

## Man fatally shoots himself after firefight with Norwalk deputies

**NORWALK** – The L.A. County Sheriff’s Department is still investigating a shootout between Norwalk deputies and a 24-year-old man, who fatally shot himself in the parking lot of Target last Friday.

Deputies from the Norwalk Sheriff’s Station responded to the Target location on the 10000 block of Firestone Boulevard at 9:09 a.m. after receiving calls that Los Angeles resident Alejandro Gomez was pointing a gun at cars coming off the 605 Freeway, authorities said.

Upon arrival, deputies saw Gomez, who matched the description of the person in the call, attempting to break into vehicles near local businesses, the sheriff’s department said.

Gomez began to walk westbound through the parking lot of the businesses, at which time, deputies saw him armed with a handgun. The suspect approached Firestone Boulevard, just west of the 605 freeway, and deputies tried to stop him from crossing the street, deputies said.

As the deputies tried to detain him, Gomez started to point the gun at his head. Deputy personnel gave Gomez numerous commands to drop the gun, at which time he placed the gun to his head again. Gomez then walked down the walkway towards the entrance of Target, said deputies.

After ignoring several commands, sheriff’s deputies say he then turned and pointed the gun at them, at which time deputies fired multiple rounds, missing Gomez.

Deputies said Gomez then ran between two cars in the parking lot, placed the gun to his head, and shot himself. Deputies later recovered a semi-automatic pistol at the scene.

Gomez was transported to a local hospital where he was placed on life support, but ultimately died of self-inflicted injuries, deputies said.

Anyone with more information about this incident is encouraged to contact the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department’s Homicide Bureau at (323) 890-5500. – **Christian Brown, Editor**

## 21-unit townhome development in Norwalk gets swift approval

**NORWALK** – The Norwalk Planning Commission last month approved a new housing development by Brandywine Homes, which plans to replace the former Excelsior Drive Baptist Church with 21 townhomes.

Brandywine Homes will construct six, two-story buildings on the rectangular lot just adjacent the Norwalk Church of the Nazarene. According to the staff report, future tenants will choose between four different floor plans, varying from a 2-bedroom, 2-bath option at 1,108 sq. ft. to a 3-bedroom, 2.5-bath option at 1,491 sq. ft.

Each unit will consist of an open floor plan “great room,” comprising a kitchen, dining room, and living room.

Brandywine Homes has proposed site amenities to include individual pre-wired security systems, a laundry in each unit, as well as a covered patio and BBQ in the common open space area. Additionally, each townhome will have a form of private space such as separate entry areas, side yards, rear yards, or a balcony.

The exterior of the townhomes will mix both French and Craftsman design styles, highlighted by varied paint colors, decorative eaves and shutters, stucco finish, recessed windows, window trims, brick trims, and vinyl fences.

The housing tract will have one main entry and exit off of Excelsior Drive with a 3-foot-high, 8-foot-long monument sign made of concrete and smooth colored stucco.

The new development will incorporate 64 parking spaces in total for all units, including 42 spaces in garages, 15 uncovered spaces, and 7 guest parking spots.

“Staff believes that the proposed 21-unit townhome project is a quality project with a strong design component,” said Norwalk Assistant Planner Monica Rodriguez. “All sides of the buildings offer varying and interesting architecture. The proposed development will have a positive effect on the appearance of the surrounding areas.”

The Planning Commission approved the development on Sept. 28 in a 3-0 vote with commissioners Phyllis Barth, Jennifer Perez, and Victor Juan Jr. voting in favor.

This latest project, located at 11042 Excelsior Dr., marks Brandywine Homes’ third housing development in Norwalk. Currently, the Irvine-based company owns a 16-unit townhome development on 11433 Excelsior Dr. and a 31-unit community at 11009 Pioneer Blvd.

The Norwalk Planning Commission also approved an updated drive-thru layout for the McDonald’s near the intersection of Rosecrans Avenue and Studebaker Road.

Beleaguered by a cramped drive-thru lane, the McDonald’s site, located at 11053 Rosecrans Ave., requested to modify its existing drive-thru by providing two lanes, which separate the menu boards from the order points, according to city staff reports.

In order to accommodate the larger drive-thru, McDonald’s will eliminate six parking spaces, bringing the number of spaces at the site down from 42 to 38. Currently, the Norwalk Municipal Code requires a building this size to have 96 spaces, however, a parking analysis by the city found only 34 spaces were needed even during this location’s peak hours.

With the proposed modifications, approximately 28 vehicles will fit within the two-lane drive-thru, up from the 14 possible before, city staff said.

McDonald’s will also update the exterior of the building by painting it an earth-toned color, removing the existing red, tile roof, and replacing the reddish tile base.

The Planning Commission also approved new drive-thru signage and internally-illuminated wall signs, which McDonald’s will install. – **Christian Brown, Editor**



## The 33rd annual Arturo Sanchez Sr. Halloween Parade kicks off Saturday

**NORWALK** – The final preparations are underway for the 33rd annual Arturo Sanchez, Sr. Halloween Parade, which is Saturday, Oct. 15 at 11 a.m. Beginning near the intersection of Pioneer Boulevard and Mapledale Street, the parade route heads south towards its final destination of Hermosillo Park in south Norwalk.

Having started out as a local neighborhood costume parade and contest, culminating in awards and prizes for costumes, it has grown into a major Southland fall event encompassing 21 marching bands and a cast of thousands marching in the legacy of the parade’s namesake.

Speaking with Arturo Sanchez, Jr. recently, he shared the involvement his father had not only with the south Norwalk neighborhood, but with many in the local area.

Sanchez Jr. spoke of his father’s “very hard to say no to” persona, recalling an incident after his father died that took place in the same local where the Sanchez restaurant establishment continues on 162nd Street.

“Shortly after my Dad died, some kids were hanging out in the store kind of restless. Finally, one of the kids said to another one, ‘go on ask him.’”

“It was then that one of them asked, ‘Is the parade going to continue?’ We contacted the city and they agreed to continue the parade.”

This year’s Grand Marshall is Pikachu and his fellow Pokémon characters, Squirtle and Charmander.

In addition to the annual fun event, scholarships will be awarded to deserving high school seniors from area schools.

The Arturo Sanchez, Sr. Halloween Parade Foundation provides up to \$9,000 dollars in scholarships for high school seniors wishing to continue their education.

The recipients of this year’s awards will be recognized Saturday during the presentation of the parade awards and costume prizes at Hermosillo Park.

While no candy will be thrown from moving vehicles, parade participants may hand out candy if they are walking in the parade, according to Sanchez Jr.

The parade moves south along Pioneer, turning left on Alondra and making a right on Horst to 162nd Street where it veers right, ending at the Hermosillo Park parking lot. – **Raul Samaneigo, Contributor**

## Waite Middle School unveils Norwalk-La Mirada’s latest college and career center

**NORWALK** – Decorated with college pennants and motivational words, Waite Middle School launched its College and Career Center with a ribbon-cutting ceremony Sept. 30, providing students with the opportunity to explore academic and career pathways at an early age.

“I am very happy to see this,” Waite Associated Student Body Treasurer Joseph Nunez said. “Students will get a chance to learn about colleges all around the country and can make an informed choice on classes and subjects they will study when they begin high school.”

The college and career center features computers and college planning guides, and will host industry professionals for talks about their careers. One wall displays three career pathway groups that Waite students can potentially follow: Fire House, a public service pathway; Earth House, a technology pathway; and Wind House, an arts pathway.

“I am so proud that we can provide this opportunity to support our community,” Waite Principal Dr. Susan Newcomb said. “It was great to have city representatives for this dedication ceremony. They work collaboratively with us and our District schools in so many ways.”

Students can also learn about the college and career paths of Waite teachers and administrators by checking out the “Where Did Your Teachers Go to School?”



board. For example, Newcomb received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees at Cal State Fullerton and her Ph.D. at Claremont Graduate University.

“We thought it would be neat for students to see where our own college and career paths have led us,” Newcomb said. “You have to plan, you have to have a starting point, and there are many, many choices.”

Waite joins Corvallis, Benton and Hutchinson middle schools in having a college and career center on its campus, a resource typically only available at high schools. Superintendent Dr. Hasmik Danielian pushed to open middle school career centers after listening to a Corvallis student.

“A student said to me, ‘I was at Norwalk High and I saw that they had a college and career center and a counselor. Why can’t we have one?’” Danielian said. “I always

knew that students were smarter than we are.”

The College and Career Center will also act as Waite’s Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports student store. Waite students receive “Panther Bucks” throughout the year when they display proper behavior. They can later redeem the Panther Bucks at the store for a game or collectible.

The center will be supervised by Waite intervention counselor Paul Castaños and staff counselor Patty Sierra during lunch and break.

“Norwalk-La Mirada Unified middle school students will receive early guidance from counselors who are attuned to their needs and well-prepared to answer their questions,” NLMUSD Board President Karen Morrison said. “Our District is committed to providing our students with every tool and resource they will need to succeed.”

### Weekend at a Glance

Friday 77°

Saturday 76°

Sunday 74°

#### THINGS TO DO



**Pasadena Oktoberfest**  
*Saturday - Rose Bowl, 2 p.m.*

Craft beer festival with 50-plus breweries. Plus live music and food trucks.



**Muertos Artwalk**  
*Saturday - Olvera Street, 10 a.m.*

More than 30 artists selling original artwork, clothing, jewelry, and more.



**Homecoming Game**  
*Saturday - Cerritos College, 6 p.m.*

Support the Falcons football team as they spar with Santa Monica College.



**Beetlejuice**  
*Saturday - Huntington State Beach, 4 - 9 p.m.*

Dress up in your Halloween costume and watch a beachfront screening of the 1988 classic “Beetlejuice.”



**Arturo Sanchez Sr. Halloween Parade**

*Saturday - Pioneer Boulevard and Maple Street, 11 a.m.*

Watch 21 marching bands and local organizations parade in Halloween costumes.



**Kygo**

*Saturday - Hollywood Bowl, 8 p.m.*

The Norwegian DJ and producer brings his EDM/Electronica to Los Angeles.



**CicLAvia**

*Sunday - Downtown LA, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.*

Nearly six miles of city streets in Los Angeles are closed to cars to allow recreational space for bikes, running, and exploring.





## New baseball-themed playground to open at Zimmerman Park

**NORWALK** – The City of Norwalk Recreation and Park Services department invites the public to celebrate the newest in a series of park playground equipment installations at a ribbon cutting ceremony on Wednesday, Oct. 19 at 4 p.m.

The new playground design was selected as an homage to America's pastime and Zimmerman Park's most popular recreation, the game of baseball.

With a state of the art jungle gym, five slides, four swings and a host of climbing gear, youngsters will have no shortage of ways to stay active. In addition, the northeast entrance of the park now has two adult exercise equipment stations.

All new equipment was funded through a \$300,000 grant awarded through Prop A and secured with the support of 4th District Supervisor Don Knabe.

The City's focus on the renovation and upgrade of community parks aligns with the goals of its 2020 Vision Strategic Action Plan. Zimmerman Park is located at 13031 Shoemaker Avenue.

For more information, please call (562) 929-5763.

## Cerritos College seeking speakers for upcoming TEDx Conference

**NORWALK** – TEDx, a local version of the popular TED Talks conference, is coming to Cerritos College on March 9, 2017. TEDx conferences are independently run and are designed to share ideas from every discipline and culture to seek a deeper understanding of the world through local TED-like experiences.

TEDx at Cerritos College is currently looking for speakers with "ideas worth sharing." Submit an online application by Nov. 1, 2016. Up to 10 speakers will be elected. Speakers will be notified on February 1, 2017.

For more information, requirements, and application, contact Monique Valencia via e-mail at [mvalencia@cerritos.edu](mailto:mvalencia@cerritos.edu).

TED Talks began in 1984 as a conference where Technology, Entertainment and Design converged, and today covers almost all topics — from science to business to global issues — in more than 100 languages. Many of the TED talks are available at TED.com.

## Downey credit union launches community education workshops

**DOWNEY** – Downey Federal Credit Union is hosting free Community Education Workshops in partnership with Collegiate Coaching LLC, a college admissions and career pathway coaching company.

Workshops will begin Wednesday, Oct. 19, and continue through Wednesday, Jan. 18, and will be held at the Barbara J. Riley Community & Senior Center at Apollo Park.

This series of workshops will cover a variety of topics such as College 101; Financial Aid; the California State University application process; adults and veterans going back to college; and more.

As college, career, and financial aid information is generally only touched on in a school setting, these workshops seek to cater to a larger audience beyond the school environment, and offer this information to the community at large. They are intended to reach residents of all ages and diverse backgrounds.

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SENIOR DISCOUNT

# Downey City Council hopefuls make their cases, clash over issues at Downey Patriot debate



■ **ELECTION:** Nine candidates participate in debate hosted by The Downey Patriot.

By **Alex Dominguez**  
Contributor

**DOWNEY** – All nine City Council candidates stood front and center Friday at the Downey Civic Theatre for a debate presented by the Downey Patriot.

The event was free and sponsored by PIH Health, Downey Federal Credit Union, and Downey Brewing Company.

This year, three of Downey's five districts – Districts 1, 3, and 5 – are up for reelection. Every district up for election is contested, as every candidate has at least one opponent.

Blanca Pacheco, Alma Marquez, Hector Lujan, Rick Rodriguez,

Frine Medrano, Art Montoya, Louis Morales, Mayor Alex Saab, and Art Gonzales all came face to face with a crowd of 300-400 residents and supporters in the Downey Civic Theater, answering question compiled by the debate's moderator, former Downey Patriot staff writer and current Norwalk Patriot editor Christian Brown.

Several questions were also received from community members through email and social media.

Mayor Saab stood as the sole candidate who was running for reelection, as evident by his opening statement.

"I want to thank the residents of Downey for affording me the opportunity to represent them the last four years, and I ask for another four years to represent them [and] continue the momentum that we have worked so hard on for the city and the residents of Downey," said

Saab.

Saab is running for District 5.

Running opposite of the sole reelection hopeful is Art Gonzales, who could be described as the freshest face to Downey out of the group. Gonzales is still relatively new to the city, having only moved to the city around five years ago.

The other two districts up for election are almost evenly split amongst the candidates: Pacheco, Marquez, and Lujan are running for District 1, while Rodriguez, Medrano, Montoya, and Morales are all vying for the District 3 spot.

Each candidate was allowed a 60-second opening statement, along with 60 seconds to respond to debate questions, and 30 seconds for rebuttal.

Most questions were addressed by district.

The possible half-cent sales tax increase was a big topic at the debate, splitting the candidates three to six, with candidates Rodriguez, Montoya, and Gonzales supporting.

"I was at that city council meeting where the fire department pleaded for more funding to better staff their department, and I know that the fire stations as well – three of four of them – are in need of upgrade," said Montoya.

He continued: "How can they do their jobs if they don't have the right equipment or the right funding to make sure that they can proceed in their daily operations..." said Montoya.

"... No one is going to want to come to Downey to buy anything or do business if there's a fear of them getting hurt..."

On the side of the opposed, Pacheco said that the sales tax increase might hinder the continued growth of the city.

"We are a city that is growing. We are continuously expanding. We have a Downtown Downey area, we now have a Promenade, and it's nice; this growth is nice," said Pacheco.

"My concern is that this sales tax increase would hinder that growth, and I'm seriously concerned about that..."

Other topics discussed by the candidates included public safety, housing, and homelessness.

For those who missed the event, video of the debate will be posted online in the coming week.

# NLMUSD's Johnston Elementary honored for \$10,000 Relay For Life donation



American Cancer Society representatives presented Johnston Elementary School first-grade teacher Dan Calma, center, with a Spirit of Relay award Sept. 23 at the school's flag ceremony.

**NORWALK** – The American Cancer Society (ACS) honored Johnston Elementary School's Relay For Life Norwalk fundraising team with the Spirit of Relay award, recognizing its efforts to raise \$10,000 in donations during the 2016 Relay For Life event.

Relay For Life Norwalk coordinator Jennifer Perez and ACS representative Sarah Ambrose presented the award to team captain and Johnston first-grade teacher Dan Calma during a flag ceremony at the elementary school on Sept. 23.

"We do this for our family and our friends," Calma said. "The motto of the Relay For Life is that cancer never sleeps. We will continue to relay as long as cancer is an issue."

The team's 53 members reached their \$10,000 fundraising goal by hosting pizza parties, bake sales, selling popsicles and holding other events. Students also raised \$1,000 from filling empty water bottles with dimes via their "Silver Saves Lives" project.

The Johnston Relay For Life Norwalk team was formed in 2012 to honor the elementary school's office secretary, parent and former PTA president, Sue Evangelho, who was a cancer survivor along with Calma and Attendance Clerk Norma Avila. She helped organized Johnston's first fundraising team, which raised \$5,000 in its first year. Evangelho agreed to co-captain the 2013 team after she planned to retire, but unfortunately passed away in 2012.

To continue the fight against cancer in Evangelho's honor, Team Johnston has since raised nearly \$50,000.

"Team Johnston are truly heroes in the fight against cancer," Norwalk-La Mirada Unified Board of Education President Karen Morrison said. "To see our District rally together in support of Evangelho and continue her mission is an inspiration to us all."

Team Johnston has been recognized with a series of individual and group awards since 2012. The team was named to the Jade Club for raising \$10,000, and won awards for having the largest team and selling the most luminaria bags, which are personalized bags lit by a candle in honor of someone affected by cancer.

Calma and Johnston attendance clerk Norma Avila were named to the Grand Club for raising more than \$1,000 each. Calma was also named to the National All-Star team for raising more than \$2,500 – he raised more than \$3,300 this year.

After the award presentation, Calma and Avila shared an emotional moment with Doug Schiefelbein, whose wife, Peggy, a longtime Johnston attendance clerk, passed away from cancer in January.

"I am so proud of Dan Calma and Team Johnston, who have worked so hard to keep Sue and Peggy's memory alive, and are giving hope to so many battling this disease," Superintendent Dr. Hasmik Danielian said. "Thank you to the American Cancer Society and Relay For Life Norwalk for recognizing their dedication and spirit."

John Glenn High School, located at 13520 Shoemaker Ave., is hosting the expo, which will showcase more than 50 college representatives from UCLA, UC Berkeley, USC and more.

Students and their parents can participate in informative workshops from 6-8:30 p.m. on financial aid, college saving strategies, admission to independent colleges, UCs and CSUs, and the SATs.

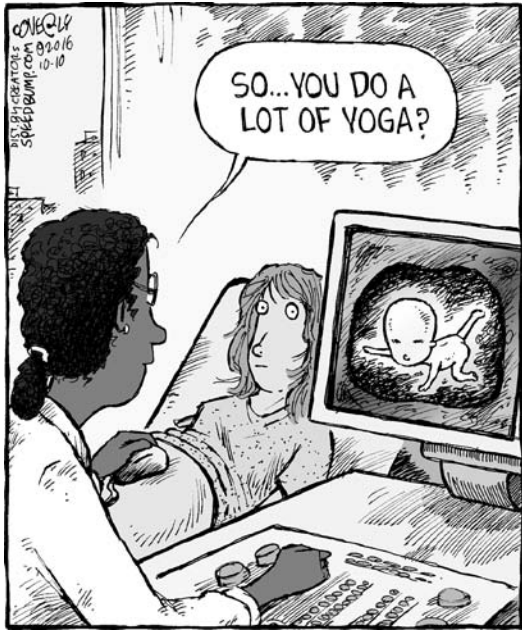
For more information, contact Valerie Martinez at (909) 445-1001.



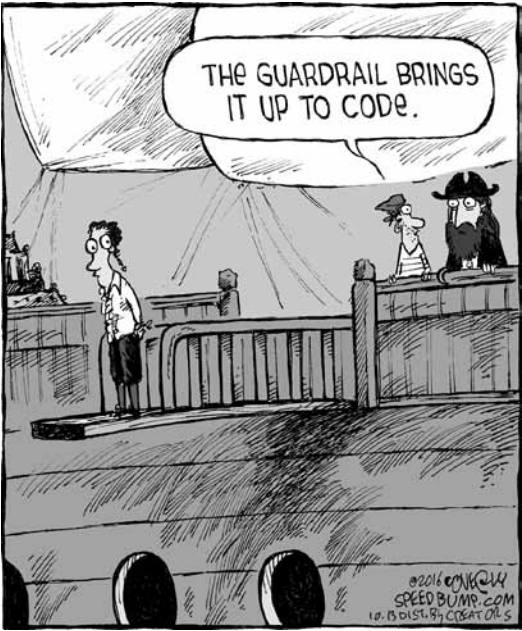




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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15**  
11:00 a.m. - 33rd annual Arturo Sonches Jr. Halloween Parade  
6:00 p.m. - Falcons Homecoming Game - Cerritos College
- WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19**  
4:00 p.m. - Zimmerman Park playground - Zimmerman Park
- 
- MONDAYS**  
1st, 6:00 p.m. - Public Safety meetings - Council Chambers
- TUESDAYS**  
8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Farmers Market - Excelsior High School  
1st & 3rd 6:00 p.m. - Toastmasters Meetings - Registrar Recorder/County Clerks Office  
2nd & 4th, - Toastmasters Meetings - Norwalk Library  
1st & 3rd, 6:00 p.m. - City Council - Council Chambers  
3rd, 5:45 p.m. - Housing Authority - Council Chambers
- WEDNESDAYS**  
10:30 a.m. - Woman's Club - Masonic Lodge  
12:00 p.m. - Rotary - Doubletree Hotel  
1st, 12:30 p.m. - Soroptimist International - Soroptimist Village  
1st & 3rd, 7:00 p.m. - Lions Club - Bruce's Restaurant  
2nd & 4th, 1:30 p.m. - Alondra Senior Citizens - Social Services Center  
2nd & 4th, 7:30 p.m. - Planning Commission - Council Chambers  
4th, 11:30 a.m. - Coordinating Council - Arts & Sports Complex
- THURSDAYS**  
1:00 p.m. - Adult color club "Color Us Happy" - Norwalk Library  
7:00 p.m. - Boy Scouts Troop 924 - Norwalk United Methodist Church  
2nd, 7:30 p.m. - Golden Trowel -Norwalk Masonic Lodge  
3rd, 8:00 p.m. - American Legion Post No. 359 - 11986 Front St.
- SATURDAYS**  
2nd, 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. - Pancake Breakfast - First Christian Church of Norwalk
- Have an event you want listed? E-mail news@thedowneypatriot.com

On This Day...

**October 14, 1954:** C.B. DeMille's "The Ten Commandments," starring Charlton Heston, began filming in Egypt. The epic had a cast of 25,000 people.

**1964:** Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his non-violent resistance to racial prejudice in America. He was the youngest person to receive the award.

**1987:** Jessica McClure, 18 months old, fell down an abandoned well in Midland, TX. The rescue took 58 hours.

**BIRTHDAYS:** Movie star Roger Moore (89); Fashion designer Ralph Lauren (77); Pop singer Cliff Richard (76); Sports radio host Stephen A. Smith (49); Actor Jon Seda (46); R&B singer Usher (38); Comedian Jay Pharoah (29); Actress Mia Wasikowska (27); L.A. Rams quarterback Jared Goff (22); and TV star Rowan Blanchard (15).

**THE NEWSDAY CROSSWORD**

Edited by Stanley Newman (www.StanXwords.com)

**LEFT TO RIGHT: Explained at 120 Across**

by Clive Probert

**ACROSS**

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5 Confab

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13 Lecturer's accessory

18 Reed instrument

19 Car radiator connection

20 Of birds

21 More than enough

22 The Lord of the Rings, e.g.

23 African snakes

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26 Unfettered

29 Informal turndown

30 Apollo 11 name

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116 Singer Del Rey

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7 Artificial sweetener

8 Irritable

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DOWNEY – STORM Wave, the electric motorcycle designed by STORM Eindhoven, a team of 24 Dutch students at Eindhoven University of Technology, rode into Downey this week as part of their 80-day world tour.

The goal of the journey is to show the potential of e-mobility worldwide. The team was in Los Angeles, where they visited various events, including a meeting with the Dutch Honorary Consul at the VTBS Architects Office, Downey High School’s Engineering Department, and a group of local creatives at Stay Gallery.

The motorcycle runs on a battery pack designed by Eindhoven students. The pack consists of 24 cartridges that have 28.5 kWh of energy, which enables the motorcycle to travel 380 kilometers (236 miles) on a single charge.

STORM Eindhoven left the Netherlands to tour the world on Aug. 14, and traveled through Europe, the Middle East, and China before coming to the US.

The bike will travel down the West Coast and through the South and Midwest before finishing its tour of America in New York on Oct. 26. STORM will make stops in Sacramento, San Francisco, Phoenix, Dallas, Columbus, and Pittsburgh, among others.

# Downey Councilman Luis Marquez, accused of having child out of wedlock, apologizes for ‘making a mistake’

■ **ALLEGATIONS:** Downey council member is alleged to have had a child outside his marriage.

By Alex Dominguez  
Contributor

DOWNEY – Downey political figures Luis and Alma Marquez have found themselves surrounded in controversy concerning a child that the councilmember allegedly fathered with another woman.

According to an official who spoke to the Patriot on the condition of anonymity, a woman by the name of Maribel Zavala has brought an allegedly out-of-wedlock child of Marquez’s to light after the council member supposedly denied that the child is his.

According to this source, Zavala wants Marquez to take responsibility for the child.

The anonymous official also spoke of a meeting between the three parties involved, where Zavala supposedly said she was intimidated by Luis and Alma to not bring the issue to the public.

The source also said that all three parties were recently in court together, and that councilmember Marquez now faces a mandatory paternity test. The court case is sealed.

In a prepared statement, Councilman Marquez acknowledged “making a mistake” but called allegations of a love child “completely false” and “a political attack.”

“This is a personal and legal matter that is affecting my family, so on the advice of our attorney, I will not be commenting on this issue any further other than this statement,” Marquez said.



Luis Marquez and his wife, Alma. According to a source, a woman has brought a paternity suit against the councilman.

“I want to publicly apologize to my wife Alma, my children, my entire family and all the residents of Downey. I made a mistake and I am working through it with my wife and family. My number one concern is protecting my children and family.

“I am proud of what I have accomplished as a Councilmember during my nearly 8 years on the council and I want the residents of Downey know that this issue will not keep me from fulfilling my city duties and doing the peoples work during my last two months on the council.

“I made a mistake and my wife Alma should not be paying the consequences with these completely false allegations and political attacks to discredit her candidacy for Downey City Council....These smear and political dirty tactics have no place in our Downey political landscape.”

The controversy comes at an interesting time for the Marquez family, as Luis will finish his final City Council term in the next few months, and Alma is currently running to replace him.

The issue was the subject of an article recently published by a local tabloid.

Alma released a statement in response, saying in part:

“This article and what it says about me is baseless and a complete fabrication. It cites ‘sources close to Zavala.’

As its source of information, the so-called reporter never contacted me, my husband or any of the parties about whom this story is supposed to be about.

“Mr. Brian Hews is a political hitman posing as a newspaper reporter and is a disgrace to all real reporters who do their reporting with journalistic integrity. Mr. Hews has put profits before ethics. Anyone who has followed his ‘stories’ can attest to the fact that he is nothing more than a hired gun for whomever can pay him to run political attack stories.

“...I can only surmise that Mr. Brian Hews has again taken money to publish this despicable and untrue political hit against me in a cowardly attempt to destroy my

credibility and ruin my chances of winning a seat in the Downey City Council.

“I am running a clean campaign based on my merits and experience, this is why I have earned the trust and support of many in my community, including Congressman Alan Lowenthal, Janice Hahn, Senator Tony Mendoza and many other public and private sector leaders and most of my neighbors...”

Zavala did not respond to calls for comment.

## Downey High SkillsUSA students put in a day of community service

DOWNEY – Seventy Downey High School students put their leadership skills to the test on Saturday, Oct. 8, when they volunteered at the Dare 2B Digital exposition, which was hosted at the school.

The daylong event introduced almost 1,000 Downey Unified middle school students and parents to cutting edge digital technologies.

The DHS student volunteers are part of the school’s SkillsUSA team. Through the day, they helped register participants, provided directions, assisted program presenters, and documented the event through photography and video.

“They were amazing,” said Norma Kropelinicki of Dare 2B Digital. “I work with a lot of volunteers and I would take this group anytime.”

At the end of the event, the students hunkered down in the shade for a group photo and a well-earned break. “I couldn’t be more proud of your professionalism,” teacher Frida J. Vadgama, Downey High’s SkillsUSA lead advisor, told the group.

SkillsUSA is a national program that builds leadership skills and supports career and technical education, Vadgama said.

Many of the students who worked Saturday will participate in SkillsUSA Leadership and Skills competitions at the regional level, with gold, silver and bronze medalists advancing to the state and possibly even national competitions.

Nicholas Acosta, co-president of Downey High’s SkillsUSA team, was happy with the volunteer turnout and with the enthusiasm of his peers. “I like to see students involved not only in school but in the community,” he said.

Dare 2B Digital event featured presentations by leaders in cutting-edge technologies such as virtual reality, space exploration and digital entertainment. NASA/Jet Propulsion Laboratory and Southern California Edison were among the presenters. The event also included appearances by celebrities Kevin McHale of “Glee,” YouTube stars such as Leo Camacho, and others.



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