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County eyes \$43B budget

■ The spending plan earmarks additional money for new sheriff's recruits and mental health services.

By City News Service

LOS ANGELES — A proposed \$43 billion Los Angeles County budget proposal for 2023-24 got early support Tuesday from the Board of Supervisors, although the initial review only begins a month-long public hearing process leading up to final adoption of a spending plan in October.

County CEO Fesia Davenport unveiled her budget proposal Monday, and presented it Tuesday to the Board of Supervisors, which took a procedural vote giving preliminary approval to the document. Public hearings on the budget will begin May 10.

Supervisor Kathryn Barger said the budget proposal "got several things right."

"I am pleased it includes ongoing funding for sheriff's academies to help keep our communities safe," she said in a statement. "Our county must have a functioning pipeline that recruits and trains quality candidates for the sheriff's department. This has a ripple effect, allowing us to maintain necessary staffing levels for our local sheriff's stations and jails."

"I am also encouraged that the Department of Mental Health is allocated more than \$60 million in Mental Health Services Act funding and more than 165 positions to expand services -- including 32 positions for the Antelope Valley Children and Family Health Clinic. The rural communities I represent need more access to services and will welcome the additional support."

Supervisor Holly Mitchell said she hopes there will be good attendance at the upcoming public budget meetings. She said the public has to understand that the county "cannot rely on unanticipated revenue."

Continued on page

Downey Unified expands young women's futures in fields of engineering

■ The Downey school district is partnering with Cal Poly Pomona on an engineering program specifically for girls.

DOWNEY — With only approximately 30 percent of all engineering jobs occupied by women, Downey Unified is providing an opportunity for female students to fill this need and be more successful post-graduation by continuing to expand a female-focused engineering program throughout the district.

In partnership with Cal Poly Pomona's Women in Science and Engineering (WiSE) program, formerly known as their Women in Engineering program, the Femineer program is embedded into Downey Unified's four middle schools and two comprehensive high schools with the goal of providing more opportunities for young women to learn firsthand what a career in engineering and other related fields would encompass.

At the end of March, the annual Femineer Gala was hosted by Downey High School where the work of Downey Unified's Femineers was showcased. This event brought over 300 people in attendance to see what these more than 200 young future female engineers have been diligently focused on this school year.

This gala featured an expansive exhibition where students explained their unique movable designs—some resembling the function of vending machines or recreating scenes from well-known movies such as the ballroom in Disney's animated version of Beauty and the Beast—made with motors, sensors and circuit boards. Similar to previous years, this year's event was rounded out with an impressive panel session made up of female engineers.

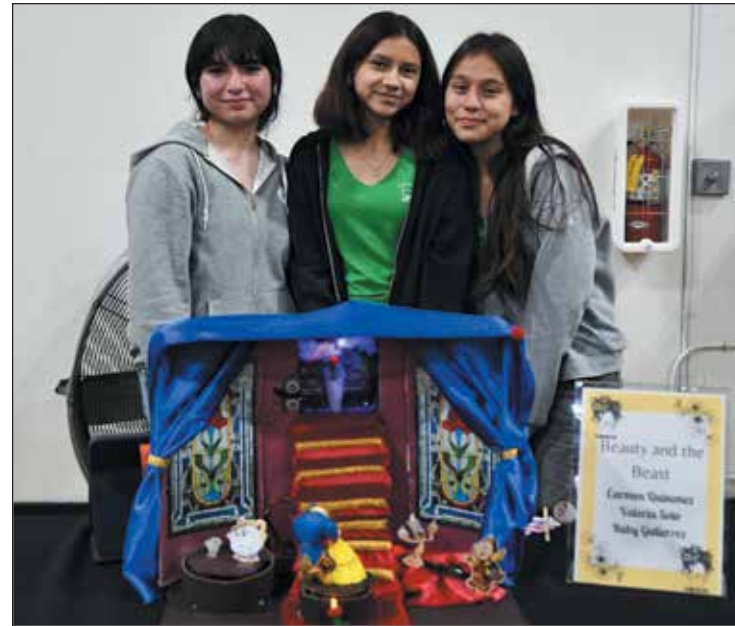
The panel spoke to students about their chosen pathways and experiences in engineering and were also able to answer questions. The panel included professional engineer, Nicky Virdone, who holds a bachelor's degree in Bioengineering from UCLA and a master's degree in Biomedical Engineering from Duke University, who spoke about her experience as current Project Manager/Director of Outreach at a National Science Foundation center called CI Compass.



She was joined by three Downey Unified alumni and former Femineer members, Stephanie Vaca, currently in her third year at Cal State Long Beach, majoring in Computer Engineering; Ifunanya Okoroma, a second-year student at UC San Diego majoring in Data Science; and Karla Sarabia, currently in her third year at Cal Poly Pomona, majoring in Aerospace Engineering.

"We are honored and excited to hear from these talented women in engineering, and to have them inspire and influence the trajectories of our Femineers in Downey Unified," stated the district's Board of Education President, Giovanna Perez-Saab. "Hearing their honest and open perspectives on what it takes to excel in the various engineering fields they are working and studying in provides such a valuable perspective for our students. I want to thank our staff for supporting our young female engineers and ensuring they are ready for various opportunities in STEAM related fields in their future."

Cal Poly Pomona's Women in Engineering Program was established by Dr. Ontiveros in 2012 to provide young women with the resources and supportive services to succeed in the fields of engineering. Transitioning to their



Downey Unified is making a stronger effort to introduce girls to engineering careers.

Women in Science and Engineering (WiSE) program in 2021 as part of the Cal Poly Pomona STEM Success Network.

WiSE provides resources and support services for students to succeed in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). WiSE serves undergraduate and graduate students and faculty in STEM fields at Cal Poly Pomona. WiSE

is dedicated to not only creating a supportive community for our current STEM students, but also strives to inspire young students to consider STEM as a possible career. Exposing young students to the creativity and excitement of STEM through hands-on activities and role models is an excellent way to build confidence in their capacity within the STEM field.

Downey resident pens first play, 'Real Men Have Chichis'

■ Ignacio Gonzalez wrote the play at the urging of Josefina Lopez, the writer behind 'Real Women Have Curves.'

By Alex Dominguez
Staff Writer

DOWNEY — Ignacio Gonzalez is already known around Downey for his work with the Southern California Resource Center for Independent Living. He has dabbled in stand-up comedy.

Now, he can add playwright to his resume.

Gonzalez's new — and first-play "Real Men Have Chichis" is preparing for a brief workshop stint at the Frida Khalo Theater in Los Angeles.

The play centers around young

Latino man Lazaro, who is looking to become his own independent, healthy person and break free of his family's loving suffocation and intoxicating food.

"His family wants to keep him close by, he wants to move away," said Gonzalez. "They physically want him to be a part of the family and not leave and be more successful than they are, and they entice him also with all the good-tasting food. He wants to try to be healthy, and the rest of the family eats and drinks and is looking to have a good time."

"He's financially, emotionally, health-wise wants to be an independent guy and he's having a hard time sort of wiggling away from his family."

Some of Gonzalez's own personal experiences made it into the play.

"One is trying to get healthy," said Gonzalez. "If you might've known me, I was a whole lot bigger than I am now. Since my heaviest 10, 12 years ago, I've lost like 140 pounds."

"Part of it, with the family, they do it out of love, they try to feed you and that's how they show you support, by feeding you. Then, you turning food down, it's something they might see as a slap in the face, like you're insulting them. You're supposed to take food because in our culture, we don't have much, but we have food; that's what I have to offer you, and if you turn that down, I don't have anything else to offer you other than that, so it's a big insult. Things like that, where I found you're trying to do it in a nice way, be polite and appreciative, and it's difficult."

Gonzalez was encouraged to write the play by writer Josefina

Lopez — known for "Real Women Have Curves" — after he took her script writing class at Casa 0101 in Boyle Heights.

"At one point, she told me, 'Hey, you should make the male version of Real Women Have Curves,'" said Gonzalez. "This was four years ago, maybe. So, I said, 'Okay, I'll give it a shot.' I did the first 10 pages which she always asked for...and it was good, she liked it. Then, I kind of let it go and it was hard to keep going; I would pick it up, put it back down again."

"At the end of last year, she said 'Hey, what happened to the play? If you do it now, we'll put it on. I'll look it over, we'll produce it somewhere. I got to work, finished it up, and now here we are.'"

"Real Men Have Chichis" runs for about an hour. It will run for six shows over three weekends, Fridays and Saturdays, from May 12 to May



Ignacio Gonzalez

27 at 8 pm.

For tickets, visit www.eventbrite.com. The Frida Khalo Theater is located at 2332 W. Fourth Street, Los Angeles, CA, 90057.

Weekend at a Glance

Friday 89°

Saturday 85°

Sunday 75°

ON THIS DAY

1871: Japan's first government-operated postal service opened between Tokyo and Osaka.

1912: Navin Field (later called Tiger Stadium) in Detroit and Fenway Park in Boston officially opened as both hosted their first professional baseball games; Tiger Stadium closed in 1999, leaving Fenway as the oldest baseball stadium in Major League Baseball.

1914: Striking miners and their families in Ludlow, Colorado, were attacked by the state's National Guard and company guards; 25 people were killed, including 11 children, and the massacre resulted in a bloody retaliation by other miners.

1924: Finalizing the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey's Grand National Assembly voted to adopt a full republican constitution, with General Mustafa Kemal, who had first proclaimed the Turkish republic about six months earlier, becoming the first president of the republic.

1999: Two disgruntled and heavily armed students entered Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, and murdered 13 people before killing themselves.

2008: Race car driver Danica Patrick won the IndyCar 300, becoming the first woman to win an IndyCar championship event.

2013: Five days after three people were killed in bombings at the Boston Marathon, Neil Diamond made a surprise appearance at Fenway Park, where he performed "Sweet Caroline" at the Red Sox game against the Kansas City Royals.

2020: Country singer Willie Nelson staged the "Come And Toke It" live stream to support efforts to legalize marijuana and free those incarcerated for it.

2021: Derek Chauvin, a former police officer, was found guilty of killing George Floyd, an unarmed African American man whose neck he knelt on while attempting to arrest him in 2020; Floyd's death caused massive protests against police brutality and brought renewed attention to the Black Lives Matter movement.

2022: Netflix suffered its first subscriber loss in a decade, losing 200,000 customers between January and March.

Birthdays

Actor **George Takei** (86), actress **Jessica Lange** (74), former Dodgers manager **Don Mattingly** (62), "Back to the Future" actor **Crispin Glover** (59), TV actor **Sherman Moore** (53), actress **Carmen Electra** (51), actor **Joey Lawrence** (47), fashion designer **Tan France** (40), and model **Miranda Kerr** (40).

Proposed budget dedicates \$288M towards homelessness

Continued from page 1

In releasing the budget proposal Monday, Davenport warned of an unstable economy and potential future liabilities from child sex assault claims that could range into the billions of dollars, having a significant impact on the county's finances.

The spending plan includes investments in mental health services, homelessness programs and establishment of an Office of Constitutional Policing within the sheriff's department. It also realizes the goal set by voter passage of Measure J in 2020 -- mandating that at least 10% of the county's locally generated "unrestricted revenues" be dedicated to community service programs and alternatives to incarceration.

Davenport said the budget proposal dedicates \$288.3 million to such programs, along with nearly \$198 million more that will roll over from the current fiscal year, putting the 2023-34 total at about \$486 million.

The budget proposal dedicates \$692 million toward efforts to combat homelessness. The amount includes more than \$60 million for mental health services and 168 positions to provide them; a \$100 million pot of money for development and preservation of affordable housing; and \$25.5 million for "city-specific programs and services" with a primary goal of moving people out of homeless encampments and into housing, along with supportive services.

Overall, the \$43 billion budget proposal represents a \$1.6 billion drop from the current year's budget, but it adds 514 new positions, bringing the overall county budgeted workforce to 114,106.

Specific recommendations for the use of those funds are expected to be presented to the Board of Supervisors this spring, and will be added to the final budget document,



L.A. County is preparing to pay up to \$3 billion in settlements from more than 3,000 claims alleging sexual assault at county facilities, including jails and juvenile halls.

according to Davenport. The measures are part of the county's "Care First and Community Investment" effort to overhaul its criminal justice system.

The spending proposal includes \$6.6 million and the addition of 24 non-sworn positions to establish an Office of Constitutional Policing in the sheriff's department, to "oversee and monitor consent decrees, deputy gang issues, audit and investigations, compliance, risk management and policy development." It also includes nearly \$50 million in ongoing funding for improved conditions and mental health services in the jails to meet terms of a settlement with federal prosecutors.

"The recommended budget -- the first step in the county's multi-phase budget process -- was developed against a backdrop of growing fiscal uncertainty, including a looming state budget deficit, a significant slowdown in local real estate transactions, and an unsettled economic environment in which recession remains a very real possibility," Davenport wrote in her budget-transmittal letter to

the Board of Supervisors.

Her message highlighted a series of potentially significant impacts on the county's budget, most notably potential liabilities from childhood sexual assault claims, which have expanded thanks to a state law extending the statute of limitations for filing of such claims. The county was recently sued by 300 people who claim they were abused as youths by county probation and detention officers while they were detained at juvenile facilities. But Davenport noted the problem extends well beyond that.

"Early information estimates that the county's financial exposure ranges from \$1.6 billion to more than \$3 billion from more than 3,000 claims alleging childhood sexual assault at various county and non-county facilities," she wrote in her letter to the board.

In a briefing Monday morning, Davenport said that level of potential liability from lawsuits and damage claims entering a fiscal year is unprecedented. She said that while the exact amount of liability the county might face is unclear,

officials are already exploring ways the costs might be covered.

"We have started looking preliminarily at ways how we would address any judgments or settlements," she said. "Everything has to be on the table. Whether that means reducing funding for some of our departments, reducing the amount of contracts, looking at other ways to finance the debt, debt financing, even looking at our rainy day fund. ... We would try to resolve any liability ... in a way that has the least amount of impact to our safety net services as possible."

She also noted the need for an overhaul of county probation and juvenile facilities, along with possible high costs of conducting seismic retrofits on multiple county facilities. A recent report identified a host of county structures in need of earthquake safety improvements, including the Hall of Administration downtown.

Following the planned initial adoption of the budget by the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, public hearings will begin May 10, with final budget deliberations beginning in June. Final budget approval is expected in October.

Former mayor Richard Riordan dies at 92

■ Riordan helped rebuild Los Angeles after the Rodney King riots and Northridge earthquake.

By City News Service

LOS ANGELES — Funeral services were pending Thursday for Richard Riordan, the venture capitalist who was Los Angeles' mayor from 1993-2001 and faced the challenges of rebuilding the city first from the Rodney King riots, then the Northridge earthquake.

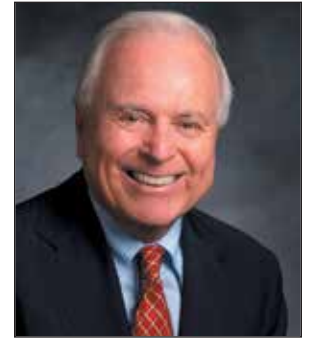
Riordan "passed peacefully this evening at his home in Brentwood, surrounded by his wife Elizabeth, family, friends and precious pet dogs," his family announced Wednesday night. Riordan was 92.

Riordan, the only Republican to hold the nonpartisan position since 1961 when Norris Poulson lost a bid for a third term, was elected in 1993, succeeding Tom Bradley, who held the position for a record 20 years.

Riordan took office slightly more than a year after the rioting that followed the verdict in the state trial of the Los Angeles Police Department officers accused in the beating of motorist Rodney King, then had another challenge to face in his first year in office -- the 1994 Northridge earthquake.

"Mayor Richard Riordan loved Los Angeles, and devoted so much of himself to bettering our city," Mayor Karen Bass said in a statement. "He always had a place in his heart for the children of LA, and worked to improve how the city served our youth and communities as a passionate member of the Los Angeles Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners.

"Mayor Riordan's legacy includes our city's iconic Central Library, which he saved and rebuilt, and which today carries his name.



"In the wake of the Northridge earthquake, Mayor Riordan set the standard for emergency action. He reassured us and delivered a response with an intensity that still pushes us all to be faster and stronger amidst crisis.

"Though born in New York, Mayor Riordan will be remembered as an LA original."

Riordan was born May 1, 1930, and grew up in New Rochelle, N.Y. He was the youngest of eight children in an Irish Catholic family. He told the Los Angeles Times one of his most vivid Depression childhood memories was seeing unemployed men coming to the family's back door in search of food or work. He attended an all-male Jesuit prep school where both neckties and Latin were mandatory.

He attended Santa Clara University, where he played on the football team. After two years at Santa Clara, he transferred to Princeton. Following his time at Princeton, he served in the Army in Korea and graduated first in his class at the University of Michigan Law School.

Riordan married Eugenia "Genie" Warady at a resort in New York and moved to Southern California. They had five children and he built a law practice, eventually founding Riordan & McKinzie.

He emerged as a political player in the 1980s, lending \$300,000 to Tom Bradley's campaign for governor and served on the city's Coliseum and Recreation and Parks commissions. He also helped lead a successful campaign to oust state Supreme Court Justice Rose Elizabeth Bird in 1986.

Two of Riordan's children died during his rise in political circles. Billy, his only son, died in a scuba diving accident off the East Coast days before his 22nd birthday. His daughter Carol died from complications of an eating disorder when she was 19.

Riordan was married four times. He was married to Genie Riordan for 23 years before the marriage was annulled by the Catholic church. He married Jill Noel in 1990, children's activist Nancy Daly in 1998, and Elizabeth Gregory, then head of admissions at Harvard-Westlake School, in 2017.

Riordan is survived by his wife; three children, Mary Elizabeth Riordan, Kathleen Ann Riordan and Patricia Riordan Torrey; three grandchildren, Luca, Jessica and Elizabeth; and a sister, Mary Elizabeth Riordan Hearty.

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Downey YMCA could receive \$3M under federal funding proposal

■ The funding request will be considered by Congress as part of its 2023-24 spending plan.

DOWNEY — Rep. Robert Garcia (CA-42) has included federal funding requests for more than a dozen local projects to the House Committee on Appropriations for consideration in the fiscal year 2023-24 cycle.

Among the funding requests is \$3 million to go towards the construction of a new Downey YMCA.

“Having served as Mayor of Long Beach, I have seen firsthand the vital role that federal funding plays in sustaining a thriving community,” said Garcia, who was elected to Congress last November. “From a child development center to affordable housing developments for seniors, these community projects aim to improve the lives of everyone in our district.

“As we continue to work hand in hand with local partners it is my priority to advocate for funding that will serve folks from every corner of our district.

“The Downey YMCA serves as much more than just a community gathering place, it is a safe space for the community, a hub of after school activities for children, and even a place for teens to find scholarships. In sum, this YMCA works day after day to improve the lives of everyone in Downey. This federal funding would provide badly needed renovations to this vital facility.”

Dan Powell, interim executive director of the Downey YMCA, said the facility is eager to reopen after originally opening in 1963.

“We are excited by the prospect of reopening of a brand-new facility which will support a vibrant, healthy community with engaging youth and teen development programs, before and after school care and senior and special needs activities,” Powell said.

Below is a full list of community projects submitted by Garcia for funding approval:

***Child Development Center Capital Improvements - Associated Students Inc, California State University Long Beach**

Since 1975, The Isabel Patterson Child Development Center has offered affordable childcare for students who are also parents of young children, on the campus of California State University, Long Beach. A roughly \$3.5 million investment will support long overdue renovations given the current facility has elements that are unsafe for children and are highly energy inefficient.

***Space Beach Research and Innovation Equipment - Long Beach Community College**

Long Beach is a critical hub of the commercial space industry. The \$2 million in community project funding, from NASA, will buy the necessary cutting-edge manufacturing equipment that will train the next generation of highly skilled workers in Long Beach.

***Studebaker Road Corridor - City of Long Beach**

Studebaker Road is a key corridor for the City of Long Beach. The \$5 million in federal funds will pay for pedestrian safety investments, bike lanes, and will ensure the corridor project is a complete street.

***Bixby Park Improvements - City of Long Beach**

Bixby Park is a shovel-ready redevelopment project which, backed by \$2 million in community project funding, this will rebuild the community center.

***Heartwell Park Improvements - City of Long Beach**

Heartwell Park is a heavily trafficked and essential park between the cities of Long Beach and Lakewood, the park serves as a magnet for the broader region. \$3 million in community project funding will build a new turf soccer and ensure ADA access.

***Martin Luther King, Jr. Park - City of Long Beach**

The \$3 million in MLK Park investments would replace park infrastructure and begin implementing a community master plan.

***Cudahy Affordable Housing Development - City of Cudahy**

Our district faces a serious housing shortage. The \$1.5 million in community project funding will be used to build affordable housing for low-income and homeless seniors. Over 140 families with senior family members would see their lives directly improved through

this project.

***Pritchard Field Park Renovations - City of Bell**

Renovating Pritchard Field in the City of Bell will create a key community gathering area that will catalyze community engagement and provide a well-suited open space for the people of Bell. In a currently unused and undesirable urban space, \$2 million in community project funding will support the complete refurbishment of vacant but well-situated open space to become a safe green space for Bell and the adjacent highly dense communities.

***Palms Park Community Center Improvement Project - City of Lakewood**

Lakewood Palms Park is a critical park and community center which serves as a hub for Lakewood and the surrounding cities but urgently needs infrastructure improvements. \$3 million will promote development and growth in the local working-class community.

***Bell Gardens Veterans Park Refurbishment - City of Bell Gardens**

\$700,000 will be used to renovate damaged, worn and deteriorating park facilities, including restrooms. Modernized park irrigation can reduce water waste and reduce blight. The project will improve the usability and value of scarce public, open space in a badly underserved community.

***Public Safety Updates - City of Bellflower**

Public safety is a priority, and everyone deserves to live in a secure community without fear. \$870,000 in federal funding will install security cameras at facilities throughout the City of Bellflower with an emphasis on the city's parks.

***City of Maywood Sewer Project - City of Maywood**

Previously supported by longtime community champion

Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard, this critical project, authorized by the 2022 Water Resources Development Act for \$10 million, will prevent sanitary sewer overflows and other problems such as: blockages, equipment failures, broken pipes, and vandalism.

***Catalina Island Ferry Landing Project - Catalina Island**

Though a small and rural community, the City of Avalon, on Santa Catalina Island, hosts over 1 million visitors per year. Exposed to the elements in a harsh environment, the Cabrillo Mole Ferry Terminal needs redevelopment so that it can continue to function as a key intermodal hub for the community and its many guests.

\$2 million will replace a damaged and deficient structure with a facility which is ADA compliant and better suited to supporting modern vessels which visit the Island.

***Bus Operations, Maintenance, and Administration Facility - City of Commerce**

The City of Commerce's transit facility, which services the Los Angeles County South-East Region, is unable to meet the growing operational needs of the city's transit fleet. \$6 million will support a project to provide the



Downey Mayor Claudia Frometa and her family recently vacationed in Hawaii. They are pictured here at the Byodo-In Japanese Temple in Oahu.

“We couldn't travel without our Patriot!” the mayor said.

city with critical infrastructure needed to meet those demands through a sustainable and community-conscious approach which will stimulate the regional economy.

***Downey YMCA Renovations - City of Downey**

Shuttered during the COVID-19 pandemic, the existing facility was deemed unsafe to reopen without a massive infrastructure refurbishment. \$3 million towards the new facility would host desperately needed amenities, with an array of programs to support broader community needs, hosting food

distribution centers, childcare and teen scholarships.

Earlier this year, the House Committee on Appropriations announced that they would begin accepting programmatic and Community Project Funding requests from Members of Congress to meet the needs of communities across the country.

Congressman Garcia and his staff have reached out and met with numerous stakeholders from each corner of the district to discuss projects throughout each of the communities the Congressman represents

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The Downey Patriot

Red Baysinger lived a long, full life

■ The longtime Downey resident died last week at age 102, leaving behind lessons and memories.

By Alex Dominguez
Staff Writer

DOWNEY — Jasper “Red” Baysinger thought “people were like water,” meaning they ran downhill to the path of least resistance.

Over his 102-year life, he sought to live the exact opposite way.

Baysinger was born on July 14, 1920 to Jasper Newton and Nettie May Baysinger in the city of Whittier. He would grow up primarily in and around Signal Hill and Long Beach. He would graduate from Poly High School.

As a youngster, Baysinger spent much of his time around automobiles, motorcycles, and auto shops.

“He had a lifelong love-affair with cars,” said Richard Holt, who would assist with Baysinger’s eventual life-story publication. “You can pin the entire life story by different cars that he had over the years. Restored cars, built cars, raced cars.”

Not just a passion and joy that he would carry with him for the entirety of his life, these tendencies would help lead him into a role working on the B-29 bombers as a US Army Air Force mechanic in the Pacific theater during WWII.

After the war, he would live with his parents in Downey. He eventually met his would-be wife, Erma Rose on a blind date. They would marry in Downey Methodist Church in 1948.

One of the prides of his life was the fact that he built his own home.

“He had told me recently, ‘It used to be a big deal to build your own home,’” said Annie Rojas, a friend of Baysinger in his later



years. “I remember asking, ‘How did you learn [to build your own home],’ and he said, ‘Well, there was so many houses being built, it was like booming, I would jump in my car and drive over, see a door being framed, and then go home and do it.’”

Baysinger and Erma would move into the home in 1950. They would have three children: Karl, Roger, and Marie.

Oldest son Karl says Baysinger was “not happy until he was working for himself.”

“He believed very much in being independent,” said Karl. “He was raised in that era, the greatest generation, of just ‘Your job, your responsibility to take care of yourself.’ He didn’t like government. He felt that a man’s own worth should be how he’s judged.”

Baysinger would open Red’s Garage in Long Beach, however held several different jobs and pursued various other opportunities throughout his lifetime.

One of these endeavors included real estate.

“He started before he got his real estate license, but he got his real estate license about 1970,” said Karl. “For 10 years, a lot of what he did is he’d see opportunities to buy property because... it was a good opportunity, or he was helping

somebody else.”

While not all of his investments would always pan out, Karl says his father “did not fear failure.”

“In fact, I think he invited it because he enjoyed the journey of the success to navigate failure,” said Karl.

Karl spoke highly of Baysinger’s ethical standards and friendly demeanor, saying that his father was “approachable.”

“He could just make friends out of, I don’t know how,” said Karl. “He was approachable; I think there was something about him that people just said ‘This guy is approachable.’”

When he turned 90-years-old, Erma gave Baysinger a recorder, with instructions to tell his life story. That recording would one day be the catalyst to his book, “I’d Like to Tell it.”

Kelly Holt, Baysinger’s computer teacher at Downey Adult School, helped him write the book. She says Baysinger was “humble.”

“One of his disbeliefs was, he said, ‘I’m not an author; I’m not a book writer,’” said Holt. “He says, ‘I can’t believe I have a book.’”

In February, Baysinger held a book signing at his home for all his neighbors.

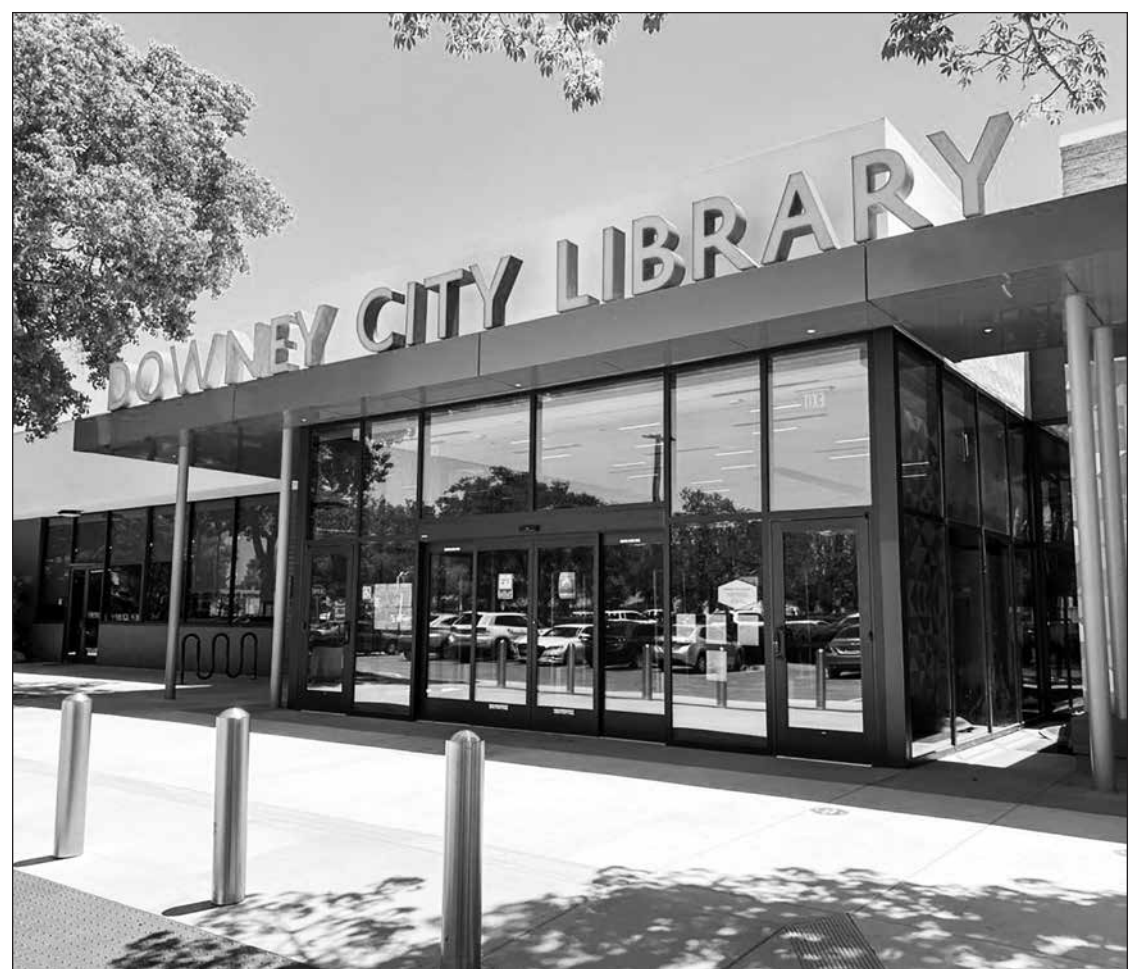
“Dozens and dozens of people showed up,” said Richard. “He gave everybody a book, signed it, ‘If you will read it.’ He was very clear, ‘I don’t want this to end up on a shelf somewhere.’”

Another was scheduled for the Stay Gallery, however was canceled for medical reasons.

Baysinger died the day after Easter on April 10.

Of his father, Karl says he will miss his mentoring the most.

“I was still learning things from him right up until the end,” said Karl. “Just talking to him, just sharing is what I miss the most.”



Friends of Downey Library’s April silent auction items

DOWNEY — The Friends of the Downey City Library are now accepting bids for its April silent auction, with proceeds benefiting the library.

Bids can be submitted in the library bookstore until April 29 at 12 pm. Bids are also accepted by calling (562) 299-6790.

This month’s auction items include:

“**The Original Whitehouse Cookbook**,” by F.L. Gillette and Hugo Ziemann. Initially published in 1887, this comprehensive compendium has recipes (some by Martha Washington and Mary Todd Lincoln), cooking techniques, etiquette instruction, household care, and cleanliness tips used in the White House. Minimum bid: \$12.

“**Healing Secrets of the Native Americans: Herbs, Remedies, and Practices That Restore the Body, Mind, and Spirit**,” by Porter Shimer.

Uncover the secrets Native Americans have known and practiced for generations. Learn to harness the bountiful gifts of nature to heal the body, mind, and spirit. Minimum bid: \$9

“**The Native American Experience**,” by Jay Wertz. A slip-cased, hardcover book with more than 200 full-color and black-and-white illustrations and 30 rare and newly researched removable facsimile documents of historical importance. Minimum bid: \$15

“**Science: The Definitive Visual Guide**,” edited by Adam Hart-Davis. Encompassing everything from ancient Greek geometry and quantum physics to the wedge and the World Wide Web, this is a remarkable reference book that tells the story of science from earliest times to the modern day. Minimum bid: \$8


In Focus: National

Greatest Portraits (National Collectors Series). Culled from National Geographic’s extraordinary archive, this collection spans more than a century and explores every corner of the globe and every aspect of the portraitist’s art. Minimum bid: \$10

“**A Guide to Backyard Astronomy: Your Guide to Starhopping and Exploring the Universe**,” by R. Burnham, A. Dyer, et. al. Was there ever life on Mars? Will Earth be hit by an asteroid? Are there any other solar systems? This book guides you through the mysteries of the universe and tells you everything you need to know about becoming a proficient backyard astronomer. Minimum bid: \$9

“**A Guide to Skywatching**,” by David H. Levy. Skywatching is your comprehensive, indispensable guide to the magic and mystery of the heavens, from the glow to the night’s first star to the splendor of the distant galaxies. Minimum bid: \$9

“**A History of the 20th Century: Conflict, Technology & Rock’n’Roll**,” by Jeremy Black and Alex Woolf. From one of the world’s leading historians comes an ambitious and sweeping history of the world in the 20th century, lavishly illustrated in full-color. Featuring remarkable maps, illustrations and photographs, this book brings the key events of the 20th century into exceptional clarity. Minimum bid: \$14



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Services are provided on an individual basis in accordance with his or her needs. If you are aware of a child or student who may need services, please reach out to us using the contact information below.

Infants ages 0-3 years old: Downey-Montebello SELPA at (562) 469-6793
or <https://web.dusd.net/selpa/>

Children and students ages 3-21: Downey Unified School District at (562) 469-6500
Montebello Unified School District at (323) 887-7900

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If the U.S. wants to stop Mexican cartels, stop supplying them with guns

By Jonathan Lowy and Luis Moreno

Jonathan Lowy is the president of Global Action on Gun Violence. Luis Moreno is the former U.S. ambassador to Jamaica and former consul general in Monterrey, Mexico.

According to recent reports, former president Donald Trump is preparing battle plans to attack Mexico if he regains the White House. This is only the latest escalation of saber-rattling in the wake of the recent kidnapping and killing of Americans in Mexico. Former U.S. attorney general William P. Barr, Rep. Dan Crenshaw (Tex.) and Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (S.C.) are among those calling for U.S. military action in Mexico to take on drug cartels.

There is no debating the threat the cartels pose. The fentanyl they push is killing thousands on both sides of the border. In Mexico, they torture and kill journalists to silence them, battle law enforcement and the military, and terrorize civilians. Cartels are largely responsible for as many as 100,000 Mexicans who have been “disappeared” — kidnapped and probably killed — and the 20,000 confirmed killed every year. The violence is spurring migration at the U.S. border. And these transnational criminal organizations are spreading to the United States.

The cartels need to be stopped. But this is not a problem Washington can bomb its way out of. Sending in troops won’t help stop the violence and drug trafficking. There is, however, something the United States can do that would: Cut off the gun pipeline that arms the cartels.

It’s shocking but not surprising that at least one of the guns used in the recent kidnapping was trafficked from the United States. Seventy to 90 percent of Mexican drug cartels’ guns are trafficked from U.S. gun stores, supplied by U.S. manufacturers and distributors.

Why do the cartels’ traffickers risk border crossings to get guns? Because Mexico has strong laws regulating gun sales and only one gun store, which restricts criminals from obtaining weapons there. But in the United States, federally licensed firearms dealers can sell dozens of AR-15s and AK-47s and thousands of rounds of ammunition to purchasers without even asking why a buyer would want such an arsenal. Manufacturers continue to supply these dealers despite their dangerous practices, even though the U.S. Justice Department told them to self-police their distribution chain more than 20 years ago.

Money and guns from the United States drive the deadly violence and drug trafficking in Mexico. The money the cartels use to pay for the guns comes largely from their sale of illegal drugs to buyers in the United States. The cartels and the gun industry profit from this deadly trade, while hundreds of thousands suffer.

What has Congress done about it? In 2004, it failed to renew the 10-year ban on assault weapons, which made it possible to recklessly sell them to traffickers. A study found that for both of the two years that followed, there was a 60 percent spike in homicides in Mexico near the border. And mass shootings in the United States have tripled since the ban lapsed.

In 2005, Congress passed a law to shield bad actors in the gun industry from accountability for the harm they cause. Gun manufacturers Barrett and Browning make and sell to civilians .50-caliber sniper rifles that can pierce armor and shoot down helicopters. U.S. law enforcement focuses on arresting traffickers, who are easily replaced. But it refuses to take on the U.S. gun industry, which is the source of the weapons used by criminals in Mexico and the United States.

If those who call for military intervention in Mexico truly want to stop the cartels, they should support a ban on assault weapons and bulk sales, and greater accountability and enforcement against gun companies that supply cross-border traffickers. The Biden administration should also crack down on dangerous industry practices.

Instead, the “send in the troops” politicians support policies that enable cartels to amass arsenals. After assault-style weapons were used to kill 19 children and two adults in Uvalde, 23 people in El Paso (including eight Mexicans) and 26 in Sutherland Springs — all in his home state of Texas — Crenshaw opposed requiring background checks for all gun sales, even though nearly 90 percent of Americans support them.

There is serious policy, and then there’s political bluster. When it comes to the fentanyl crisis and violence in Mexico, there has lately been too much of the latter and not enough of the former. Reforming the gun industry to stop the crime gun pipeline is a serious and necessary solution to this ongoing emergency.

Chick-fil-A is taking over

Dear Editor:

Downey will soon have another Chick-fil-A location and it’s no wonder.

The demand is high for the franchise’s menu and its newest location on Telegraph will likely serve north Downey residents who would otherwise have to trek to the cumbersome Firestone location, which shares the often-circus-like parking lot with The Habit or to the newest location on Firestone next to the 605 Freeway. South Downey residents have a location on Imperial Highway and Lakewood Boulevard.

The saturation process is not complete. There are still plenty of markets, sectors, and audiences to address in the Chick-fil- aration of Downey. It should not be long before there are pop-up locations inside supermarkets, hospitals, and banks, catering vehicles arriving at schools, churches, gyms, and seasonal chicken beers on tap at local bars. Personally, I can’t wait for the Nike Air-fil-A Ones.

In the meantime, Downey must grapple with the question: What are residents supposed to do on Sundays, until the frozen Chick-fil-A entrees arrive, or until Popeye and the Colonel step-up their game? Downey may have missed-out on Tesla, but we sure got Chick-fil-A in a headlock for now. Here’s looking at you Elon.

Daniel Chantre Downey

Downey should clean up the San Gabriel River

Dear Editor:

As someone who regularly walks, jogs and bikes on the San Gabriel River Bike Trail, there is nothing more anxiety inducing than when the bike path goes underneath the narrow, unlit 5 Freeway and also under the Telegraph Road overpass.

Both sections are filled to the brim with homeless tents and loose dogs. The pavement under the 5 Freeway is full of potholes and bumps, forcing cyclists to slow down dramatically in a dangerous area. They also scatter their junk all across the bike lanes. Not to mention all the stolen motorcycles, mopeds and scooters with fake paper plates or no plates at all.

The Telegraph section of the bike path is just as bad. There is literally active drug dealing (likely fentanyl) going on there. There’s swaths of burned trash everywhere. Loose dogs roaming around in the bike lanes.

The problem is that nobody wants to take ownership and responsibility of those sections of the San Gabriel River.

The LA County Sheriff’s says it’s not their jurisdiction and says to refer to Downey or Santa Fe Springs. Downey PD says it’s Santa Fe Spring’s jurisdiction. And Whittier Police, who handles police services in Santa Fe Springs, says it’s Downey’s problem.

This is exactly why they’ve been able to get away with living there for so long, because neither Downey or Santa Fe Springs wants to take responsibility for that area. While the two cities are fighting over whose problem it is, the drug dealers stay winning and cyclists and joggers who want to enjoy the trail are losing.

I call on Downey officials to please clean up this area and remove the homeless tents and expel the drug dealers. Even if the area is not technically within city limits. It’s not like Santa Fe Springs is going to do anything about it anyway.

Rob Mendoza Downey

Remembering Virginia Johnson

Dear Editor:

In a world where self-obsession and social media dominate our lives, it’s easy to forget the value of community and timeless values. But my dear friend, Virginia Johnson, was a shining example of what it means to be committed to these values. As a young man who believed in the power of local government and community, Virginia was always there to turn dreams into a reality in an incredibly compassionate way. She was the knight in shining armor for South Gate, a city that had no idea it needed her.

Virginia’s generation is one that seems like a long time ago. They exuded a sense of community and were proud of it. When I first moved to Hollydale, South Gate, I was struck by the neighborhood’s old-fashioned charm. Homes with real neighborly presence, parks, schools, libraries, supermarkets, and restaurants were all within walking distance. Virginia understood the value that these things have on families long before any city planner or community development consultant could ever see it.

Despite having some detractors, Virginia remained steadfast in her love for family, country, and community. Her commitment to God-fearing ways and timeless values may be viewed as prudish or outdated by some, but she understood something that my generation will never fully grasp. Self-actualization is not something that can be achieved with millions of social media followers or by following the latest trends. Millennials may be the most connected generation in human history, but we have become increasingly disconnected from our communities and values.

Virginia’s unwavering commitment to these values reinvigorated my love for South Gate and the promises this country holds for all children and families looking to pursue happiness. As we say goodbye to Virginia, we must acknowledge the gap that she leaves behind. Her willingness to accept young people looking to lay roots in the Southeast Los Angeles area was a testament to her commitment to community and timeless values.

Thank you, Virginia, for your unwavering commitment to these values that are so desperately needed in today’s world. You will be dearly missed, and there will never be a moment in time where I do not think about you. God bless you and thank the Lord for letting me exist in a time where someone like you existed.

Jimmy Torres South Gate

Downey’s professional symphony

Dear Editor:

Congratulations to conductor Sharon Lavery, the Downey Symphony Orchestra and the Downey Symphonic Society for the beautiful concert of Spanish music performed at the Downey Theater last Saturday.

Very respectfully I would like to suggest a program of Spanish music by French composers which could be called “The French Connection.”

I first became enamored of French composers when early in my career I was an audio engineer at Capitol Records in Hollywood. While there, I was exposed to Angel Records repertoire. (The now defunct Angel Records label was the classical arm of Capitol).

I was there when Maria Callas recorded the only complete French opera that she has sung. She was a specialist of Italian opera and even though she spoke French fluently she did not think that she was prepared to sing French opera. I remember how she studied French diction under Georges Pretre for one year before she felt that she was ready to sing Carmen. This to me showed how humble and professional she was. Pretre also conducted the orchestra for Callas’ recording of Carmen.

In my last will I have asked my family that if they do a celebration of life after I kick the bucket, that the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Zubin Metha led version of Bolero be played on that occasion.

The program I have in mind would include among others:

1. Bolero – Ravel
2. Toreador Song (Carmen) – Bizet
3. Iberia – Debussy
4. España – Chabrier
5. Symphonie Espagnole – Lalo
6. Habanera – Chabrier
7. Rapsodie Espagnole – Ravel
8. Le Cid – Massenet
9. Le Pas Espagnol – Faure

The addition of a flamenco dancer and a couple of palmeros would make the program perfect.

I hope that conductor Lavery thinks that my suggestion has some merit and creates a program of Spanish music by French composers. We all would enjoy it.

Jorge Montero Downey

Dear Editor:

I attended the Downey Symphony concert last week and came away amazed that our Downey community has its own professional orchestra, much like Los Angeles, Long Beach and other larger cities.

Having an orchestra adds a cultural element to our city. These are professional musicians – not students – who have studied music and are among the best in their fields.

A Downey Symphony concert is always a great excuse to dress up and have a nice evening out, right in our own backyard. Kudos to the orchestra for a spectacular performance.

Betty Flores Downey

Striking Vikings

Dear Editor:

On behalf of the Downey High School Striking Vikings, we would like to thank a few of our sponsors for their amazing support during our season.

The Mary Stauffer Foundation, Gene Haas Foundation, Raytheon, Southeast Community Development Corporation, Century 21 Peak, Porto’s Bakery, and the Linda G. Kennedy Memorial have been instrumental in providing us with the resources and funding necessary to compete at the highest level.

Without their support, we would not be able to excel in the world of robotics. We look forward to their continued sponsorship and making them proud.

Thank you guys again for your love and support.

Gio Aguirre Co-Captain Striking Vikings

Street vendors don’t belong near schools

Dear Editor:

If you observed a lone adult male loitering around your child’s grammar school, would you be okay with it? No? What about middle school? No? High school? No? Would you find this behavior suspect? Would you be inclined to notify the school officials or even go so far as to call DPD?

Then why is the City of Downey allowing this to happen at virtually all of our schools?

Does the fact that a lone adult male loitering around our schools behind some sort of food cart make it okay? I no longer have school-aged children and I find this trend troubling.

Weren’t you taught not to talk to “strangers” and/or not to take candy/food items from them?

Who knows what your child is actually getting from these vendors? Do you trust the hygiene practices? Do you trust the food handling skills? If those “skills” were in the school cafeteria or at a local restaurant, would you be outraged? What sort of grade would they receive? Lack of hot running water is an automatic fail. Does the fact that your child may have to walk out into the street to get around these vendors distressing? I see them regularly blocking sidewalks/encroaching on the public domain.

These vendors do not pay City of Downey taxes or registration fees; they generate no revenue for the city. They do not generally have a City of Downey or Health Department permit. They pay no rent/mortgage or utility bills. They pay no insurance. They are unfair competition for legitimate brick and mortar businesses within our city.

Mostly, they’re interacting with your children and you have no idea who they are or what may be in their background that may make them predatory.

Are you really okay with having these vendors outside our schools and elsewhere in our city?

Patricia Morris Downey

The Downey Patriot

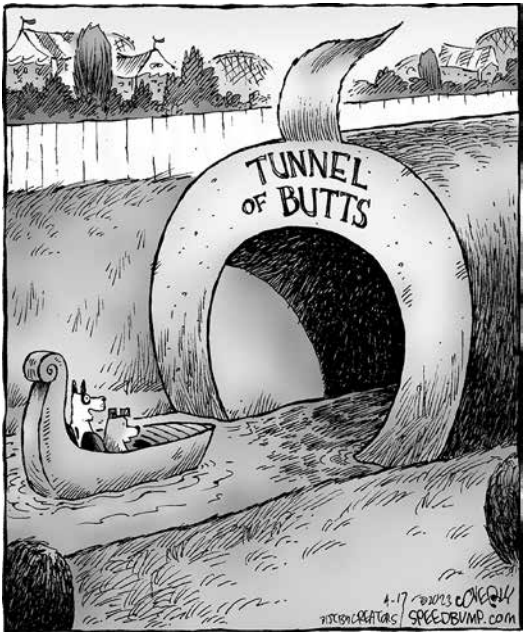
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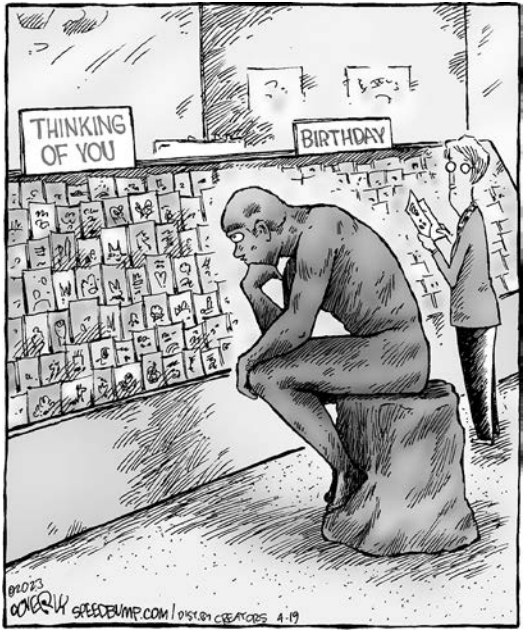
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SPEED BUMP



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.
 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 Mel Sanchez 562-665-4125.
 6 pm: Toastmasters Club 587, at First Baptist Church, contact Salvador Cervantes: tmsalpuede@gmail.com.
 7 pm: Downey Knights of Columbus Bingo, at 11231 Rives Ave., call 923-1932.
 7 pm: Boy Scout Troop 351, at Furman Park, contact 562-500-5093 for more information.
 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.
 10:30 am: Ballroom dance class, at Downey Community Center, call 776 7270.
 1 pm: Women's Bocce Club, at 7850 Quill Drive, call Marie Puch at 869-4366.
 7 pm: Royal Rangers Outpost 132, at Desert Reign Church, call 562-861-6011.
 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.
 7:30 pm: Downey Elks Lodge #2020, call 803-3557.
 1st Thurs., 6 pm, All other Thurs. 12 pm: Kiwanis Club of Downey, at Rio Hondo Events Center, call Roy Jimenez 283-2335.
 1st Thurs., 7:30 pm: Downey Amateur Radio Club, EOC room Downey Fire Station #1, 12222 Paramount Blvd.
 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.
 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.

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 by Gary M. Larson

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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.

Per the World Wildlife Fund's website, the slow speed of a SLOTH (11) (10) (9) (8) (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) yards per day, is due to its extremely low metabolic rate. Other famous people on the "national sides" of EUROS (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) (11) (12) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (19) (20) (21) (22) (23) (24) (25) (26) (27) (28) (29) (30) (31) (32) (33) (34) (35) (36) (37) (38) (39) (40) (41) (42) (43) (44) (45) (46) (47) (48) (49) (50) (51) (52) (53) (54) (55) (56) (57) (58) (59) (60) (61) (62) (63) (64) (65) (66) (67) (68) (69) (70) (71) (72) (73) (74) (75) (76) (77) (78) (79) (80) (81) (82) (83) (84) (85) (86) (87) (88) (89) (90) (91) (92) (93) (94) (95) (96) (97) (98) (99) (100) (101) (102) (103) (104) (105) (106) (107) (108) (109) (110) (111) (112) (113) (114) (115) (116) (117) (118) (119) (120) (121) (122) (123) (124) (125) (126) (127) (128) (129) (130) (131) (132) (133) (134) (135) (136) (137)



Rotary puts the spotlight on very good readers

By Lorine Parks
Society Editor

Rotary Club of Downey's ongoing support of childhood literary was highlighted when they hosted some remarkable guests from the Downey Unified School District, for their program, Rotary Recognizes Readers.

Good readers, who have raised their reading level significantly over the past year, were honored. Dr. Roger Brossmer introduced Dr. Wayne Shannon, Assistant Superintendent, Elementary Education, and Wayne enthusiastically introduced the boys and girls named good readers.

The principals of Downey's 13 K-5 schools came up with each student, and each read a special citation for their school's reader, who ranged in age from third grade to fifth.

Each child's story was different, some with challenges at home at overcome, some new to the District and needing to settle in. But every story celebrated the accomplishments of these young people who are enthusiastic and curious and willing to try. "You have skills, and such a love of reading," they said.

"You have gained courage with your hard work and determination."

As each school was called, from Alameda and Carpenter to Ward and Williams, the principals said how excited they were to be here for their students, who work hard and are always good sports. "We are proud of you," their principals said. "You never gave up." One girl wore a pink flowered skirt and blouse, another wore a big red baseball cap.

President Amelia Sanchez handed gift bags to each child, and afterwards I asked Barbara Lamberth what she had chosen to put in them. "A little boxed set of books," said Barbara, some candy, and a pen."

The palm-sized collection of four books for girls called The Never Girls, was about young girls. "real girls in a fairy tale land," and the selection for boys was 3 boxed tales about My Big Fat Zombie Goldfish. They all received Stone Fox, an adventure story about a thrilling dogsled race.

Afterwards I sat down with Old River School fifth grader Kamilah Green and her principal Caryn Jacish. "Kamilah has started a book club in her class," Caryn said. How many have joined? "Twenty," said Kamilah. The group chose the book, and they are reading Loser by Jerry Spinelli, a story about how not fitting in just might lead to an incredible life.

"It's about feeling alone when you're new," said Kamilah. Kamilah is new to Old River School Road School, as she and her mother just moved here from Compton.

Just as books have always done, this one is inspiring her just when she needs it. But Kamilah may be moving again in the fall, to Las Vegas, where her mom has family, so this book may help her again, when she goes there. I wished her luck and happiness wherever she goes, and in return as they left, Kamilah gave me quick hug.

One more good reader, Axel Martinez, received a certificate, and he is enrolled in Downey's Virtual Academy, where he receives online instruction at home.

I talked with Axel, who is ten and in the fifth grade. His mom, his older sisters, and his extended family of aunts and uncles have all helped Axel with his reading skills.

In addition to thirteen K-5 schools, we in Downey also have a Virtual Academy, an online Independent Study school that was started around the time COVID appeared. "We have alternative educational experience for our students," said vice principal Andrea Larios, who accompanied Axel to the Rotary program. "They are able to take advantage of self-paced learning in a familiar setting."

"We currently serve 360 pupils for grades 1 through 12," said Andrea "and that includes an Elementary School Division." The Downey Virtual Academy is housed at the Lynn L. Pace Education Center.

"Is that usual, to have a Virtual Academy, or is Downey special?" I asked Andrea. "It is very unusual, and Downey is unusual," Andrea said, "in offering students a more



Dr. Roger Brossmer

individualized approach to learning while in the safety and comfort of their own homes. We believe our students should have a high-quality, student-centered online option that focuses on each individual student's

academic and social-emotional growth.:

"It's a regular school day," said Andrea "with class time, recess, and lunch time off."

Welcome back from spring break!

■ **EYE ON OUR SCHOOLS:** Downey Unified enters the home stretch.

By Giggy Perez-Saab
School Board President

Welcome back from Spring Break, Downey Unified! I hope everyone had a relaxing and fun week. Can you believe that we only have less than two months before the end of the school year?

As we look toward June, there are many exciting events including our promotion and graduation ceremonies. I want to share some great opportunities for our families and the community as our district begins to wind down the year.

As a district, we look forward to hosting events highlighting the hard work of our students and staff.

Beginning with our elementary schools, I want to congratulate all our students who competed in our annual Carnival of Champions at the end of March. We had an incredible turn out and our fourth and fifth grade students showed their positive character throughout the entire event.

Congratulations to Lewis Elementary School for placing first in this year's competition. A special shout out to Alameda Elementary's Zoey Finnell for beating the fourth-grade girls' standing long jump record held since 1994. She jumped 7'2", breaking the previous record of 6'10.5". What an incredible accomplishment.

Our annual Robolympics will be held on April 29 at 8:30 a.m. at Warren High School. This is an elementary robotics competition which brings third, fourth and fifth grade students together from across the district to compete. Please join the Board members and our Downey Unified staff as we cheer on our youngest robotics students. It's an event you can't miss.

Moving on to our middle schools. Our drama and music programs will be very busy in the next month displaying their work. Everyone is invited to see our talented kids in actions.

From May 3-6, Stauffer Middle School's Advanced Drama students will be performing "High School Musical." Showtimes are Wednesday through Friday at 4 and 7 p.m., and Saturday at 2 and 5 p.m.

Doty Middle School will be hosting their Spring Concert at the Downey Civic Theatre on Monday, May 8 at 6:30 p.m.

The Advanced Drama

students from Griffiths will be performing "Haphazardly Ever After," May 11, 12, 18 and 19 at 6:30 p.m.

Sussman Middle School's Advanced Drama students will also take the stage from May 16-18, at 6 p.m. each evening.

To wrap up our middle school performances, our DFE Musical Conservatory will be showcasing a production of "Beauty and the Beast," June 1-3. This is a special opportunity to see students from all four of our middle schools performing together.

The performances will take place at Stauffer Middle School, Thursday and Friday at 4 and 7 p.m., and Saturday at 2 and 5 p.m.

Our high schools put on performances continuously throughout the school year ranging from drama and choir, musical theater, dance, marching band and much more.

In case you haven't had a chance to see a performance yet, you are missing out. There are a few performances left so I encourage you to show your support of our talented students.

On Tuesday, May 9, Warren High School will be holding their Spring Band Concert at the Downey Civic Theatre beginning at 7 p.m. and the following day, Downey High School will be holding their Spring Concert also at the Downey Civic Theatre at 7 p.m.

Lastly, Downey High's Musical Theatre Department will be presenting "Mamma Mia" on May 19 at 7 p.m. and May 20 at 2 p.m. at the Downey Civic Theatre.

I want to close out by reminding those interested in supporting our students to please make sure to check with each school for accurate ticket information and any updates related to each performance. You can always follow our schools on social media for the most up to date information.

Let's close out the year Downey Strong!

individualized approach to learning while in the safety and comfort of their own homes. We believe our students should have a high-quality, student-centered online option that focuses on each individual student's

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Cerritos College works to address shortage of mental health workers

NORWALK — Cerritos College is adding two new cohorts in a dual enrollment Mental Health Worker pathway (MHWP) with the ABC Unified and Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School Districts this summer.

In 2021, the College's Mental Health Worker Program received a \$25,000 grant from the California Department of Education in collaboration with Cal-HOSA to launch a behavioral and mental health pathway for high school students, and since then the program has grown and expanded to four districts.

"Dual enrollment provides an amazing opportunity for students in high school to also obtain college units," said Laura Tchulluian, senior manager of dual enrollment at the College. "With this Mental Health Worker Pathway, we are seeing dual enrollment students succeed and receive a Mental Health Worker certificate in as little as 18 months and begin their career preparation."

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a significant increase in the demand for social and mental health services. According to the program instructor Melanie Martins, there are several conversations across various systems such as homeless services and mental health about how to increase the workforce.

"Many of our systems are greatly understaffed and are eagerly searching for employees," said Martins. "The MHWP creates a pathway that benefits both students and employers. It provides opportunities for students and fills a huge gap in social services."

One of the most valuable aspects of the program, in addition to the classes, is the internship opportunity that students are placed in for their field experience class. According to the program's internship instructor Andrea Sanserino, mental health agencies are always looking for quality staff, and currently have many positions open.

"Often, I hear how hard it is to find candidates. The education that our students get throughout this program, both the theoretical foundation and the practical application in their internships, puts them in a great position to begin to fill some of these gaps," said Sanserino.

"As we continue to increase the number of students in the program, we are increasing the impact on many levels of the mental health workforce and realizing the vision to expand recovery-oriented mental health services."

For more information about the Mental Health Worker Program, please contact Psychology Professor Dr. Jaelyn Ronquillo-Adachi at jronquillo@cerritos.edu

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry says nearly 1 in 5 children experience a mental health issue, but only about 20% receive care.

Doctor behind 1-800-GET-THIN gets 7 years in prison

■ Julian Omidli lied to insurance companies to gain authorization for weight loss surgeries.

By City News Service

LOS ANGELES — The former operator of the now-defunct 1-800-GET-THIN ad campaign was sentenced Monday to seven years behind bars for using fabricated sleep studies to persuade insurance companies to pay out tens of millions of dollars for Lap-Band surgery.

Julian Omidli, 54, of West Hollywood, and one of his companies, Beverly Hills-based Surgery Center Management, were found guilty in December 2021 of multiple wire and mail fraud counts.

Omidli, a former doctor, also was found guilty of two counts of making false statements relating to health care matters and one count each of aggravated identity theft and money laundering. Additionally, Omidli and SCM were found guilty of one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office.

SCM was sentenced to five years probation. Fines and restitution are to be determined at a hearing in June.

The Lap-Band is a silicone ring that is surgically implanted around the stomach to discourage overeating. The weight-loss-surgery business was widely advertised on Southern California freeway billboards, radio and television, attracting people desperate to shed excess pounds.

However, before insurance companies would pre-approve the \$100,000 surgery, prospective patients had to show they suffered from certain afflictions, including sleep apnea.



Prosecutors told the Los Angeles federal court jury that Omidli created a process that turned "patients into profits" by directing employees to "falsely diagnose patients with a sleep disorder they didn't have."

The defense argued that Omidli was a victim of a sleep-study con man named Charles Klasky, who "posed as an expert in sleep medicine" and tricked Omidli into allowing him to oversee the sleep-study program.

Klasky pleaded guilty to a federal conspiracy charge and was placed on probation last year.

Prosecutors told the jury that patients were harmed as a result of the scheme when they were subjected to unnecessary medical procedures, and that insurance providers were conned out of millions of dollars after receiving fraudulent bills.

Omidli, whose medical license was revoked in 2009, established procedures requiring prospective patients -- even those covered by insurance plans he knew would never cover Lap-Band surgery --

to have at least one sleep study, and employees were offered commissions to make sure the studies occurred.

According to federal prosecutors, Omidli decided every patient would get a sleep study, and the scheme "got the patients in the door with false promises, gave them false hope, and billed their insurance companies with false claims."

After patients underwent sleep studies -- often with little indication that any doctor had determined the study was necessary -- GET THIN employees, acting at Omidli's direction, falsified the results to reflect that the patient had moderate or severe sleep apnea, and that they suffered from severe daytime sleepiness, the jury found.

Omidli then caused those falsified reports to be used in support of GET THIN's pre-authorization requests for Lap-Band surgery, evidence showed.

Relying on the falsified studies, as well as other bogus

information, including patients' heights and weights, insurance companies authorized payment for many of the proposed Lap-Band surgeries. Prosecutors said GET THIN received at least \$38 million for the Lap-Band procedures.

Even if the insurance company did not authorize the surgery, GET THIN still was able to submit bills for an average of \$15,000 for each sleep study, the jury was told during the 48-day trial in downtown Los Angeles. The insurance payments were deposited into bank accounts associated with the GET THIN entities.

Benefit programs victimized by the billing scam include TriCare -- the health care program for uniformed service members, retirees and their families around the world -- and various private insurance companies.

Omidli's mother, Cindy, was sentenced to probation in 2015 after she was convicted of violating laws designed to prevent money laundering.

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In State of City speech, Bass acknowledges LA is not 'where it needs to be'

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass said there is increased urgency to take people off the streets and create safer neighborhoods.

By City News Service

LOS ANGELES — Mayor Karen Bass delivered her first State of the City Address Monday, saying, "I am 127 days into my administration, and I cannot declare that the state of our city is where it needs to be."

But at the same time, Bass painted a picture of hope and "increased urgency" as the city grapples with major challenges such as homelessness and public safety and takes aim at what she repeatedly called her vision for a "new L.A."

"I am proud to report that together, we have brought change to the city of Los Angeles," said Bass, standing in the Council Chambers of City Hall before council members and an array of city officials.

"We have increased urgency at City Hall. And we have a clarity of purpose, and have focused our work on the people's most pressing challenges. After years of frustration, tonight, we can see a clearer path to a new Los Angeles ... where the state of our city will be stronger, healthier, happier and safer."

The mayor is required annually to address the council on the state of the city before the release of the proposed city budget. Bass is expected to release her first budget proposal on Tuesday -- and she gave some hints of its particulars during her Monday address.

Acknowledging the challenges that lay ahead, Bass said, "The state of our city is really about the state of your neighborhood. It's about the state of your household. It's about your state of mind."

"Do you look over your shoulder when walking after dark?" she said. "Do you feel pride in your local park? Do you have peace of mind because you can pay the rent?"

"When the answer is yes, then we can say the state of our city is strong. That's the New L.A. that we're building together."

Not unexpectedly, homelessness -- a major element of her campaign, in which she vowed to house



Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass said the city would spend a record \$1.3 billion next year in an effort to eradicate homelessness.

17,000 people in her first year -- was a major theme of Bass' remarks.

She noted that her administration has brought about 1,000 Angelenos indoors through her Inside Safe Program, and that her proposed budget will aim to build on that.

"Tomorrow, I will release my first budget as mayor," she said. "Building on the success of Inside Safe, my budget includes a \$250 million investment to scale Inside Safe citywide."

"Leaning into the new direction we're charting for L.A., my budget includes an unprecedented \$1.3 billion investment to accelerate our momentum on homelessness. This is a record for the city of Los Angeles."

Bass also declared her "number one job as mayor" is to keep Angelenos safe -- but noted, "the unfortunate reality is that LAPD is down hundreds of officers."

Bolstering the LAPD's ranks will also place high on her priorities in the coming year, she said.

"This has been an ongoing trend here in L.A. and in cities across the country -- and so I'm concerned that the department's recent release of information (of officers' photos and other information) will cause

more officers to leave.

"My budget proposal calls for urgent action to hire hundreds of officers next year on the way to restoring the department to full strength," she said.

"The situation we currently face means we could see the number of LAPD officers drop below 9,000 -- and we have not seen numbers that low since 2002."

She said she also wants to reduce the number of officer-involved deaths, revamp the LAPD's disciplinary system and provide enhanced mental health training for officers.

In addition, Bass espoused expanding the city's unarmed mental health crisis teams, which offer alternative responses to certain calls for service now handled by police.

Her proposed budget, she said, will fund a new Mayor's Office of Community Safety, aimed at building a force of community intervention workers, social workers, clinical psychologists and other experts to respond when law enforcement is not required.

"This office will organize the community services that break the cycle of violence and crime," she said.

Bass said that, in addition to refilling the ranks of the LAPD, she intends to boost

the fire academy before taking a seat in an ambulance.

"My plan still requires all paramedics to become firefighters -- but if you are already a qualified paramedic, we will immediately put you to work, and then you can complete your firefighter training."

Climate change will remain on the city's radar as well, she said.

"We must continue to aggressively confront and adapt to climate change, and to make sure that our city is resilient," she said. "And while we cannot rely on record storms to solve our long-term drought, the city's prior investments have allowed us to capture 28 billion gallons of stormwater -- and I'm committed to doing more, so that this precious rainwater doesn't just wash into the ocean."

Bass said other items she wants to focus on include increasing ridership on Metro, filling potholes, clearing trash from streets and sidewalks and cleaning graffiti.

"I am serious about the physical condition of our city -- because a city that

is clean and in good repair is safer, prosperous, and provides Angelenos with a better life," she said.

Timothy O'Reilly, chair of the Los Angeles County Republican Party, gave Bass' remarks a skeptical response.

"Despite her commitments and promises, Los Angeles is not safe or livable for law-abiding, hard-working people who live in many neighborhoods," O'Reilly said in a statement. "In fact, crime and homelessness are getting worse -- much worse."

"What's needed is bold, decisive action to clean the streets and protect our citizens -- not new agencies, more departments, more bureaucracy, more self congratulations and more spending."

Bass returned time and again to her "new L.A." theme.

"People from all over the world seeking a better life come to L.A.," she said. "I want all of them to experience a new L.A. But more importantly, I want Angelenos to experience a new L.A."

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THE DOWNEY PATRIOT PRESENTS

Class of 2023

The Downey Patriot will be publishing a commemorative issue to celebrate the Class of 2023.

This issue will be published on June 1, 2023 so make sure to reserve your space before **May 15, 2023!**

					
FULL PAGE 10" wide X 15.5" tall ***** \$980 includes color	HALF PAGE 10" wide X 7.75" tall ***** \$650 includes color	QUARTER PAGE 5" wide X 7.75" tall ***** \$450 includes color	EIGHTH PAGE 5" wide X 4" tall ***** \$250 includes color	FIFTEENTH PAGE 3.25" wide X 3" tall ***** \$125 includes color	BUSINESS CARD 3.25" wide X 2" tall ***** \$90 includes color

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