respectful to one another at all times.”

The district will continue with its daily screening procedure.

“At this point we don’t have a specific expiration date, but we wanted to at least do that at minimum through Spring Break, and then we’ll continue on with that,” said Dr. Garcia. “We feel like the daily screener is an important part of what it is we’re doing in regard to symptoms and what’s happening.”

Garcia also announced the district’s intention to continue with the online learning option, and that in the coming weeks families currently enrolled as such should anticipate a survey asking whether they intend to continue online next year.

Families whose students are currently on campus who are considering transferring online are encouraged to call the district office.

Alex Dominguez, staff writer

## Public speaking rules changed

**DOWNEY** – Downey Planning Commission’s public speaking rules will now align with that of the City Council.

To maintain consistency across public meeting and public hearing procedure, the Planning Commission will allow three minutes per speaker for public hearing items, and one public comment period will be held for non-agenda public comment to hear comments for agenda items listed under “consent calendar” and “other business,” where speakers will be given four minutes.

The move was approved by the Planning Commission at its Feb. 2 meeting, and ratified by the City Council on Tuesday.

Alex Dominguez, staff writer

## City council meetings to reopen

**DOWNEY** – Council meetings will reopen to the public after the City Council unanimously decided to allow its current resolution to allow for remote teleconferencing to run out.

Council has closed its chamber doors twice in response to Covid-19, most recently in January in the wake of the Omicron variant surge. The current resolution is set to expire this week.

Councilwoman Claudia Frometa said “it was important to consider the changes.”

“As we know, LA County had been heavily impacted with cases, and as such this county had the most stringent requirements,” said Frometa. “Staying as these have now relaxed, I think it’s important that we do not renew this teleconferencing, that we move forward and move to open our council chambers and have a little more normalcy.”

Councilwoman Catherine Alvarez pointed to the recently loosened state recommendations before saying that “the chambers should be opened.”

“I believe there is a lot of people who want to come and be present,” said Alvarez.

Teleconferencing can be reestablished if future variants or coronavirus numbers deem it necessary.

Alex Dominguez, staff writer

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# Paging Dr. Frischer...

By Dr. Alan Frischer

I love milk. For as long as I can remember, cow's milk has been a daily part of my diet. Through the years, more and more milk alternatives have become available, and yet here I am, still drinking the same old thing. It helps that I have no problem with lactose intolerance, as so many do. (Nearly 50% of people in this country are felt to be lactose intolerant.) A number of sources have suggested that milk is not good for me. Should I rethink my milk habit?

While consumption of cow's milk has been declining gradually over the past few decades, it remains by far the most popular form of milk in the United States. Recent statistics show that over three billion gallons of cow's milk are consumed annually, as compared to roughly 340 million gallons of plant-based alternative milk.

Some researchers have recommended that children over the age of two and adults should not drink cow's milk. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Association strongly disagree. Cow's milk and other dairy products are excellent sources of calcium, and calcium (together with vitamin D) is proven to be critical for good bone health. Most of the calcium consumed by adults and by children comes from milk and other dairy products. Children who do not drink milk show lower height, body weight and bone mineral content when compared with those who do.

Milk also contains phosphorus, which increases calcium retention; protein, which plays a key role in muscle growth and immune function; and other vitamins and minerals. (Other great sources of calcium include seeds, some fish, beans and lentils, some nuts, and leafy green vegetables.)

What are the downsides of drinking milk?

- Cow's milk is not recommended for a baby's first year, due to possible intestinal bleeding and anemia. Research does not show any significant long-term impact.

- About 2% of children are allergic to the protein in cow's milk. For them, milk products may cause hives, diarrhea, wheezing, or other allergy symptoms.

- Some children and many adults are lactose intolerant, meaning that they cannot digest the sugar found in milk. Consuming dairy products results in bloating, gas, and diarrhea. Taking a lactase supplement along with the dairy replaces the missing enzyme. Those with mild lactose intolerance can often consume limited amounts without experiencing symptoms, so most people with lactose intolerance need not completely avoid dairy products.

- One of the more unusual but effective claims against milk is that it contains pus. There is NO pus in milk. There are, however, white blood cells, which are the body's infection fighters. The level of white blood cells rises when there is an infection, but they are always present, in cow milk as well as in human milk. White

blood cell levels are monitored by dairy farmers and by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Some within the scientific community feel that cow's milk is not meant for humans, and that it leads to inflammation and can exacerbate arthritis. They point out that we in the United States consume huge amounts of dairy, yet still have very high rates of osteoporosis. Note that there are many different factors responsible for osteoporosis, in addition to the amount of milk consumed.

For those at high risk of heart disease or who have high cholesterol levels, low-fat or non-fat milk are safe choices. They contain the same nutrition without the same fats. However, recent studies show that regularly consuming even full-fat milk and other dairy products does not increase the risk of heart disease. In fact, it may have a protective effect.

My conclusion? The preponderance of evidence overwhelmingly indicates that milk from cows is safe and beneficial. I will continue to drink my daily glass of milk. However, if because of lactose intolerance or other reasons, you do not consume dairy, I urge you to be very deliberate in finding replacements for calcium, vitamin D, and protein. Fortunately, there are now shelves full of dairy alternatives.

*Dr. Alan Frischer is former chief of staff and former chief of medicine at Downey Regional Medical Center. Write to him in care of this newspaper at 8301 E. Florence Ave., Suite 100, Downey, CA 90240.*

# Covid hospitalizations drop below 700 in LA County

■ Hospitalization rates have declined steadily as health officials promote at-home medication.

By City News Service

**DOWNEY** – Los Angeles County reported another 55 COVID-19 deaths Wednesday, while the number of hospital patients with the virus fell below 700.

The 55 new deaths gave the county an overall pandemic death toll of 31,138.

According to state figures, there were 666 COVID-positive patients in county hospitals as of Wednesday, down from 706 on Tuesday. The number of those patients being treated in intensive care units was 122, down from 133 a day earlier.

County health officials said they were working to increase the number of providers who can offer residents access to anti-COVID therapeutics, while also striving to raise awareness about their availability.

According to the Department of Public Health, the oral medications

are Paxlovid and Molnupiravir are prescription drugs that must be taken within five days of COVID symptoms developing. Paxlovid is available for anyone age 12 and older who weighs more than 88 pounds. Molnupiravir is available for anyone 18 and over.

A third medication, Evusheld, is given through an injection and is available for people 12 and over who have not been exposed to the virus and are unable to get a COVID vaccine for medical reasons.

"Given that the new therapeutics can save the lives of residents who are at elevated risk, Public Health

is working closely with partners across the county to make sure they are accessible to those who are most vulnerable to severe illness from a COVID infection," county Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer said in a statement. "Having sites where residents can both get tested and receive appropriate medications if they are positive is essential and we look forward to working with federal and pharmacy partners to expand availability of 'Test to Treat' programs, especially in our under-resourced communities."

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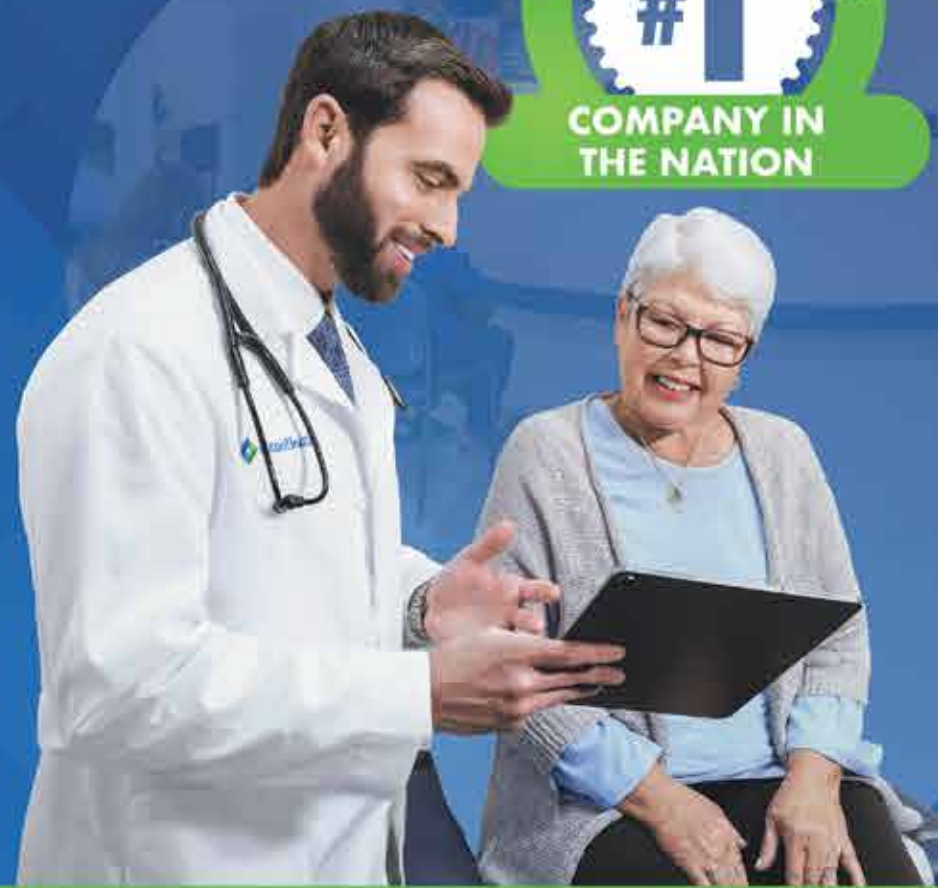
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# Here's your chance to conduct the Downey Symphony

■ The Downey Symphony is auctioning off an opportunity to conduct the orchestra in a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

By **Lorine Parks**  
Society Editor

**DOWNEY** – “Bidding for the baton was a wonderful way to honor my family,” said Cathi Peterson, “and the magical life we had, growing up in Downey in the 50s and 60s. I drove down from my home in Ventura County in the pouring rain on a Friday night to rehearse, and back on Saturday for the performance. Sharon Lavery and her amazing musicians made the whole process SO MUCH FUN!”

Each year a baton auction is

held at the Downey Symphony Orchestra's spring concert, when amateur music lovers vie for the privilege of wielding the conductor's slender stick. The April 9 concert will offer that chance again, to realize a Walter Mitty dream and conduct a full size professional orchestra on the Downey Theatre stage.

Downey history is intertwined with the lives of the winner.

“As a native daughter of Downey,” said Berkeley resident Priscilla Winslow, “I remember going to hear the symphony at the high school gym with my parents, who were enthusiastic supporters of the symphony from its beginning.”

Priscilla is a two-time winner of the auction for the

baton of the Downey Symphony Orchestra. Her father, Paul, served as a member of the Downey Symphonic Society's Board of Directors, and her mother, also Priscilla, taught ballet classes and was a member of the Assistance League of Downey.

A bonus that comes with winning the baton is a hands-on conducting lesson from the Symphony's music director, Sharon Lavery.

“When I had the chance to win the baton and actually conduct,” said Pris, “decades later, it was quite a thrill. Especially gratifying was Sharon's coaching beforehand, showing me the 3/4 and 2/4 pattern and allowing me to conduct the piece at the dress rehearsal. This was double the fun, since I twice got to experience the beauty and intensity of the music right in front of me.”

That intensity was what nearly overwhelmed Art Morris when he guest-conducted in the early 2000's. Well-known as a benefactor of the Downey Community Hospital and community leader, Art said he told the orchestra that he wanted a lot of volume from the percussion.

“When I gave the downbeat for the overture,” Art said, “they almost blew me off the podium. It was great.”

Art supported the Downey Symphony Society as a long-time Board member. His father, J. Arch Morris, donated the

land where the hospital, now PIH Downey is located, and Art himself contributed more than \$1 million to the hospital's Radiology Department. Both father and son were long-time Downey Rotarians, and Arch Morris served as club president back in 1941. The city of Downey celebrated Art Morris Day on his birthday, February 8, in 2011, the year before he died. At 93, Art successfully bid again for the baton in 2011.

On the other extreme, in April 2019 Aaron Saldana, a Stauffer Middle School student, waved the baton and got the evening off to a rousing start with Souza's The Stars and the Stripes Forever. After intermission, before the auctioning of the next year's baton, Aaron came on stage to tell how much fun it was.

“A wonderful experience,” Aaron said, and he thanked Bernice Mancebo Stumps for inviting him to wave the baton. When Bernice won the auction, she dedicated it in honor of her grandson, Christopher Parks.

Aaron volunteers for the Downey Foundation for Educational Opportunities with the String Ensemble. If the name sounds familiar, it's because the DFEO was founded by his mother, Linda Saldana.

Several years ago, at the Downey Symphonic Society Guild's Barbeque fundraiser for the Music in the Schools program, I sat next to a woman who surprised me by saying, “I won the baton two years ago, and brought 68 people. I saved



Aaron Saldana and Bernice Mancebo Stumps. (Photo by Lorine Parks)

for three years,” Terry Wright said. “My husband thought I was crazy. But I watched what it went for, eighteen hundred and then two thousand. So I saved \$2,500. And I won.”

“I didn't want to conduct a march,” said Terry. “I wanted something more melodious and in a thanksgiving spirit, so Sharon Lavery the Maestro let me do Bach's Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring, and I had tears, it was so beautiful.”

Would Terry do it again? “In a heartbeat, but I'll have to wait and let the money build up.”

Carolyn Osborn, our concertmaster who enjoys playing auctioneer as well, points out to the audience all the benefits that Music in the Schools brings to Downey kids, like the yearly morning symphony concerts at the Downey Theatre, one for third graders, and a different one for fifth-graders. Both were specially created for Downey by Conductor Tom Osborn in the 1990's.

The third grade concert introduces the youngsters to classical music, and then the fifth graders are encouraged to take up an instrument when they get to Middle School the next year. The outings are sponsored by the Kiwanis Foundation and the Downey Unified School District. A quintet also goes to perform in each K-5 school in Downey, and all this is paid for by the Society's Music in the Schools Outreach Program.

Who will conduct in April? Dottie Nadolski, a teacher bidding from the balcony two years ago, ended up with the winning bid for leading the Orchestra, a new record of \$3,500. But that concert had to be canceled because of Covid restrictions. Dottie, a bidder who bided her time, will finally get

her chance.

“Several years ago,” said Dottie, “I reconnected with my junior high school friend, Carol Novak Kearns. Carol and Frank are members of the Symphony Guild, and they invited me to my first ever Downey Symphony program. I was amazed at how the guest conductors made it look so easy and fun. I was also curious about the auction held every spring for a chance to be a guest conductor.”

“I started saving my money for the auction,” Dottie said, “and won the bid to conduct. About 16 friends and family will be coming. The piece I'll be conducting is Simple Gifts, a Shaker song that Aaron Copeland used in Appalachian Spring, a tribute to Martha Graham, one of the founders of modern dance. I am so very excited to conduct this wonderful piece and I hope to do it justice.”

Dottie's little black outfit has been hanging in the closet for two years, but she'll finally get the chance to wear it when she conducts on April 9.

“It was such a privilege,” said Cathi Peterson, “to stand in front of this talented orchestra and connect with them, bringing the printed notes to life. Who gets to do that? The committee gave me a beautifully framed photo of the event, which I've hung proudly in my home to always remember the excitement of that evening. Hooray for reopening!”

Society President Anthony Crespo invites all would-be Gustavo Dudamels to come to the concert and bid. Tickets are available at [downeytheatre.org](http://downeytheatre.org) or call the Box Office at (562) 861-8211.

The Downey Theatre is at 8435 Firestone Blvd. Concert starts at 8 pm.

## In Memory of

### Ronald John Bannon

May 24, 1943 - February 13, 2022



Ronald John Bannon (78) passed away Sunday, February 13, 2022 at the Prime Care Facility Home in Bellflower, CA.

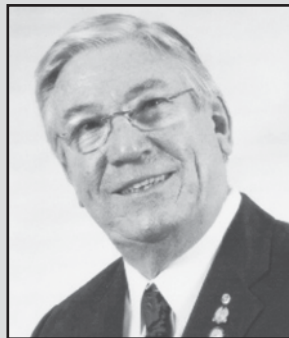
Ronald was born on May 24, 1943 in Glens Falls, NY to William and Isabel (Goldsmid) Bannon. He went to Glens Falls High School. Ronald enlisted in the United States Army where he served in the Vietnam War. He moved to California and was employed with Gannett Outdoor. He was married 42 years to Joyce (Watson) Bannon who passed away suddenly November 30, 2020 at the age of 76. Ronald and Joyce resided at their home in Downey since 1978. They enjoyed family and friends. Ronald enjoyed karate. Ronald belonged to Al Malaikah Koppers, he and Joyce helped to raise money for The Shriners Hospital for Children. Joyce was a CPA and was employed with Granite.

Ronald was preceded by his parents William and Isabel; brother, Edward Bannon and wife, Eleanor; his children: Scott Steven, and T.J. (Thomas John), Mickey (Michelle); his brother Donald and wife, Joan Bannon. Ronald is survived by sisters: Evelyn Philo and Carol and Gordon Stockman of Queensbury, NY. He is also survived by nieces and nephews: Susan Stockman, Timothy Stockman, Amy Jobe, Donald Bannon Jr., Isabel Natividad, and Stephanie Bannon. Joyce Bannon is survived by sister, Marsa Rider and nephew, Van.

## In Memory of

### Colin Charles Clarke

March 15, 1938 - February 6, 2022



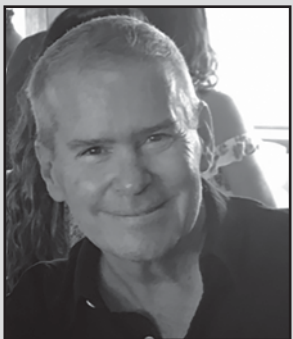
the City of Downey.

Colin came to the United States from North London, England in 1966.

He was a successful businessman and raised his two sons, Brian and Devin. In 1996 he became a popular and successful Realtor in Downey.

A Celebration of Life will be held March 12 from 12 to 3pm at the Downey United Methodist Church located at 10801 Downey Ave, in

## In Memory of



### Guy Freeman

July 27, 1961 - February 12, 2022

On the evening of February 12th, 2022, in Scottsdale Arizona at the age of 60 Guy M Freeman passed away.

July 27th, 1961, Guy was born to John and Mary Freeman in St. Louis Missouri, shortly after the family moved to Downey California.

Guy grew up playing all kind of sports at Rio San Gabriel and Dennis the Menace Parks in Downey as a youth with neighborhood friends and he also had a paper route to earn money as youngster, with his quick thinking he “subcontracted” some of the route work to his younger sister Liz and some of his pals in the neighborhood, those days of throwing newspapers while riding his bike added to his lifelong enjoyment of bike riding and as a kid he started riding his bike from Downey to Seal Beach in the summer where later in life he would enjoy many great days and quite a few memorable nights!

Early in his education Guy developed an inventive mind in making up board games and had a special interest in statistics and reading (sports statistics form the Sporting News) that would help him in his success as a Computer Programmer later in life.

Guy was good student at Downey High School and developed a life long passion for the sport of wrestling, his commitment to training and following the advice and direction of his Coach led to a very successful wrestling record at Downey High which culminated in being selected to participate in an International Wrestling Matches in the then Country of West Germany where Guy represented the USA and had several victories in matches at various West German cities and towns.

Living later in Sunset Beach Guy developed a tradition of “Freeman Days” with locals and his friends, beach chairs, “beverages” and the always present newspaper, especially Sports Pages from multiple publications we're part of Guy's routine while reading about his beloved LA Dodgers, Horse Racing, Boxing were the main topics of Guy's Beach time talks, this routine followed Guy for the rest of his days as he lived in SoCal, San Francisco, Portland Oregon and finally in Scottsdale Arizona and although the years came and went and the newspapers changed in location the routine remained even in the era of the Internet and online reading Guy kept the “Papers” coming.

Guy's early interest in using his mind in creative ways as a youth (before the PC or online services) enabled him to land a job with Petrolane in Signal Hill as a computer programmer entry level, that job launched Guy into many years of successful entrepreneurship in working as a contractor for various companies in commercial industries and the entertainment industry throughout Calif, Oregon, Washington, Las Vegas and Scottsdale using his skills to develop many customized Software Programs.

Guy loved his family and friends, his passion in life was focused on his son Tyler and daughter in law Alexa and with his three grandchildren, Guy was so happy about seeing and spending time with that young family and the happiness, joy and pride were represented in paintings that Ivy created that were present throughout his home and of the pictures on the walls of Sunny and Dempsey that always inspired Guy and brought a renewed sense of purpose to life.

Guy is preceded in life by his father John, mother Mary and older brother Mark. He is survived by his son Tyler, daughter in law Alexa grandchildren Ivy, Dempsey and Sunny, his brothers Jeff and Michael, sister Elizabeth (whom he shared a close bond) former wife Shelly Avdeef, in laws, relatives, and a lot of close special friends.

Please join us at 12 pm March 20th, 2022, for Funeral Services for Guy at Fairhaven Mortuary.

**Located at:**

1702 Fairhaven Ave, Santa Ana, Ca 92705

The Reception and Celebration of Guy's Life will be at 3pm located at: Plaza de Magdalena 31781 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano 92675

Wear Guy's favorite color Dodger Blue!

In Lieu of flowers we ask a donation to be made in Guy's memory to “Old Friends” an organization that cares for retired Thoroughbred Races Horses which would be favorable for Guy's wishes.

Oldfriendsequine.org online or:

Old Friends 1841 Paynes Depot Rd, Georgetown Kentucky 40324

## POET'S CORNER

### The Sleepers

I wander all night in my vision,  
Stepping with light feet, swiftly and noiselessly stepping and stopping,  
Bending with open eyes over the shut eyes of sleepers,  
Wandering and confused, lost to myself, ill-assorted,  
contradictory,  
Pausing, gazing, bending, and stopping.  
How solemn they look there, stretch'd and still,  
How quiet they breathe,

The night pervades them and infolds them.  
The married couple sleep calmly in their bed,  
he with his palm on the hip of the wife, and she with her palm  
on the hip of the husband,  
The sisters sleep lovingly side by side in their bed,  
And the mother sleeps with her little child carefully wrapt.  
The blind sleep, and the deaf and dumb sleep,  
The prisoner sleeps well in the prison, the runaway son sleeps,  
The murderer that is to be hung next day, how does he sleep?  
And the murder'd person, how does he sleep?...

The sleepers are very beautiful as they lie unclothed,  
They flow hand in hand over the whole earth from east to west  
as they lie unclothed,  
The Asiatic and African are hand in hand, the European and  
American are hand in hand,  
Learn'd and unlearn'd are hand in hand, and male and female  
are hand in hand...  
They pass the invigoration of the night and the chemistry of the  
night,  
and awake.

**Walt Whitman, Leaves of Grass**

Daylight Savings Time begins on March 13, and with it Sleep Awareness Week, that promotes better sleep as a way to increase overall health and well-being. “Sleep invigorates the night,” said Whitman, and his poem is a vision of a democratic dream where everyone is united by the night they are viewed in. Poetry Matters is curated by Lorine Parks.

## War is a last resort but Putin may leave us without a choice

By Betsy McCaughey

The public needs straight talk about what's happening in Eastern Europe. President Joe Biden and the United Kingdom's Prime Minister Boris Johnson need to level with their own countrymen about the rising risk of war against Russia. The public's getting double talk — praise for the Ukrainians' courage but also empty promises that what's happening in Ukraine will stay in Ukraine. Secretary of State Antony Blinken promised Sunday that "President Biden has been clear that we are not going to get into a war with Russia." Johnson wrote in the New York Times on Monday that "this is not a NATO conflict and it will not become one." That's ridiculous. The U.K. and the U.S. can't make that guarantee. There are too many tripwires leading to broad-scale war. American eyes are on gruesome television images of Ukrainians huddled in the basements of bombed hospitals or running down snowy roads with children in their arms to escape Russian missile fire. But Russian President Vladimir Putin is eyeing territory beyond Ukraine, including Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, all NATO allies once under Soviet domination. These countries and five other NATO members have already triggered Article 4 of the NATO agreement, calling for consultations about the serious Russian threat. In response, the U.S. and other NATO allies are moving ground troops and tanks into Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. News broke Monday that the U.S. is considering supplying air defense systems to these three Baltic countries. On Monday, Blinken also pledged to Lithuania's foreign minister, Gabrielius Landsbergis, that "we will defend every inch of NATO territory if it comes under attack." Putin himself is laying tripwires for a NATO conflict. Sunday, he warned that foreign countries like Romania that are allowing Ukrainian fighter pilots to use their airstrips may be viewed by Moscow as parties to the conflict. Putin could say the same about Poland's announced decision to lend fighter planes to Ukraine.

Putin even labelled economic sanctions "akin to a declaration of war." Cowed by Putin's warnings, the U.S. and NATO allies refuse Ukraine's requests for a no-fly zone. Blinken concedes that without NATO pilots fighting off Russian bombers, Ukrainians face bloodier days ahead as the Russians "keep grinding things down," leveling city after city. A high price to pay, and for what? Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda warned Blinken, "if we want to avoid the Third World War," Putin must be stopped in Ukraine. Nausėda is worried his own country will be next, but he nevertheless is driving home a fundamental truth. It won't be easier to stop Putin after he crushes Ukraine. It's never easier to stop a bully once he's allowed to win a fight. Though Ukraine is not part of NATO, it's arguable that the U.S. and U.K. owe Ukraine more than they're doing. In 1994, they pressured newly independent Ukraine into surrendering its nuclear weapons to Russia under the Budapest Memorandum with tacit assurances — now conveniently forgotten — that they would respond if Russia threatened them. History aside, the question is, how long can Putin be allowed to continue snuffing out innocent lives in Eastern Europe? Russia's economy is tanking as corporations pull out and the half-hearted sanctions already imposed by the West take effect. If oil and gas exports were also banned, Bloomberg Economics predicts, the Russian economy would contract a devastating 14% this year. Russia may be a more vulnerable foe now than at another time. Is NATO ready to fight this weakened foe? Despite neglecting the Russian threat for years, NATO outpends Russia on armaments 15 to 1 and outnumbered Russian ground forces 4 to 1, according to retired Adm. James Stavridis, a former NATO supreme allied commander. War is a last resort. Now is the time for the Biden administration to talk honestly about what it already knows is true. The U.S. and NATO allies may be forced into a war with Russia, not because we choose to go to war but because a tyrant leaves us no choice. **Betsy McCaughey is a former lieutenant governor of New York and author of "The Next Pandemic," available at Amazon.com.**

## Downey politics

Dear Editor: Upon arriving at Downey City Hall Tuesday evening to attend the city council meeting, I was met at the door by a police officer who informed me that our city council members had decided to hold a virtual meeting "due to Covid." Those of us gathered outside the chambers had come to express our dismay with the recently approved Ojos Locos sports bar which is to be located on Firestone across from Downey High School and the Embassy Suites. I find it curious that our US Senate and House members can meet in person and unmasked but our city council cannot. Perhaps they did not want to face their very unhappy constituents. During the lively exchange that took place outside it was revealed that Ojos Locos liquor license was quietly approved a year ago in March of 2021. The citizens of Downey are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the way our city is being governed and we are ready to do something about it. **Victoria Smith Downey**

Dear Editor: I would like to express my profound disappointment with our mayor Blanca Pacheco for voting to appoint Catherine Alvarez mayor pro tem. Alvarez is a convicted thief who also pleaded guilty to welfare fraud. And we expect her to oversee our budget and police department? I sure miss the days when our local elected officials served with integrity, free of scandal, and were people we could look up to. Meredith Perkins, David Gafin, Diane Boggs and Mario Guerra come to mind. What a joke our beloved city has become. Blanca should be ashamed of herself. **Melissa Zapata Downey**

Dear Editor: It looks like Blanca Pacheco fooled us all. We thought we elected a smart, courageous leader and got the cowardly lion instead. **Anthony Picazo Downey**

Dear Editor: We must congratulate council members Blanca Pacheco and Mario Trujillo for making Downey the laughing stock of the country. It is the first time that a convicted felon has been elected mayor pro tem of a city in the western world. For those of us who care about Downey, the next step should be a recall effort against Pacheco and Trujillo and to work for their opponents in any new election in which they try to participate. It is obvious we have reached a new low in politics in Downey. It is not surprising given the moral character of Pacheco and Trujillo. Sean Ashton does not have the courage to show his true colors and by abstaining he de facto voted for Alvarez for mayor pro tem. Can we go any lower? Probably not, but that is small consolation in a sad episode of Downey's history. **Jorge Montero Downey**

## Thankfully, we will forget much of the pandemic



By Scott A. Small

As we approach another anniversary of the pandemic's onset, many of us are reflecting on the past two years and thinking about the ways the virus has altered our lives. More than 950,000 Americans have died. Many more have lost a loved one, and millions are still grappling with the lingering aftereffects of infection. As we begin to move toward a postpandemic future, it is vital that we remember the toll this virus has taken. The lessons of this pandemic should be carried with us so that — unlike what happened after the 1918 flu — it doesn't fade from history, and so we can honor and memorialize those we have lost. It is also inevitable that over time, many of our memories of these difficult years will fade. As a neuroscientist who studies memory and memory disorders like Alzheimer's, I find this fact — perhaps counterintuitively — comforting. I have come to understand, through new research, that there is a danger in remembering too much and that forgetting is not only normal but in fact necessary for our mental health. It used to be thought that forgetting anything — from minor things like the name of a casual acquaintance to the more painful loss of cherished memories experienced by my patients — was caused, to varying degrees, by a failure of the brain's memory mechanisms. But new developments in neuroscience over the past decade or so refute this simple idea. Neurons contain what are sometimes called nanomachines that are dedicated to the construction of new memories. But scientists have recently discovered that neurons are also endowed with a completely different set of nanomachines

designed for the opposite purpose: to carefully disassemble — and thus forget — components of our stored memories. In light of this new and growing body of research, normal everyday forgetting can no longer be thought of as a malfunction of our memory machinery; instead it should be considered a healthy and adaptive part of our brain's normal functioning. Memory and forgetting work in unison. We depend on our memory to record, to learn and to recall, and we depend on forgetting to countervail, to sculpt and to squelch our memories. This balancing act is, as it turns out, vital for our cognitive functioning, creativity and mental health. Of course, there are unhealthy kinds of forgetting. Alzheimer's disease, for one, targets memory mechanisms and causes them to fail. But in other disorders, it appears that the brain's forgetting mechanisms break down. The psychological condition that perhaps best exemplifies what can happen when people don't forget properly is PTSD. While it is often beneficial to remember the facts of a traumatic experience, sometimes even in pointillist detail, it is equally — if not more — important to the healing process to let the emotional valence of it fade. If we don't, we can get stuck in total emotional recall, reviving our distress in perpetuity. Forgetting protects us from this debilitating anxiety not by deleting memories but by quieting their emotional scream. The same is true for more run-of-the-mill emotions. Intuitively, it makes sense that we sometimes need to "let go" of hurt and resentment to preserve close friendships and that we need to forget in order to forgive. "Letting go" is just one of the many colloquialisms that implicitly nod in recognition and gratitude toward our brain's forgetting mechanisms. In patients with PTSD, the area of the brain that stores fear memories is highly active, suggesting that the individual cannot properly engage the brain's fear forgetting system and therefore cannot let go of the high anxiety associated with the memory of the traumatic event. Complex disorders should not be oversimplified, but it is possible to think about PTSD as a disorder stemming from too much memory, caused by an inability to forget a traumatic experience in a healthy way. Turning down activity in this brain region effectively induces a healthy ability to forget feelings of fear. Drugs like MDMA do just that and are being tested as a treatment for PTSD. Some couples therapists have even used MDMA to accelerate the "forgetting and forgiving" process in their patients. From the testimonials of recreational users, quieting fear-related memories is apparently so potent in its "prosocial" effects — making people friendlier, more compassionate, even more loving — that it underscores how unchecked fear memories can make people antisocial and miserable. Of course, we won't — and shouldn't — forget the pandemic. In addition to memorializing the loss of our loved ones, we should commemorate the selfless commitment of our fellow health care workers, and rewrite our government and medical manuals so that we are able to respond better and faster next time. But for many of us, particularly those on the front line, some degree of emotional forgetting will be a natural part of living in and moving forward from the pandemic. As a society, one of the most beneficial things we can do to move forward in a healthy way will be to resume safe socializing. Several studies have shown that social isolation exacerbates the negative effects of trauma. Because this particular pandemic required us to socially isolate, we couldn't make use of the most psychologically beneficial coping mechanism: gathering together. One of the greatest risk factors for PTSD in soldiers is when, shortly post-trauma, they find themselves socially isolated, their minds exposed without a social fabric to protect them from the lashing loops of their fear and dread. Not every observation about the mind needs a neurological explanation, but it is nevertheless true that socializing causes our brains to secrete endogenous chemicals like oxytocin, which — similar to MDMA — induces fear forgetting. Gazing into one another's eyes is all that is needed for oxytocin to be simultaneously secreted in the gazer and the gazed-upon, a feedback loop that induces a socially uplifting pas de deux. Preventing social isolation has become part of the standard of care for those returning from the battlefield and deemed at risk for PTSD. We can predict that when it's safe to do so, relaxing the recommendations for social isolation, encouraging people to get together at work, in schools and other social venues, will reduce the risk of long-lasting distress. With luck, in the months and years ahead, the threat of the virus will abate and we will be able to let go of the fear that for many of us has been a near-constant companion over the past two years. With hope, the terrifying images of the pandemic's ravages — the empty streets and crowded hospitals, the funeral pyres and freezer trucks — will cease to loom so large in our collective memory. Forgetting some of this fear will allow us to more clearly recall the details we want to remember. For me, those include the astonishing resilience, bravery and sense of collective spirit that emerged two years ago this week as my hometown became an epicenter of this pandemic. Those memories make me hopeful for the future. **Scott A. Small is the director of the Alzheimer's Disease Research Center at Columbia University and the author of the book "Forgetting: The Benefits of Not Remembering."**

## Open letter to Ojos Locos

Dear Editor: I'm writing to let Ojos Locos know we see you. WE see you defining yourself as a restaurant, avoiding bar regulations. WE see you choosing a location right in our children's school zone where they feel safe now. WE see you trying to pretend you will modify your soft porn uniforms just to get your foot in our door. WE see you and the long list of murders and shootings and drug violence that plagues you. WE see you having your 2-7pm happy hour that will coincide with our children's school and extra curricular hours. WE see you ignoring how you'll destroy the quality of life for the 120 seniors that live behind your proposed bar. WE see you treating your young female employees as irrelevant sex objects and how the federal government sued and won a lawsuit for \$700,000 because you sexually harassed and retaliated against those young girls. WE see you thought we are a city that will allow you to destroy our city image with the criminal element you are a magnet for. WE see you being informed we don't want you here and you still insist on coming to our beautiful Downey. WE see you underestimating our community thinking we'd be naive enough to let you thrive so close to our children. WE see you and we hope you see us. WE are a community that will not stop until every parent, church member, service group, every Downey Citizen will understand how you will cause irrevocable harm to our city image, our city safety, and most of all our city's children. We see you and we make sure every other community sees you too. **Jennifer Alvarez Downey**

## Voting Rights Act

Dear Editor: I am an educator, parent and grandparent here in our local community. I would like to thank Senator Alex Padilla for standing up for democracy and the millions of Americans who are counting on him by voting in favor of The Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act. This bill includes many tried and true solutions in red, blue and purple states. It is a nonpartisan issue. Of course every American has the right to vote and we need to ensure this right for all Americans. Because of current Senate rules, this bill cannot be passed without reform. It's time the Senate reform the rules that have been holding back important legislation that will help the American people. **Sharon Byers Downey**

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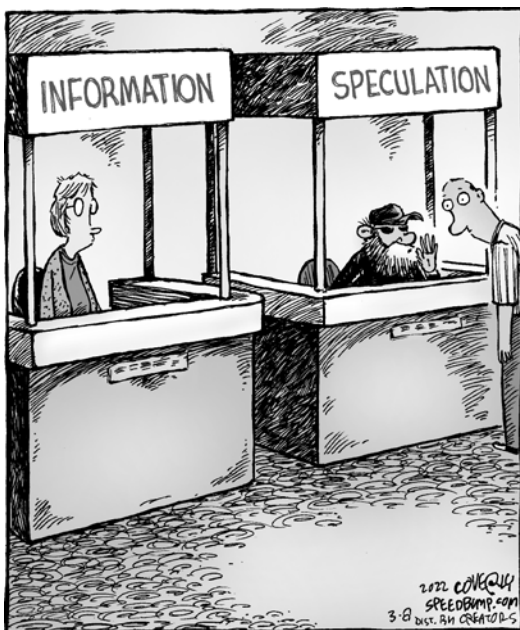
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## SPEED BUMP



## DAVE COVERLY



# Downey Community Calendar

### CITY MEETINGS

1st & 3rd Wednesday, 6:30pm: Planning Commission, Council Chamber at City Hall.  
 1st Tue., 4:00pm.: Recreation and Community Services Commission, Council Chamber, City Hall.  
 2nd & 4th Tue., 6:30pm: City Council, Council Chamber.  
 3rd Tue., 6:00pm: Library Advisory Board, at Downey City Library.  
 3rd Thurs., 6:30pm: CERT, at Downey City Council Chamber at City Hall, for more info call 299-5462.  
 4th Mon., 5 pm: Green Task Force, at City Hall.

### Regularly Scheduled Meetings

#### MONDAYS

7 pm: Boy Scout Troop 2, at Downey United Methodist Church, call 869-6478.  
 4:30 pm: Courage Forward Meeting, at 10829 New St, 2nd Floor, call 213-545-6810.  
 2nd Mon., 11 am: American Legion Auxiliary #270, at United Methodist Church, call 310-386-8112.  
 4th Mon., 7:30 pm: Downey Numismatists, at Downey Retirement Center, call 862-6666.

#### TUESDAYS

9 am: Quilters group, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, call 803-4459.  
 9:30 am: Downey Seniors Club, at Apollo Park, call Irene Vallini at 328-7039.  
 10 am: Downey Bocce Club, at 7850 Quill Drive, call John Fiorenza at 652-4399.  
 12 pm: Rotary Club, at Rio Hondo Events Center, call William Medina 413-3447.  
 6 pm: Toastmasters Club 587, at First Baptist Church, contact Salvador Cervantes: tmsalcpuede@gmail.com.  
 7 pm: Downey Knights of Columbus Bingo, at 11231 Rives Ave., call 923-1932.  
 7 pm: Boy Scout Troop 441, at Apollo Park, email scoutmaster@downeyboyscouts.com.  
 7:30 pm: Downey Master Chorale, at Cornerstone Church, contact info@downeymasterchorale.org.  
 1st Tues., 7:30 am: Gangs Out of Downey, at City Hall training room.  
 2nd Tues., 6 pm: Downey Fly Fishers, at Apollo Park, call 425-7936.  
 3rd Tues., 12 pm: Downey Newcomers Club, call Marilyn 928-2623.  
 3rd Tues., 6:30 pm: Community Emergency Response Team meeting, Fire station 1, 12222 Paramount.  
 3rd Tues., 6 pm: American Legion #270, at Sizzler Restaurant, call 544-0372.  
 Tues., Thurs. & Sat., 10 am: Downey Bocce Club, at 7850 Quill Drive, call John Fiorenza 652-4399

#### WEDNESDAYS

7 am: Kiwanis Club, at Rio Hondo Events Center, call Steve Roberson at 927-2626.  
 1 pm: Women's Bocce Club, at 7850 Quill Drive, call Marie Puch at 869-4366.  
 7 pm: Out Post 132 Royal Rangers, at Desert Reign Church, call 928-8000.  
 1st Wed., 11 am: Woman's Club of Downey, call Cheryl Olson 833-8954.  
 1st Wed., 11:30 am: Downey Coordinating Council, Community Center, call Bobbi Bruce 440-5416.  
 1st Wed., 7:30 pm: Downey Stamp Club, at Maude Price School cafeteria, call 928-3028.  
 2nd Wed., 11:30 am: Christian Women's Club, call Marilyn 928-2623.  
 2nd Wed., 3:30 pm: Keep Downey Beautiful, at City Hall, call 904-7102.  
 2nd Wed., 7 pm: Downey Model A Club, at Gallatin School Cafeteria, call 484-8415.  
 3rd Wed.: Downey Dog Obedience Club, for information please call Gina 869-5213 or Valerie 420-2972.  
 3rd Wed., 10 am: Los Angeles County Quilters Guild, at Women's Club, call 860-8821 or 927-3635.  
 3rd Wed., 6:00 pm: Sister Cities of Downey, at Barabara Riley Senior Center, call Gloria Nezahualcoyotl (562) 776-6136.  
 4th Wed., 7:30 pm: US Coast Guard Aux. Flotilla 5-10, First Presbyterian Church, call Brian 419-5420.  
 Wed. & Fri., 10:15 am: Senior Bingo, at Apollo Park, call 904-7223

#### THURSDAYS

7:30 am: Connections Networking, at Bob's Big Boy, for info., call Nick Smith, 861-5222.  
 7:30 am.: Soroptimist Int'l of Downey, for information, call Mia Vasquez, 806-3217.  
 9:30 am: Take off Pounds Sensibly, at Barabara Riley Senior Center, call (800) 932-8677.  
 12 pm: Bingo, at Woman's Club of Downey - Proceeds benefit Rancho.  
 12 pm: Optimist Club of Downey, at Rio Hondo Events Center.  
 6:30 pm: Downey United Masonic Lodge # 220, 8244 3rd St., call 862-4176.  
 7 pm: Boy Scout Troop 351, at Furman Park, contact 562-500-5093 for more information.  
 7:30 pm: Downey Elks Lodge #2020, call 803-3557.  
 1st Thurs., 6 pm, All other Thurs. 12 pm: Kiwanis Club of Downey, at Frantone's Downey, call Roy Jimenez 283-2335.  
 2nd Thurs., 12 pm: Creative Purposes, call Bill Wallace 923-2311.  
 2nd Thurs., 7:30 pm: Beaming Rebel Foxes Collectors Club, call Carl D. Jones at 923-2400.  
 2nd & 4th Thurs., 6:30 pm: Downey Lions Club, at Mimi's, call Lenora (310) 283-9825.  
 3rd Thurs., 4 pm: Public Works Committee, at City Hall Training Room.  
 3rd Thurs., 6 pm: Downey CIPAC, at Sizzler's Restaurant, call Rich Tuttle 413-6045.  
 4th Thurs., 10 am: Assistance League, at Casa De Parley Johnson, call 869-0232.  
 4th Thurs., 7:30 pm: Downey Historical Society programs, at Community Center, call 862-2777.

#### FRIDAYS

7:30 am: Pro Networkers, at Mimi's Cafe, call Barbara Briley Beard at 869-7618.  
 3rd Fri., 8:30 am: Women's "In His Glory" Ministry at Los Amigos C. C. 622-3785.

#### SATURDAYS

9 am: Farmers Market, Downey Avenue at 3rd Street, call 904-7246.

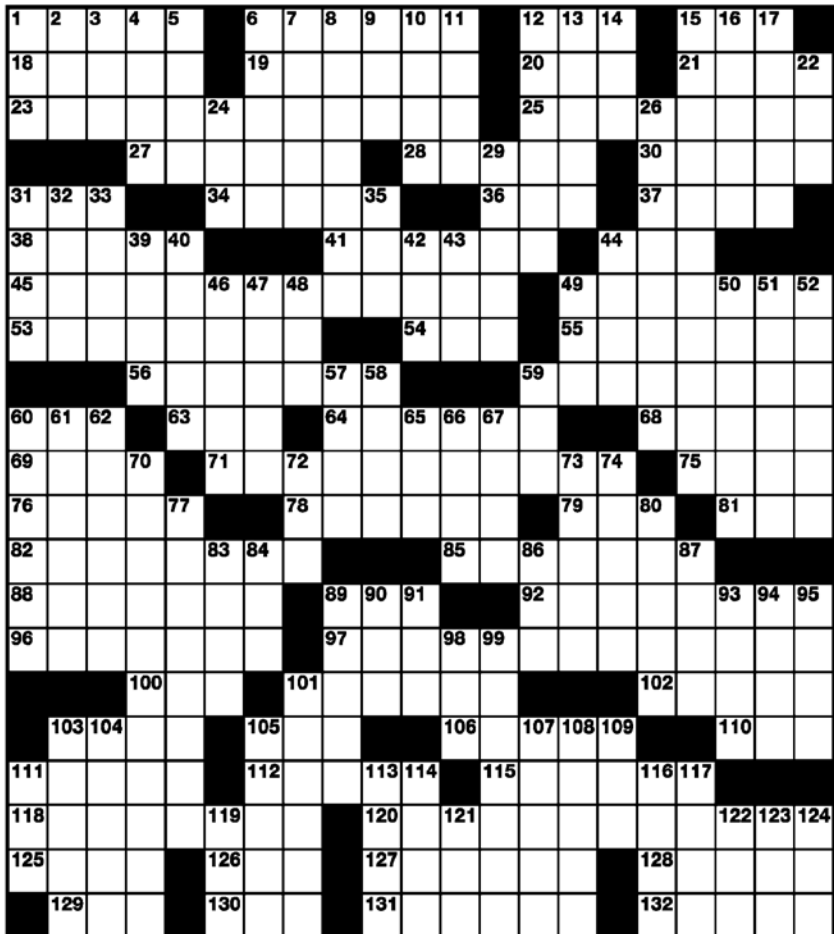
The **DOWNEY GRAFFITI HOTLINE NUMBER** Report graffiti to this number. **923-4484**

## THE NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

Edited by Stanley Newman (www.StanXwords.com)  
**LOOKS EASY: In seven answers**  
 by Mark McClain

- |                                   |                           |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>ACROSS</b>                     | <b>DOWN</b>               |
| 1 Startles severely               | 1 Inoculation, informally |
| 6 50-50 chance                    | 2 Laudatory verse         |
| 12 Nonprescription: Abbr.         | 3 Designer verse          |
| 15 LAX stat                       | 4 Pro shop purchase       |
| 18 Gallic goodbye                 | 5 Star Trek officer       |
| 19 Winter spike                   | 6 Make a connection with  |
| 20 "Which of you ..."             | 7 Group of eight          |
| 21 Madcap                         | 8 Share a table with, say |
| 23 Protective jewel mounting      | 9 Poli (college major)    |
| 25 Synthetic rubber               | 10 Below-elbow bone       |
| 27 Omani leader                   | 11 Pins of violins        |
| 28 Barbecue residue               | 12 Proprietors            |
| 30 North African capital          | 13 The things right here  |
| 31 Bahamas isle                   | 14 Dove sound             |
| 34 Cheyenne Frontier Days event   |                           |
| 36 Bismuthite, for instance       |                           |
| 37 Dr. Yellen's field             |                           |
| 38 New and interesting            |                           |
| 41 Blacksmith's blocks            |                           |
| 44 Electrical unit                |                           |
| 45 Seaside sunbathers' refresher  |                           |
| 49 Looks through a window         |                           |
| 53 Oklahoma nation                |                           |
| 54 Danson of TV                   |                           |
| 55 Arise (from)                   |                           |
| 56 Former Spanish money           |                           |
| 59 False front                    |                           |
| 60 DVD recorder ancestor          |                           |
| 63 Strong desire                  |                           |
| 64 Part of a compass              |                           |
| 68 a fox (crafty)                 |                           |
| 69 Give (care)                    |                           |
| 71 Jet set destination            |                           |
| 75 Twitter's bird, e.g.           |                           |
| 76 Upper house of France          |                           |
| 78 Chorus members                 |                           |
| 79 Article in Le Monde            |                           |
| 81 Certain offspring              |                           |
| 82 Matinee time                   |                           |
| 85 Deteriorates a lot             |                           |
| 88 Painter's studio               |                           |
| 89 Bottom-line amount             |                           |
| 92 Military pilots' posts         |                           |
| 96 Trivial amount                 |                           |
| 97 Elevated circus star           |                           |
| 100 Double-twist shape            |                           |
| 101 Reach, in a board game        |                           |
| 102 Keep an the ground            |                           |
| 103 Big galoot                    |                           |
| 105 Rowboat implement             |                           |
| 106 98 Down's forename            |                           |
| 110 Arboreal "blood"              |                           |
| 111 Western Pacific nation        |                           |
| 112 Great effort, so to speak     |                           |
| 115 Misprint list                 |                           |
| 118 Sense of self                 |                           |
| 120 City beside El Paso           |                           |
| 125 Ireland's Ivan                |                           |
| 126 Birth name preceder           |                           |
| 127 Danny in the movies           |                           |
| 128 Stand of trees                |                           |
| 129 GPS reading                   |                           |
| 130 Hide hair                     |                           |
| 131 Lunar feature                 |                           |
| 132 Ability to move fast          |                           |
| 15 Ivy League school cofounder    |                           |
| 16 Martial arts fitness regimen   |                           |
| 17 Former UN head                 |                           |
| 22 To date                        |                           |
| 24 35mm purchase                  |                           |
| 26 Readies, as a range            |                           |
| 29 Hid, with "up"                 |                           |
| 31 Fiscal execs                   |                           |
| 32 "Rule, Britannia!" composer    |                           |
| 33 Tom Sawyer assent              |                           |
| 35 Unnamed person                 |                           |
| 39 Cruise line traveler           |                           |
| 40 Hive product                   |                           |
| 42 November honoree               |                           |
| 43 Verb-forming suffix            |                           |
| 44 Viral social media post        |                           |
| 46 White House garden flowers     |                           |
| 47 Justice Kagan                  |                           |
| 48 Place at risk                  |                           |
| 49 According to                   |                           |
| 50 Some HDTVs                     |                           |
| 51 "We're on!"                    |                           |
| 52 Schindler portrayer            |                           |
| 57 Part of AD                     |                           |
| 58 Alien-seeking acronym          |                           |
| 59 Energy                         |                           |
| 60 New York college               |                           |
| 61 Dream up                       |                           |
| 62 Carried on loudly              |                           |
| 65 List-shortening abbr.          |                           |
| 66 Bit of residue                 |                           |
| 67 Mislay                         |                           |
| 70 French Post-Impressionist      |                           |
| 72 Campus climber                 |                           |
| 73 Nickname akin to 3 Down        |                           |
| 74 Serengeti equine               |                           |
| 77 Tests                          |                           |
| 80 Lord Nelson weapon             |                           |
| 83 Hideaways                      |                           |
| 84 Curator's concern              |                           |
| 86 Bugs Bunny's "devil" adversary |                           |
| 87 Computer input                 |                           |
| 89 Fixed look                     |                           |
| 90 Vase on a pedestal             |                           |
| 91 Fit to be tied                 |                           |
| 93 Knighted fellows               |                           |
| 94 This: Sp.                      |                           |
| 95 Go no further                  |                           |
| 98 Mystery story pioneer          |                           |
| 99 Scuttled a project             |                           |
| 101 Grisham's former occupation   |                           |
| 103 Boy Scouts founder -Powell    |                           |
| 104 City southeast of Buffalo     |                           |
| 105 Prefix meaning "bone"         |                           |
| 107 Drain cover                   |                           |
| 108 Intense enthusiasm            |                           |
| 109 Rule opposed by Gandhi        |                           |
| 111 for Peril (Grafton novel)     |                           |
| 113 Power converter letters       |                           |
| 114 Layer of a cake               |                           |
| 116 Pulls with effort             |                           |
| 117 Interest group for seniors    |                           |
| 119 Small hotel                   |                           |
| 121 Charlottesville sch.          |                           |
| 122 Eggs on sushi                 |                           |
| 123 Genesis exile                 |                           |
| 124 OED ender                     |                           |

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- |                                   |                                 |                                |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 83 Hideaways                      | 99 Scuttled a project           | 111 for Peril (Grafton novel)  |
| 84 Curator's concern              | 101 Grisham's former occupation | 113 Power converter letters    |
| 86 Bugs Bunny's "devil" adversary | 103 Boy Scouts founder -Powell  | 114 Layer of a cake            |
| 87 Computer input                 | 104 City southeast of Buffalo   | 116 Pulls with effort          |
| 89 Fixed look                     | 105 Prefix meaning "bone"       | 117 Interest group for seniors |
| 90 Vase on a pedestal             | 107 Drain cover                 | 119 Small hotel                |
| 91 Fit to be tied                 | 108 Intense enthusiasm          | 121 Charlottesville sch.       |
| 93 Knighted fellows               | 109 Rule opposed by Gandhi      | 122 Eggs on sushi              |
| 94 This: Sp.                      |                                 | 123 Genesis exile              |
| 95 Go no further                  |                                 | 124 OED ender                  |

Reach Stan Newman at www.StanXwords.com

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You can contact puzzle editor Stanley Newman at his e-mail address: StanXwords@aol.com. Or write him at P.O. Box 69, Massapequa Park, NY 11762. Please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you'd like a reply.

Specifically, a BEZEL SETTING (23 Across) surrounds a gem with a metal rim, rather than hold it in place with prongs. Janet Yellen (37 Across) holds three Economics degrees, a bachelor's from Brown, plus an MA and PhD from Yale. Not coincidentally, the MHO (44 Across) is "ohn" spelled backward, as it is mathematically the reciprocal of the ohm.



## Norwalk mayor: 'No one should be denied pancakes'

Continued from page 1

"Has anyone experienced being denied service at Norwalk IHOP, because they were not wearing masks after CA and the LA County lifted those mandates," the mayor wrote in his caption. "No one should be denied pancakes! This is not acceptable. I received a complaint from a family that was asked to leave for not wearing masks. Put them on notice @ihop."

Ramirez declined to share the family's name but described the email they sent him detailing the incident.

"The family of four walked in there maskless, they were seated maskless, but they were denied service because they didn't have a mask," Ramirez said.

The Norwalk IHOP has three signs posted on the door stating the establishment requires patrons to wear a mask, and three additional signs requesting proof of vaccination.

The Mayor continued to say that if he was asked to wear a mask when entering a business, he would follow their rules.

"I'm a law-abiding citizen," the mayor said. "I respect the establishment. If they say I need to wear a mask then I'll wear a mask."

## Jane Austen collection available in silent auction

Also being auctioned are classics dating to the 1870s; proceeds will benefit Downey Library programming.

**DOWNEY** – The Friends of the Downey City Library organization is now accepting bids for its March silent auction. Proceeds help fund programs at the library.

Bids can be made in person at the Friends bookstore located inside the library. The auction closes at 12 pm on March 26.

Below are the auction items:

Jane Austen: The Complete Novels. Here in one volume are Jane's seven great novels: "Sense and Sensibility," "Pride and Prejudice," "Mansfield Park," "Emma," "Northanger Abbey," "Persuasion" and "Lady Susan." Minimum bid: \$9.

"The Complete Peanuts, Vols. 1-7," Charles M. Schulz. Each book contains an introduction and an index of themes and characters chronicling the classic American comic strip series by one of the

most influential and beloved cartoonists of all time. Minimum bid: \$120

"Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: Tom Sawyer's Companion," Mark Twain. Leather-bound edition with gilded pages and beautiful illustrations, this American masterpiece is a must-have for the home library. New, in plastic wrap. Minimum bid: \$25

"The World of Beverly Cleary," Beverly Cleary. Plastic-wrapped boxed set includes 15 books featuring all your favorite Beverly Cleary characters, by one of America's most beloved children's writers. Minimum bid: \$22

"The Encyclopedia of Ancient Myths and Culture," Anonymous. A magnificent introduction to the greatest myths and cultures in history, from Egyptians to Vikings, and includes the rich mythologies of India and the Far East. Features sumptuous illustrations and photographs. Minimum bid: \$10

"Paradise Lost," illustrated

by Gustave Doré, John Milton. Undated internally, however believed to be printed in the 1880s. Features full page illustrations and an account of the life of Milton by Robert Vaughan, D.D. Bound in pictorial brown cloth accented in black. Minimum bid: \$75

"Bible Gallery," illustrated by Gustave Doré, Talbot W. Chambers. 1880 printing features full page illustrations, a memoir of Doré, descriptive letter-press, and portrait frontispiece of ore bound in pictorial brown cloth accented in black. Minimum bid: \$75

"Your Birthday Sign Through Time: A Chronicle of the Forces That Shape Your Destiny," edited by Rochelle Gordon and Nadia Stieglitz. Understand how astrological and historical factors may influence your destiny and personality in this extraordinary resource. Minimum bid: \$10

## Frometa alleges corruption

Continued from page 1

"What a disgrace for our great Downey! First time in our city's history someone with a criminal record including fraud serves as Mayor Pro Tem. Unfortunately, [Tuesday night's] vote was planned," Frometa wrote from her official city council Facebook page, as well in the comment section of the Downey Patriot's original Facebook post. "It is shameful and very sad the current council has personal agendas. Corruption has arrived in Downey. Fifty years of stability and order have been thrown out the window in one election and certainly by tonight's vote. Sad, sad night for our Downey."

If Tuesday's mayor pro tem vote was planned as Frometa claimed, it would be a potential violation of the Brown Act, California's open meetings law.

Pacheco responded to Frometa's allegations, writing on Facebook that "Nothing was planned and I am not corrupt."

Meanwhile, Alvarez wrote her own social media post, thanking her colleagues for the appointment and for supporting the Renters' Rights subcommittee she had requested, which will see her work alongside Trujillo to collaborate with renters and property owners.

"Thank you to my colleagues for appointing me Mayor Pro Tem, and for supporting the new Renters' Rights Board," Alvarez wrote. "It is an honor to represent our community and continue fighting to improve the lives of working-class families. I am honored to serve our community, and I am here for everyone in our community. Please continue to reach out to me with your issues. Onward Downey."

Alvarez takes over the mayor pro tem role from Ashton, who relinquished the title Feb. 22 and will resign as a council member March 18.

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# Internal probe critical of Spitzer's handling of mass shooting case witness

■ The Orange County DA allegedly pressured a prosecutor to dismiss auto theft charges against a man whose child was killed in a mass shooting.

By Paul Anderson  
City News Service

**SANTA ANA** – Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer spoke with the father of a 9-year-old boy killed in a mass shooting in Orange last year, even though the father had a pending auto theft case being prosecuted by his office, and then leaned on the prosecutor to drop the case, according to an internal ethics investigation obtained by City News Service.

Spitzer, however, vehemently denied any unethical activity and insisted he did not pressure a prosecutor to dismiss the auto theft case.

The Jan. 3 investigative report details concerns raised by top executives in Spitzer's office over his handling of the auto theft case against Rafael Farias, whose son, Matthew, was killed in a March 31, 2021, mass shooting in Orange.

Some of the issues raised in the report prepared by Orange County District Attorney investigator K. Schiffner were also contained in a legal claim filed recently by one of the D.A.'s top executives, Tracy Miller, who alleges she was forced to retire due to retaliation for whistleblowing in the case against the accused mass-shooter, Aminadab Gaxiola Gonzalez, and in a separate murder case.

According to the investigative report, Deputy District Attorney Jeff Schunk contacted his supervisor, Tammy Spurgeon, on July 16, 2021, to report that he had filed charges against Farias, whose son died in the mass shooting. Farias was accused of forging documents to sign over a car in his name that belonged to the boy's mother, who was injured in the Orange shooting but survived.

Miller instructed Schunk to proceed with the case, then sent an email to Spitzer, Spitzer's chief assistant Shawn Nelson and Public Information Officer Kimberly Edds to inform them about the charges against Farias, according to the report.

On Nov. 15, Spitzer told a group of executives in his office, including Miller, that he had spoken on the phone with Farias, initially to discuss

the murder case against accused mass shooter Gaxiola Gonzalez, but eventually Farias brought up his own criminal case, according to the investigative report.

"Farias told Spitzer he was only trying to help the victim (Blanco Tamayo) in this case," Schiffner wrote in the report. "He explained to Spitzer why it was OK for him to transfer Tamayo's vehicle into his name, and that he was not guilty. He also mentioned something about a restraining order violation to Spitzer, and said he was not guilty of that crime either."

According to the report, "Spitzer said Farias was very emotional during the conversation and the district attorney felt sorry for him. Spitzer advised Miller she needed to look into Farias' open case, since based on the information he received from Farias, this did not sound like a good case for our office."

Ebrahim Baytieh, a former assistant district attorney Spitzer fired last month over allegations of mishandling a separate murder case, broke in during the November meeting to alert Spitzer that he had spoken with a witness in the mass killing case without an investigator present, and that Farias was also a criminal defendant represented by an attorney, who also was not present for the conversation, Schiffner wrote.

Spitzer initially responded that he was unaware when he spoke to Farias that there was a pending criminal case against him, but both Edds and Miller said they had previously informed Spitzer that Farias was being charged with a crime, according to the report.

"Baytieh said they needed to have an investigator interview (Spitzer) and document the interview since the conversation with Farias" had to be turned over to defense attorneys in the Gaxiola Gonzalez and Farias cases, Schiffner wrote.

On Nov. 30, Claudia McCarthy, an investigator with the office, conducted a phone interview with Spitzer. According to Schiffner's report, Spurgeon subsequently became "concerned" that Spitzer's account of his talk with Farias during that interview differed from what he said during the earlier meeting with executives in his office. Miller reviewed McCarthy's report and agreed with Spurgeon's concerns.

"Compared with what was said in the executive meeting, the interview with McCarthy lacked detail and context and was misleading,"

Schiffner wrote in his report.

Miller and Spurgeon asked Schiffner and one of Miller's assistants to pool together all of the information regarding the conversation to be turned over to defense attorneys. On Dec. 4, Spurgeon informed Miller that Schunk -- the prosecutor on Farias' case -- received a voicemail from Spitzer, with the D.A. saying he had contacted Farias' attorney to discuss the case, according to the report.

Schunk then spoke to Spitzer, who said "that to his knowledge, Farias had no criminal record, and this case should be dismissed," according to Schiffner. Schunk, however, thought Spitzer lacked all of the facts and was being swayed by Farias' view of the evidence, Schiffner wrote.

"Schunk then called Spurgeon and related his conversation and claimed though there are some issues with the case, he believes it can be proven," Schiffner wrote.

In response to Schiffner's Jan. 3 report, Spitzer wrote a memo on Jan. 31 saying the report was "completely misleading, lacks necessary context, and draws inferences which are not based on facts."

Spitzer said his exchange with Farias was "accidental and completely unintentional." He said that as soon as he was made aware of Farias' criminal case he "ceased contact." He also said he could not recall receiving a July 16 email informing him about Farias' criminal case.

"My office files 70,000 cases a year and I cannot be expected to recall specific details and proceedings of each of these cases," Spitzer wrote in his Jan. 31 memo. "When I called Mr. Farias, it was simply to provide him with a forum to continue to grieve the loss of his young son and to allow me to assure him that I am doing everything in my power to seek justice in this case."

"... It is clearly understandable that a father who lost his young son in such a violent way would want to hear from the elected District Attorney that we are doing everything we can to lawfully pursue justice," he wrote.

Spitzer contended that he spoke with Farias for about 15 minutes, and Farias was "expressing his grief and the frustration with the court proceedings. Mr. Farias then transitioned to the topic of a car that he had given to Ms. Tamayo, the fact that Ms. Tamayo had come to live with him after being released from the hospital after undergoing brain surgery, and that he consoled Ms. Tamayo, but at some point, Ms. Tamayo's adult children (who are not related to Mr. Farias) did not want their mother to continue staying with him."

Spitzer said Farias "mentioned that he had bought Ms. Tamayo a car so that she could transport their son and that the car had been stored at his residence. He then discussed how there became ownership issues about the car and the police showed up at his home. I then immediately asked him if there was a criminal case arising from this dispute. He told me yes."



Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer is the subject of an internal ethics investigation. (Courtesy photo)

Spitzer said he "immediately asked if he had a lawyer and he confirmed he did," so Spitzer advised him that he could only speak about the case with his attorney and he "terminated" the conversation. Spitzer conceded in his memo that the conversation had to be memorialized.

"The resulting investigator's report is written with such aggressive and ill-intent language to buttress a perspective that I was acting inappropriately," Spitzer said.

He also said Miller's "characterization of my conduct and how she describes the circumstances is biased, leading, fails to be objective, is agenda driven and entirely inappropriate."

Spitzer insisted in his memo that Schiffner "had an obligation to re-interview so that I could clarify the misperceptions in the report."

Spitzer said he spoke with Schunk twice about the prosecution of Farias. He said the second conversation was after discussing the case with Farias' attorney, and he asked Schunk "to see

what, if any, resolution to the case was appropriate."

According to Spitzer's memo, Farias' attorney never "indicated that my interaction with Mr. Farias was problematic," and that she "was very appreciative that I was concerned about (Farias') mental state and was willing to consider his mental state as to how it may have played a role in his commission what is now a crime charged by my office."

Spitzer said he only asked Schunk to consider that Farias "had just experienced the horrific death of his child and look at his behavior from at least that perspective."

The district attorney acknowledged that Schunk was "unhappy with my talk with him. He seemed bothered that I was having this discussion with him and he was clear that I must not understand the facts of the Mr. Farias case. ... DDA Schunk indicated that he would seriously consider my concerns and re-evaluate the case and get back to me."

Spitzer denied pushing for Schunk to dump the case.

"I only spoke in the abstract that if a distressed father thought he could put a car in his own name because the mother could not drive it as a result of her head trauma and has essentially abandoned it, would it matter how he proves the case," Spitzer wrote.

Spitzer said Schunk never called him back "despite his promise" to do so.

"Instead, he contacted Ms. Spurgeon, and Ms. Spurgeon and Ms. Miller decided to conduct their own investigation in order to draw unfair and baseless conclusions and direct Investigator Schiffner to write a report based on hearsay, incomplete information, bias and raw speculation," Spitzer wrote.

Spitzer assigned the Farias case to another prosecutor and walled himself and Schunk off from the case.

## Cancio calls on increased oil production

■ The Assembly candidate said domestic oil production could help ease gas prices.

**DOWNEY** – State Assembly candidate and Norwalk-La Mirada school board member Dr. Roberto Cancio on Tuesday called on state government leaders to reverse recent efforts to discourage domestic oil production to lower gas prices.

"\$5 and \$6 per gallon for gas in California is a direct hit on the pocketbooks of middle class and working families," said Cancio. "We must act, we must provide relief. Too

many families in my community are struggling to fill their gas tanks and sometimes forcing the choice between gas for driving to work or food on the table."

"Sacramento politicians can ease this burden," Cancio continued. "As a group, they have moved too fast, too soon to cut domestic production before our economy is ready for it. I share their concerns about climate change, and I oppose more offshore drilling, but oil and gas will continue to be part of California's energy portfolio well into the future whether they like it or not. That's just a fact."

"So, it seems like a pretty easy

choice: We can produce it here in California and reap the benefits of lower prices and good paying oil sector jobs or rely on foreign countries like Russia, which President Biden today properly banned imports from, and their higher prices and potential for environmental disaster during transport."

Cancio, a Democrat and U.S. Navy veteran, is running for Assembly District 64, which includes the cities of Downey, Norwalk, La Mirada, Santa Fe Springs, Cudahy, Bell, Bell Gardens, and La Habra.

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# Woman alleges Staples rat problem forced her to quit job

■ A lawsuit alleges that a rat infestation at the Staples in Venice caused the worker physical ailments.

By City News Service

**LOS ANGELES** – A Hawthorne woman is suing Staples the Office Superstore, alleging she was forced to quit earlier this year because the Venice store where she worked was infested with rats, causing her nausea and headaches.

Ashley Carlyle's Los Angeles Superior Court lawsuit allegations include wrongful termination, harassment, whistleblower retaliation, disability discrimination and violations of the state Labor Code. Carlyle seeks unspecified compensatory and punitive damages in the suit brought Monday.

A Staples representative could not be immediately reached.

Carlyle was hired Oct. 26 as a retail associate at the store on Lincoln Boulevard and soon promoted to operations manager, overseeing office supplies, cashiering and truck loading, the suit states.

Carlyle quickly began having red spots on her ankles and the week after she was hired, a customer told her a rat had run under the shopping carts, the suit states. The next day the plaintiff saw a rat scoot across two aisles and into a hole in the wall, but when she reported it, her manager said in response, "It must have come from outside," the suit states.

Some of Carlyle's associates told her rats had been a problem there for years and that the situation was getting worse, the suit states.

When Carlyle told several managers about rat droppings in the stock room, they said that traps were laid, but the plaintiff saw few of the larger rodents being caught, the suit states. She began feeling sick with nausea and headaches and one day almost vomited, the suit states.

When Carlyle complained about the smell of dead rats, she was told to "move on to another aisle," according to the suit.

In December, a fed-up Carlyle contacted Cal/OSHA anonymously in order to protect her job, the suit states. She reported the rat problem and the agency responded that they would investigate, the suit states.

When Carlyle refused to clean

up rat droppings in January because it was not part of her job, the store's general manager told her she should quit "if this isn't the job for her," according to the suit.

When Carlyle protested that cleaning up rat feces could expose her to disease and that she had already been sick because of the rodents' presence, her manager told her, "Well, if you are allergic you need to let us know, but other than that, you need to help us out."

Carlyle was demoted to price auditor, allegedly because of her complaints, and she went on leave on Jan. 11, the suit states. Eight days later, she notified her general manager that she would not return because of the alleged rat infestation, the suit states.

A human resources representative confirmed Carlyle's firing in a letter sent to her on Feb. 22, according to the suit.

Through the final days of Carlyle's employment, she would be covered in rat droppings when pulling items off the shelves, the suit alleges.

Carlyle has suffered emotional pain and a decline in her physical health because of the work conditions at Staples, the suit alleges.

# Archuleta honors sheriff's captain as Woman of the Year

■ Jodi Hutak praised as "a model of professionalism" by state Sen. Bob Archuleta, who selected her as Woman of the Year.

**PICO RIVERA** – In celebration of International Women's Day, Senator Bob Archuleta (D-Pico Rivera) recognized Pico Rivera Sheriff's Station Captain Jodi Hutak as Woman of the Year for Senate District 32 for her long record of public service in Los Angeles County.

"Captain Hutak's record of public service to Los Angeles County and its residents exemplifies leadership, and is a model of professionalism we should all strive to emulate," Archuleta said. "It is a privilege, during Women's History Month, to recognize Captain Jodi Hutak as Woman of the Year for Senate District 32."

Hutak, a 22-year Sheriff's Department veteran, has led the station with "a wealth of knowledge, experience and community familiarity. These traits have been invaluable during the recent public health crisis," Archuleta said.

She directed her station in many of the city's public safety programs, such as food and personal protective equipment distribution events, as well as COVID-19 testing and vaccine programs.

"I commend Captain Hutak on

her work in ensuring the safety and well-being of the community, while strengthening partnerships with the people living and working in the city, particularly during this public health crisis," Archuleta said.

"Her community looked to her and the station's personnel amid these extraordinary times, and will continue to rely on her leadership in public safety in the years ahead, in partnership with my office and other stakeholders. Congratulations Captain Hutak and thank you for all that you do in the service of public safety."

Before his election to the State Senate, Archuleta was mayor of Pico Rivera and worked alongside the Pico Rivera Sheriff's substation on public safety and community outreach efforts. With his background in law enforcement, Archuleta said he is familiar with the immense responsibilities our law enforcement partners shoulder in the course of protecting the public's safety.

Hutak was featured in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's 100th Anniversary of Female LASD Deputies display, a tribute highlighting the history of women in law enforcement and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Along with a desire to preserve the legacy of women in law enforcement, she is a mentor to others, empowering them to achieve their career goals.

Outside of her duties, Hutak has

dedicated her time coaching youth soccer in the cities of La Mirada, Whittier and Fullerton. Between her nearly four decades as a competitive athlete, coupled with undergraduate and graduate degrees in the field of Kinesiology and Sports Science, her passion is to share that knowledge to help others not only strive for top sports performance but also to live a healthier lifestyle.

Hutak is the parent of a teenage son and an adult stepson. She resides in La Habra Heights where she spends time working out or enjoying a variety of outdoor activities including running, hiking and cycling.



# Hyundai undergoing renovations

**DOWNEY** – Hyundai will soon be undergoing a remodel and expansion.

Located at 7550 Firestone Blvd., the existing 13,909 square foot car dealership will be updated to reflect Hyundai's mandate for uniform corporate branding and architectural design across its locations.

The project will see the expansion of the showroom and service area, expanded delivery canopy, expanded landscaping, and reconfiguration of pedestrian and vehicle circulation. Electric vehicle storage and battery with EV service bay will also be installed.

According to a representative from Hyundai, the requirement to update the site to the company's corporate specifications was present when the dealership moved into the city from Carson in 2017. The process was delayed during the transition period, and then further pushed back due to the pandemic.

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