

Chamber mourns Vernola, Adams

■ Luigi Vernola and Darryl Adams both died suddenly, leaving behind big legacies in Norwalk.

Contributed by the Norwalk Chamber of Commerce

NORWALK – The City of Norwalk has seen the cases of Covid-19 increase just as every other community in Los Angeles has seen over the last few months. Los Angeles County went from 2,316 hospitalized on Dec. 1 to 7,546 hospitalized on Dec. 31 and a 34% increase in the number of deaths over that same time period.

Norwalk itself has had 9,940 cases of Covid-19 confirmed as of Dec. 31 and with that our share of losses. Our members have dealt with devastating business closures, financial losses, school closures, impacted operations and most recently with the death of long time Chamber members.

The Norwalk Chamber would like to recognize and acknowledge these community members.

Luigi Vernola, a former Norwalk mayor and City Council member, was born in Los Angeles and raised here in Norwalk. He attended Norwalk High School where he met his future wife Joan. They married and raised three children Kristina, Thomas and Lisa in Norwalk.

At the age of 20 he started his first business, an automotive service station, which he later expanded to include a towing business. Vernola's Towing has been a Norwalk staple and a member of the Norwalk Chamber of Commerce for 45 years.

As a chamber member, Mr. Vernola provided sponsorship and member support to our Chamber. He created the Santa Sleigh Foundation and the banner program for the City of Norwalk Armed Services recognition. His Kids & Cops Golf Tournament raised money every year to support various charitable enterprises here in Norwalk.

If there were any events that supported children or senior citizens in Norwalk, Luigi would be participating. He believed in the local community and would fight for local control of the decisions for the community.

Former Mayor Gordon Steffenhagen states, "I really got to know Luigi when he was setting up the Santa Sleigh project with Frank Napolitano. He was so excited to see the kids at every stop, and take pictures with them and their toys. His heart was filled with joy."

Chamber Board President Amanda Blanton added, "he was a huge part of Norwalk and our history."

Luigi believed in making Norwalk a great place to raise a family and have a business. Luigi was a good friend to many here in the community and he will be missed greatly by his friends and family.

Darryl Adams

Darryl Adams served the Norwalk La Mirada School District as a board member for over 27 years and was still serving at the time of his passing.

He was first elected to the board in 1993, and was then reelected to serve an unprecedented five times. He had held the position of board president four times, and served as vice president also.

He had the opportunity to work with the last four superintendents at the district along with many other board members over the years.

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Luigi Vernola, former mayor, dies of Covid-19

■ A cornerstone of the Norwalk community, Vernola served on the City Council for nearly four decades.

By Daniel Suarez Jr. Talon Marks

NORWALK – On Jan. 1, the former Mayor of Norwalk Luigi Vernola died from complications due to Covid-19, according to multiple sources close to him.

Vernola is survived by his wife, Joan Vernola, daughters Lisa Vernola and Kristina Freesmeier, his ten grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

In December, the Vernola family also lost Luigi's brother, Mike Vernola, and son-in-law Gilbert Salas. Both had a strong relationship with Luigi.

Freesmeier, who teaches at Lakeview Elementary School, said her father "loved America."

"He was so proud to be American. He wanted to give back to the community that gave so much to him while he was building his business," Freesmeier said. "He was there for anyone that needed help."

Vernola's eldest daughter, Lisa, now runs his towing company, Vernola's Tow Service, at 13514 Norwalk Blvd. His company is contracted with the AAA Auto Club.

Vernola was actively involved in community projects and charitable organizations. He donated to the Norwalk Lions Club, holding food drives and Turkey trots and founding the Santa's Sleigh Foundation.

Vernola's foundation would organize volunteers and community members every December in a drive-by gift-giving celebration. A float with a photo set would set up in several neighborhoods, inviting families to take pictures with Santa and elves.

Due to the pandemic's



Former Norwalk mayor Luigi Vernola, left, and State Sen. Bob Archuleta. Vernola died last week after contracting Covid-19. (City of Norwalk photo)

severity, Santa's Sleigh didn't run in 2020, marking the first holiday season without the program since its founding 30 years ago.

"He loved Christmas and he loved kids," said friend and Norwalk Lions Club member Custodio Celeste who has volunteered for Santa's Sleigh from the beginning.

"He would drop off furniture for families and would always visit the elderly. He liked to help out a lot of people for Christmas," Celeste said.

Vernola's love of children encouraged him to help students pay for their trips to Washington D.C.

Vice-Mayor Tony Ayala recalled when the hospital refused to release seniors because they did not have the proper equipment at home. Vernola used his personal funds

to build ramps for the seniors to return home.

Vernola, the son of Italian immigrants, graduated from Norwalk High School and remained faithful to his community.

He once journeyed back to Italy and met Pope John Paul II.

In the 1980s he was appointed to the Norwalk City Council and later served as mayor. He held office again in 2013.

"Everyone knew he was the right man for the job. He always thought in terms of right and wrong. He listened to his morals first," Ayala said. "He was a leader, and that's what I will miss most about him."

"I will miss his out-of-the-box thinking," said Councilman Rick Ramirez. "He was always thinking about the community and wanted what was best for the city."

In March 2020, Vernola stepped down from local politics when he lost his city council seat as vice mayor to Margarita Rios, who now serves as a councilwoman in Norwalk.

"I worked closely with Vernola when I was elected to the council in 2017," Rios said. "One of the things I'm going to miss about Luigi is how much he cared about young people and students. He always tried to make a difference in their lives."

While it is still unknown where Vernola contracted the virus, Ramirez stated that the city is following safety guidelines to keep employees and the public safe.

Daniel Suarez Jr. is the news editor for Talon Marks, the campus newspaper at Cerritos College.

With hospitals overwhelmed, leaders plead for help

■ Officials are requesting federal help to support overburdened hospitals.

By Eric Pierce Editor

NORWALK – An effort to return a U.S. Navy hospital ship to Southern California to help overburdened hospitals failed this week after military officials said the vessel is down for repairs.

"It is imperative that all efforts are made to immediately bring back the USNS Mercy," Mayor Jennifer Perez wrote to L.A. County Supervisor Janice Hahn. "The need has never been greater to assist with other medical ailments such as heart, cancer and non Covid-19 related illnesses."

"Our healthcare system is under tremendous stress and has scarce resources. There are staffing shortages, limited oxygen and equipment, intensive care units have reached capacity and makeshift ICU rooms have been constructed."

"More importantly, the doctors and nurses that are fighting Covid-19 on a daily basis are stressed and fatigued."

Despite efforts from city and county leaders, however, Navy officials said the hospital ship USNS Mercy is undergoing maintenance and won't be available for several months.

The ship was deployed to Southern California in the early months of the pandemic but is currently docked at a shipyard in Portland, Ore., where it is undergoing a "major overhaul," Navy representatives said.

On Wednesday, Hahn asked the Department of Defense to instead send the USNS Comfort hospital ship with medical personnel to provide backup for L.A. County's strained hospital system. The ship is currently stationed in Virginia.

"We have to plan for the very real possibility that this surge gets much worse in coming weeks and months," Hahn said.

This week, Gov. Gavin Newsom and the state's Office of Emergency Services (OES) approved a request for 500 federal medical workers to temporarily relieve hospitals.

"Our plea for help has been heard," Hahn said. "I appreciate and support Governor Newsom and Cal OES's request to the federal government for 500 medical personnel to help our overwhelmed hospitals."

"The situation is dire statewide, but nowhere is this help more desperately needed than here in LA County. If the federal government fulfills this request, I urge that every medical personnel that can be spared be sent to our hospitals in LA County."

County health officials said people are continuing to



The USNS Mercy arrived in Los Angeles last May to help ease the strain on area hospitals. The ship is currently unavailable due to scheduled maintenance. (Navy photo)

interact with others outside their households, which is spreading the virus.

"The rate of new cases this month is translating into a disastrous increase in the number of people with severe Covid-19 symptoms being sent to our local hospitals and, tragically, we are now seeing more than 200 deaths a day," health officials said.

"People who were otherwise leading healthy, productive lives are now passing away because of a chance encounter with the Covid-19 virus. This only ends when we each make the right decisions to protect each other."

Testing results are available for nearly 4,850,000 people with

17% of people testing positive.

On Nov. 1, the test positivity rate was 3.8%. Wednesday's test positivity rate increased to 21.8%.

"This is very significant because it means one in five people who are tested are carrying the Covid-19 virus and can expose others to this disease," officials said.

As of Wednesday, the virus has killed 141 Norwalk residents and infected 11,087 people here.

The death toll is higher than neighboring cities, including Downey (128), Whittier (117) and Bellflower (94).

Weekend at a Glance

Friday 73° ☁️

Saturday 74° ☀️

Sunday 73° ☁️

ON THIS DAY JANUARY 8

1815: U.S. forces led by Gen. Andrew Jackson defeated the British in the Battle of New Orleans during the War of 1812.

1918: President Woodrow Wilson outlined his 14 points for peace after World War I.

1959: Charles De Gaulle was inaugurated as president of France's Fifth Republic.

1964: President Lyndon B. Johnson declared a war on poverty.

1981: A farmer reported a UFO sighting near Trans-en-Provence, France, claimed to be "perhaps the most completely and carefully documented sighting of all time."

1982: AT&T settled the Justice Department's antitrust lawsuit against it by agreeing to divest itself of the 22 Bell System companies.

1998: Ramzi Yousef, the mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, was sentenced in New York to life in prison.

2002: President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act.

2007: A Moroccan man convicted of aiding three of the four pilots who committed the 9/11 attacks was sentenced by a German court to the maximum 15 years in prison.

2011: Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz., was shot and critically wounded when a gunman opened fire as the congresswoman met with constituents in Tucson; six people were killed and 12 others were injured.

Birthdays

Mexican wrestler **Rey Misterio** (63), R&B singer **R. Kelly** (54), North Korean leader **Kim Jong-un** (37), and "Hannah Montana" actress and singer **Noah Cyrus** (21).

Deaths

Italian astronomer **Galileo Galilei**, called the "father of modern science and astronomy," died on this date in 1642 after a severe fever. He was 77.

Art Clokey, a pioneer in stop-motion clay animation and creator of Gumby, died at his home of a bladder infection in 2010. He was 88.

Def Leppard guitarist **Steve Clark** died in 1991 of a prescription drug and alcohol overdose. He was 30.

Dave Thomas, founder of Wendy's, died on this date in 2002. A fast-food tycoon, Thomas was the face of Wendy's, appearing in more than 800 commercials for the chain.



Dave Thomas

Book Recommendation

"**Keep Sharp**" by Sanjay Gupta, MD "Keep Sharp" debunks common myths about aging and cognitive decline, explores whether there's a "best" diet or exercise regimen for the brain, and explains whether it's healthier to play video games that test memory and processing speed, or to engage in more social interaction.

"Keep Sharp" is the only owner's manual you'll need to keep your brain young and healthy regardless of your age.

Vernola, Adams remembered

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He has been remembered by friends and colleagues as having a passion for supporting children and providing equal opportunity for all.

Adams was a graduate of USC, with a BA in Political Science. He originally started his professional career working for former California Governor Jerry Brown and at that same time became a substitute teacher for Norwalk La Mirada USD. While he contemplated attending law school, he eventually decided on a career in teaching.

He taught in Norwalk La Mirada USD for eight years prior to being elected to serve on the

school board. Mr. Adams taught at John Glenn High School, Hargitt Middle School and as an adult ed teacher. During his time as a board member, he was recognized as a PTSA Honorary Service Award Winner and had been included in the "Who's Who Amongst American Teachers" nine times.

He often cited his late parents as the inspiration and drive that enabled him to continue as a community leader and servant over those many years. Darryl has been remembered by many as being the inspiration behind their choices to work in education and serving as a role model for helping others.

Darryl will be greatly missed by all at Norwalk La Mirada USD.

■ Norwalk's congressional representative, Linda Sanchez, takes the oath of office.

NORWALK - Rep. Linda Sanchez this week was sworn in as the representative for California's 38th Congressional District in the 117th Congress. This marks her tenth term representing Norwalk in Washington, D.C.

"Representing the people of California's 38th District is an incredible privilege, and an immense responsibility," said Sanchez. "I have devoted my career to helping working people get ahead: advocating

for our families, improving our education systems, and bringing jobs to our district. As we begin a new Congress, I am more committed than ever to keep fighting."

Sanchez said she will prioritize working to get much-needed relief to working families, small businesses, and those experiencing extreme hardship in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and economic downturn.

Additionally, Sanchez said she will remain focused on finding legislative solutions to our country's caregiving crisis. She will also concentrate efforts on improving our nation's infrastructure, as well as other

legislative priorities important to her community.

The congresswoman will continue to serve as a member of the House Ways and Means Committee. She will also continue to serve in leadership positions, including in the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and Labor Caucus, and as a member of the Democratic Women's Caucus.

Constituents who need help with federal issues - such as Social Security, Medicare, and Veterans Affairs - as well as other constituent services should contact the District Office at (562) 429-8499 or online.

Sanchez was first elected to Congress in 2002 and was most recently re-elected in November.

Sanchez became the first Latina to serve on the House Judiciary Committee and the House Ways & Means Committee, and the first Latina to serve in leadership.

The 38th Congressional District includes Norwalk, Artesia, and portions of Bellflower, Cerritos, Hawaiian Gardens, La Mirada, La Palma, portions of Lakewood, Montebello, Norwalk, Pico Rivera, Santa Fe Springs, South El Monte, Whittier, and the unincorporated communities of Los Nietos, East Whittier, East La Mirada, and South Whittier.

In Memory of



Beatrice "Bee" Vigil (Lopez) - February 6, 1930 - November 26, 2020

In honor & respect for a Norwalk matriarch, community leader, and quiet advocate for justice:

Beatrice Marian Vigil, born in San Diego, California on February 6, 1930 to Magdalena Barela Vigil and Patrick Torres Vigil, as the 5th child and youngest daughter of 7 children, has quietly passed to heaven on one of her favorite holidays November 26, 2020. Born into a family that originated in Texas and made their way to California in the 1930's during the great depression, the Vigil's settled in Los Angeles, on 25th St. and Maple Ave., in what was a historic small Mexican town of the period. During her youthful days in L.A., she witnessed an era of a low population in the downtown area, the "Big Band" environment, the decade of world war 2 (WWII), the denigration of Mexican people during the U.S. government "Repatriation Movement", the "L.A. Zoot Suit riots", and, the introduction/birth of two younger brothers, James (Jimmy) and Richard (Dickie) Vigil.

As a youth she became to be known as "Bee" (as in bumblebee), cherished by her oldest sibling Patrick, Jr., who went off to WWII as a volunteer, and reared by her older sisters Viola (Vi), Eloise (Loy), and Magdalena (Nanny), as they assisted in the family restaurant/club business that their father established while assimilating into the culture of L.A. development. Her working family background led her to early employment in the L.A. sweat shops as a seamstress, even though her father encouraged her to pursue her general education by paying her to attend school, and eventually she worked through her teen years trying to follow the youthful/beautiful path of older sisters in an exciting era of dance and show in the L.A./Hollywood scenes.

At the close of WWII, in the excitement of "peace" and celebration, she met and married a U.S. Army Paratrooper who grew up and worked in the L.A. transportation industry (Robert "Bobby" Lopez), and summarily exited downtown (1952) as they followed the migrations of her parents and sisters to the new suburbs in Norwalk, Calif., after birthing their first three children, Monica, Larry and Michael, and, by 1960 completing their family with Samuel, Roberta, and Johnnie. By 1961, with the changes and challenges of California life, she became a single struggling mother and independent head of household, which was an aberration in a society framed as "must have a normal family". Her struggle was overwhelming while looking for work, caring for 6 children, and maintaining a new home, when her parents decided to join her challenge after the 605 Freeway took their home through eminent domain in Norwalk, and, assisted in caring for her children while she worked 2 & 3 jobs. It was at this moment that she was successful in becoming employed at Rockwell International, on the advice of an older sister (Nanny), joining the U.A.W. (United Auto Workers) under a solid union contract that provided superior wages, benefits, and working conditions, and stabilizing her standard of living for the challenges ahead.

By the mid-1960's, with the passing of her father, and her eldest children becoming teens & high schoolers, she decided that a lesson in perseverance was in order as she secretly attended night school to garner her GED diploma, and, to graduate before her eldest child, Monica, and express her dream of college education for all her children. She accomplished this task in 1968, two days prior to her eldest child's graduation at Excelsior High, as her surprise unfolded while her children sat in the auditorium unaware that she would march down the aisle. This moment triggered her message that education was the key to advancing in life, and joined by her younger brothers, Jimmy & Mangas (Dickie), they influenced her brood to engage in the new Chicano Movement, anti-war movement, civil rights protest, and demands for equal rights and higher education. Her motivation was to save her sons from the draft, support the issues of the day, and maintain a standard of equal access to opportunity in the U.S., while defending her youngest brother's rights from charges in the 1968 E.L.A. Blowouts (one of the E.L.A. 13). She led her children in protest at the L.A.P.D. offices, where over 2000 people circled the headquarters, demanding the release of the "13", who were being held on conspiracy charges and subject to 40 years in prison for simply demanding a fair & equal education for Chicanos in the public schools. In her quiet wisdom she revealed her true revolutionary spirit, original feminist lifestyle, faith driven morals, ethical practices of respect for all human beings, and loyal protection for her family.

In the early 1970's, upon the residual effects of the 1960's cultural clashes, she engaged in supporting her son's actions in the Excelsior High "walk-outs", protesting unequal treatment and opportunity in public education (including racism, corporal punishment, and denial to higher education), and she became a founding member of U.P.A.N. (United Parents Association of Norwalk). This organization led the fight for access & equality at Excelsior High, establishing Chicano Studies at Cerritos College in Norwalk, the founding of a community library and Social Services Center on Alondra Blvd. in Norwalk, El Centro Aztlan (Community Youth Center on Front St. in Norwalk), multiple protest at the school board, city council, and Norwalk Police Station against brutality & harassment of Chicano youth. She continued to support the fights for political change by marching in the historical 1970 Chicano Moratorium, sponsoring fundraisers for Los Tres del Barrio, C.A.S.A. - HGT, and La Raza Unida Party, while sponsoring the many weddings of her children in the '70's. After the loss of her mother in 1973, she eventually decided to commit to foster and adopt 4 orphaned children (Paul & John and Richard & Anita) while continuing to work full time, which took a serious toll over time on her health condition.

Throughout the decades she maintained a close relationship with her extended family, always ready to support traditions, activities, and, sewing for weddings, quinces, personal requests and/or needs, even after moving residences out of Norwalk and into Alta Loma, re-establishing a base for the family to unite and grow. The 1980's brought growth in family numbers, eventually exceeding 80+ grandchildren & greats, multiple activities supporting athletic events of her grandchildren, the educational advancements of many family college graduates, and at the close of the decade early retirement. Although she witnessed the passing of most of her siblings over the past 20 years (leaving herself and brother James as the last survivors), and, her eldest son Nativo (Larry), adopted son John, grandson Manuel Rivera, and two son-in-laws, it never diminished her love for family, life, and celebration. She accepted life realities with grace, faith, and understanding, never forsaking her family and/or friends.

On the eve of the recent holiday season, she spent the quiet evening with family, talking about the fun season, watching classic movies, making her gift list, and just feeling good to stay up beyond midnight. As she settled in for the night on November 26, 2020, she transcended on her own terms into deep sleep as she always wanted to do and exited graciously to the heavens. She will always be present!

Our mother, Beatrice Marian Vigil (Lopez), is survived by her younger brother, James "Diego" Vigil, her surviving children, Monica, Miguel (Mike), Samuel, Roberta, Johnnie (Marcia), and, numerous grandchildren, great grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren.



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State, L.A. County overstepping their bounds

By Jaivon Grant

Soon after the Covid-19 pandemic first took its toll on California earlier this year, Governor Gavin Newsom declared a public emergency and ordered Californians to stay home and businesses deemed non-essential to shut down. These measures, as Californians were assured, served as necessary, but temporary, remedies to get the initial spread of the virus under control and to minimize the burden on our health care system.

However, more than six months later, while Governor Newsom was quick to grasp a hold of these emergency powers, he has been exceptionally slow in ceding them back to local governments. Instead, he continues to take advantage of the broad scope of emergency powers afforded to him, dictating changes that affect everything from plastic bags to weddings, and which directly impact how local governments operate.

Cities have not taken this power grab lightly. They have taken steps to curtail the Governor's overreach. For instance, the cities of Milpitas and Novato threatened to sue over planned Project Homekey (a state program to establish permanent housing facilities for people experiencing homelessness) sites in their cities. The state is forcing these programs on cities without prior consent or input. Other cities have also made attempts to curtail this abuse of power. In the city of Norwalk, their city council unanimously passed an emergency ordinance that required any public agency to consult with the city prior to placing a homeless or COVID-19 facility in Norwalk. This was an attempt to ensure collaboration between state, county, and city government. Was this not the purpose of Gavin Newsom's statement that "localism is to be determinative?"

So how are cities supposed to deal with these limited options, where they are left with little to no say in what will affect their residents? Los Angeles County has been overstepping its powers through emergency actions as well, but it's finally being restrained. Los Angeles Superior Court Judge James Chalfant recently ruled that Los Angeles County health officials acted "arbitrarily" and without a proper "risk-benefit" analysis when they banned outdoor dining. Some cities, such as Whittier, have even considered creating their own health department to opt out of falling under the jurisdiction of L.A. County public health. Additional litigation efforts have been made to curtail Newsom's unilateral power. An ongoing lawsuit has sought to build on recent federal decisions against gubernatorial



Gov. Gavin Newsom speaks at the California Democratic Party state convention in San Francisco in 2019.

Photo by Gage Skidmore

overreach.

Unfortunately, for resource-limited municipalities, they have limited options even in the face of negative consequences for their city and residents. The city of Norwalk who on several occasions, has taken steps to limit the state's attempts to leverage emergency decision-making, yet the state and county proceed undeterred. One of the most contentious examples of this has been the state's efforts to purchase a local Motel 6 as part of its Project Homekey program.

Project Homekey is meant to build upon the earlier efforts undertaken as part of Project Roomkey, through which the state and county governments rented motel and hotel rooms for homeless individuals in order to minimize their risk of contracting COVID-19. However, Project Roomkey was, by and large, an abject failure in Norwalk and several other cities.

Approximately 206 homeless individuals were provided with rooms, but at least 184 have abandoned those rooms. This means that

the county of Los Angeles, in executing this program, has exacerbated the problem of homelessness by now adding 184 individuals who are now unaccounted for and roaming the streets of Norwalk.

In addition, the purchase of Motel 6 would cost the city more than \$140,000 in tax revenue each year for up to a period of 55 years. The city objected; the county did not care. Their response? Their interests in this program supersede the revenue lost by the city of Norwalk.

This abuse of power by Newsom should not be meant to provide indefinite cover for policymaking. They are supposed to be used only with caution and in the best interest of the people. We have long since passed that point, and the right thing now is to bring these emergency powers to heel and give control back to the local and legislative bodies to which they are rightly designated.

Jaivon Grant is a political commentator and former journalist with *Our Weekly*.

The pandemic is a national test that we failed

By Steve Chapman

Over the past century, there have been times when Americans showed they can unite to overcome formidable challenges: winning World II, sending men to the moon, bringing down Soviet communism. The coronavirus pandemic will not be remembered as one of them.

It's fair to say that we have done many things right, individually and collectively. Most Americans, most of the time, have abided by the counsel of public health experts that we wear masks, socially distance and avoid large indoor gatherings. Most governors and mayors have taken prudent steps to curb transmission of the virus. In all, we've done pretty well.

But pretty well is not good enough. On a final exam, getting most of the answers right can mean an F. Reality doesn't grade on a curve.

To date, more than 336,000 people have died of COVID-19, and things are getting worse, not better, with nearly twice as many deaths in December as in November.

The rollout of vaccines will eventually turn things around, but not before tens of thousands more people are dead.

Many of the deaths so far were inevitable, once this virus found its way to our shores. But many are the direct result of reckless, careless or uninformed choices that could have been avoided.

The failure started at the top, with President Donald Trump. Month after month, he insisted that the pandemic would soon be just a memory. March 6: "It'll go away." Oct. 24: "It is going away,

it's rounding the turn." Who can forget his forecast of "packed churches" on Easter, or son-in-law Jared Kushner's prediction that by July, the country could be "really rocking again"?

The administration's false hopes were regrettable not just because they were wrong but because they promoted mistaken policies and reckless conduct. Many red-state governors refused to require masks in public, and others did so only after needless delays. Some Republican governors even took steps to block local governments from issuing such mandates.

The official resistance to basic precautions spurred widespread defiance. Anyone who has taken a trip by car can attest that an alarming number of people go into grocery stores, gas stations and motel lobbies without face coverings.

They are following the example of a president who was so contemptuous of caution that his White House became a cluster of infection. Trump also mocked mask-wearers and held mass gatherings that were perfectly crafted to spread the disease. A study by Stanford economists estimated that 18 Trump campaign rallies produced 30,000 additional cases of COVID-19 and 700 deaths.

But let's not put all the blame for these on him. Each of the people who attended those crowded events made the choice to risk getting the virus and then passing it on to people who chose not to attend. Trump was irresponsible, and so were they.

Even some officials who embraced essential public health measures, however, sabotaged the effort through their own

selfishness. Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot got her hair styled when hair salons were closed by state order. California Gov. Gavin Newsom violated his own rules by attending a birthday party at a fancy restaurant. Denver Mayor Michael Hancock told his constituents not to travel for Thanksgiving, before flying off to see relatives.

One obstacle to universal cooperation is that many people who take risks don't get the virus, which encourages them to take more risks. Another is that most of us know someone who has gotten it and suffered no serious effects, which creates a false sense of security. If COVID were far more contagious and lethal — as Ebola is — Americans would have been more careful.

Self-discipline isn't easy in the absence of immediate, obvious dangers or rewards. But the fact that an obligation is hard is not a license to disregard it.

Even in places with tight restrictions, there is little enforcement, letting some people flout the most vital rules. The English writer G.K. Chesterton said: "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried." Too many of us have taken the same approach to the best practices for combating the coronavirus.

Huge numbers of people deserve credit for diligently striving to defeat the virus. But too many have been indifferent or rebellious. Americans like to think that as a nation we are capable of meeting any challenge. Looks like we've been fooling ourselves.

Steve Chapman blogs for the *Chicago Tribune*.

Biden must stop the plundering of Alaska

By Susan Eisenhower

Sixty years ago, my grandfather, President Dwight Eisenhower, set aside the first 8.9 million acres of what today is the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in the remote northeast corner of Alaska. Twenty years later, President Jimmy Carter signed a law doubling the refuge's size and strengthening its protections.

Now, despite the refuge's bipartisan history, the departing Trump administration has scheduled a last-ditch oil and gas lease sale for Wednesday that could lead to drilling in one of the country's last great wild places.

The sale targets about a million acres in the refuge's 1.5 million acre coastal plain, which lies between the highest peaks of the Brooks Range and the Arctic Ocean. Its rolling tundra, lagoons and barrier islands were part of the original protected area established by

my grandfather, and for good reason: It is the biological core of the 19 million acre refuge.

His intent was to preserve the region's "wildlife and wilderness values," and his administration made clear from the outset that the refuge's use for other purposes should be permitted only "in a manner that would not impair the intent."

Our wildlife refuges are, by definition, public lands and waters set aside to conserve America's wild animals and plants, and few areas in the United States are as wild or as biologically rich as the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Polar bears come onshore to build winter maternity dens and are spending more time on land as climate change melts sea ice. Millions of migratory birds nest and feed on the coastal plain's tundra and along its rivers before departing to the lower 48 states and other destinations. Hundreds of thousands of caribou travel to the coastal plain each summer to calve as part of the longest land migration on the planet.

My grandfather was adamant that the range, including the coastal plain, be protected in its entirety. As his interior secretary,

Fred Seaton, explained to Congress, "Looking ahead 50 years to the unfolding story of Alaska's development, it is clear that the only economically feasible opportunity for maintaining a wilderness frontier large enough" to protect the area's wildlife "lies in this northeastern Arctic region of the state."

But even as it moved to establish the refuge, the Eisenhower administration recognized the need to balance resource development and conservation in the Arctic. Approximately 20 million acres of federal lands on the North Slope to the west — which included what would become the Prudhoe Bay oil fields — were given to the new state of Alaska in exchange for leaving the refuge undeveloped. This transfer paved the way for decades of oil and gas development on state lands across thousands of miles of the Arctic.

Today, even without whatever oil and gas lie beneath the refuge's coastal plain, the United States is the world's largest producer of oil and natural gas. Many major banks have adopted policies against financing oil development in the refuge because of the risks involved, and there is no guarantee that Arctic refuge oil would not be shipped overseas. What is necessary is a focused and swift transition to clean energy. There are plenty of other places to acquire fossil fuels as that transition takes place.

If my grandfather were alive today, I'm confident he would be critical of the Trump administration's effort to open the refuge to oil and gas development. In his farewell address in 1961, he warned against such shortsighted thinking: "As we peer into society's future, we — you and I, and our government — must avoid the impulse to live only for today, plundering, for our own ease and convenience, the precious resources of tomorrow."

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge remains largely as Mr. Seaton described it in 1959: "One of the most magnificent wildlife and wilderness areas in North America," providing "a wilderness experience not duplicated elsewhere." We must hold on to the wild places we have left, particularly when spoiling them is so unnecessary.

I urge President-elect Joe Biden to take immediate action after his inauguration on Jan. 20 to halt the leasing process and suspend all oil activities and operations in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. By doing so, he will restore in the American people the faith that their leaders will preserve the most magnificent wildlife and wilderness areas in North America for generations to come.

Susan Eisenhower is a consultant, a policy analyst and the author of "How Ike Led: The Principles Behind Eisenhower's Biggest Decisions."

Trump succeeded

Dear Editor:

In my letter to the editor of Oct. 1, 2020, I stated that President Trump would claim fraud if he lost the election and that his goal was to make the US a third world country.

Well he made it. My hat is off to President Trump for having accomplished what I thought was impossible, to make the US a third world country.

The last time that I saw an ugly mob stomp its way into Congress was 65 years ago when I was a high school student in Quito, Ecuador. It was ugly at that time and is not any less ugly what happened in Congress today.

To see this type of event in Ecuador is a given because Ecuador is a third world country. To see it happen in the US is unprecedented.

I sincerely hope that all members of Congress whose security was violated today react as Americans and reconvene and confirm the election of Joe Biden as the next democratically elected President of the US. It is the least they can do to restore faith in our democratic principles.

Jorge Montero
Downey

The Norwalk Patriot STAFF

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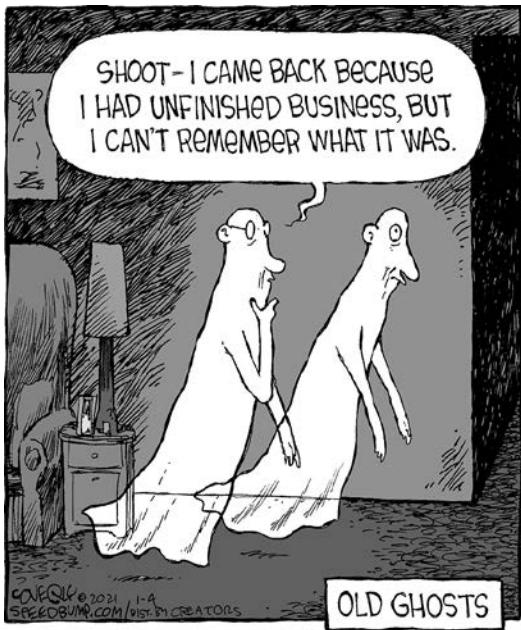
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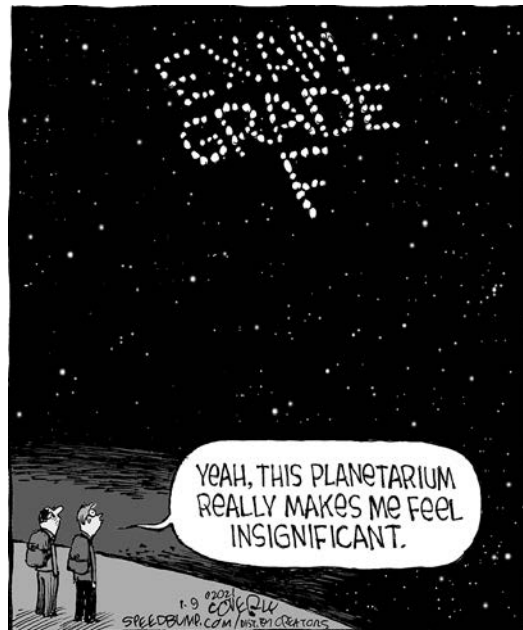
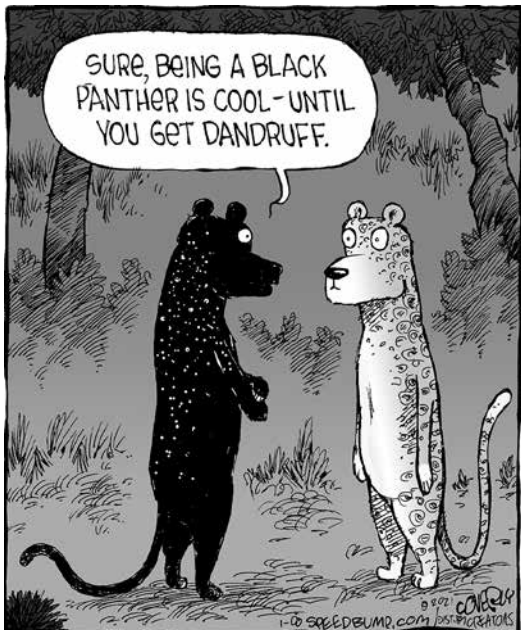
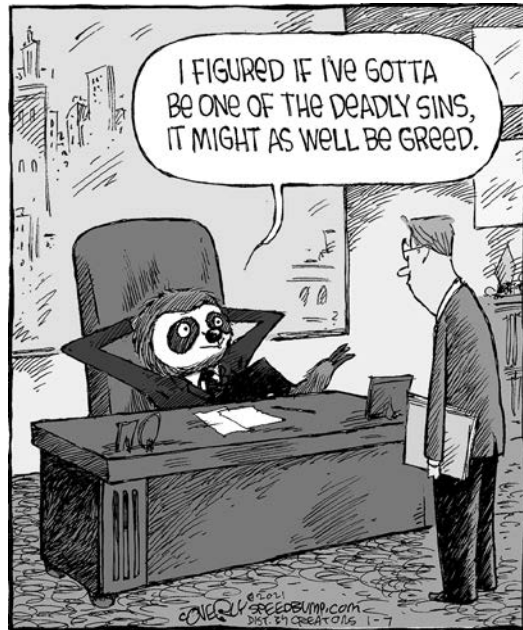
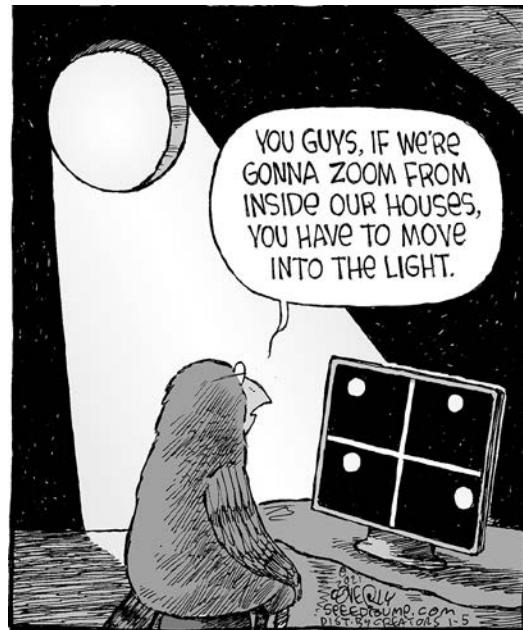
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Norwalk, CA 90650
Email:
news@thedowneypatriot.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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
12:00 p.m. - Rotary - Doubletree Hotel
1st & 3rd 6:00 p.m. - Toastmasters Meetings - Registrar Recorder/County Clerks Office
1st & 3rd, 6:00 p.m. - City Council - Council Chambers
3rd, 5:45 p.m. - Housing Authority - Council Chambers

WEDNESDAYS

1st, 12:30 p.m. - Soroptimist International - Soroptimist Village
1st & 3rd, 7:00 p.m. - Lions Club - Bruce's Restaurant
2nd, 10:30 a.m. - Norwalk Woman's Club - Masonic Lodge
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

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

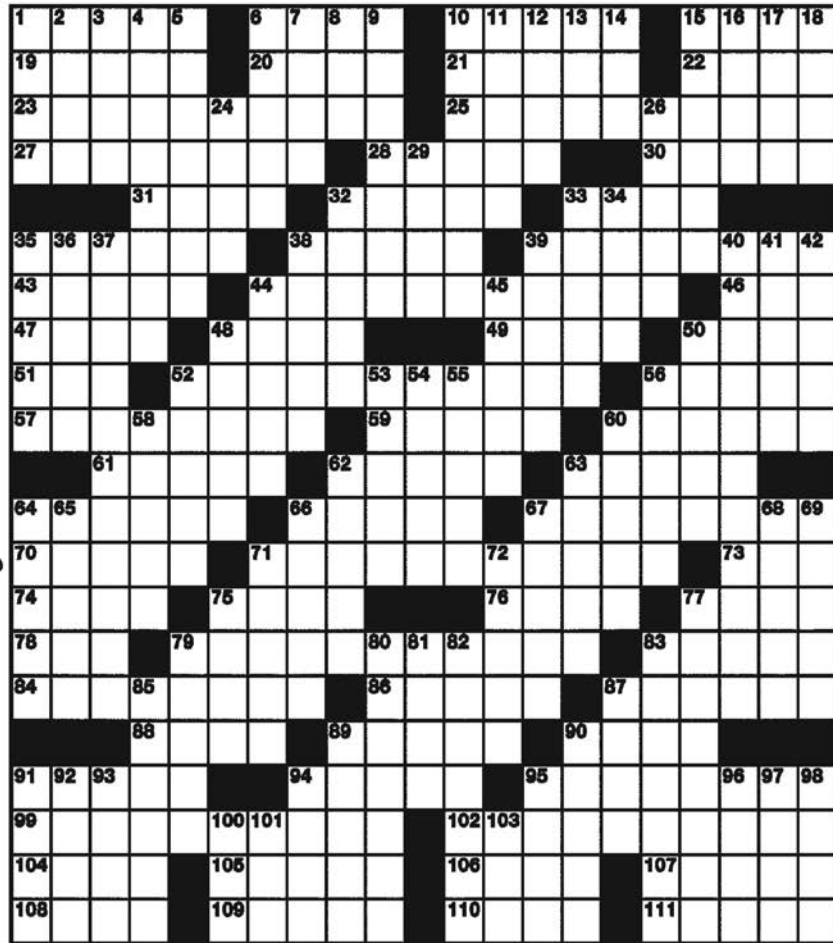
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The Norwalk Patriot

THE NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

Edited by Stanley Newman (www.StanXwords.com)
A CENTURY AGO: What happened in 1921
by S.N.

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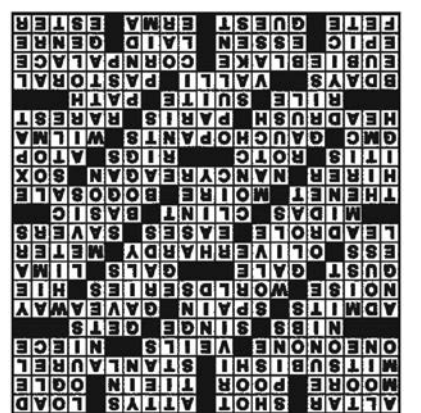
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ADVERTISING POLICY

The Norwalk Patriot reserves the right to censor, reclassify, revise or reject any ad. The Norwalk Patriot is not responsible for incorrect ads beyond the first business day of an ad scheduled. Please check your ad on the first day of publication and report any errors we have made to the Classified Department at 562-904-3668 at the beginning of the next business day to have it publish correctly for the remainder of the schedule.

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.

term "sliders" for its mini-burgers. (Down) is credited with coining the grains. WHITE CASTLE (40) with art made of corn and other PALACE (102 Across) is decorated for of South Dakota's CORN Apocalypse. Each year, the exter- role in The Four Horsemen of the Rudolph Valentino's star-making became a 1921 craze as a result of GAUCHO PANTS (79 Across)



LEGALS

TITLE 24 OF THE CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS, INCLUDING THE APPENDICES, COMPRISING THE 2019 CALIFORNIA BUILDING CODE; PART 5 OF TITLE 24 OF THE CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS, INCLUDING THE APPENDICES, COMPRISING THE 2019 CALIFORNIA PLUMBING CODE; PART 3 OF TITLE 24 OF THE CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS, INCLUDING THE APPENDICES COMPRISING THE 2019 CALIFORNIA ELECTRICAL CODE; PART 4 OF TITLE 24 OF THE CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS, INCLUDING THE APPENDICES, COMPRISING THE 2019 CALIFORNIA MECHANICAL CODE; AND PART 10 OF TITLE 24 OF THE CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS, COMPRISING APPENDIX 1 OF THE 2019 CALIFORNIA CODE FOR BUILDING CONSERVATION.

Public Comment: Interested persons may review the agenda report for the above-described matter at the City's webpage at: <https://www.norwalk.org/city-hall/meeting-agendas-393>. Until further notice, the City Council meetings will be conducted pursuant to the provisions of the Governor's Executive Orders N-25-20, N-29-20, and N-35-20, which does allow for City Council and/or staff to videoconference. As a precaution to protect staff, our constituents, and commissioners, public access to the meeting in person is not allowed due to the Governor's Executive Orders. You may watch the meeting from home on Charter Channel 3, Verizon Fios Channel 32, or livestream through the City's website. Additionally, as City Council meetings are now closed to the public, if you wish to make a comment on the item (during the meeting), you may provide input either by phone or electronically through the following procedures: 1) By emailing publiccomments@norwalkca.gov. Please limit your comments to three (3) minutes maximum, which is the same time allotted at meetings, emails will be read during the meeting; or 2) By dialing into the Zoom Meeting at (669) 900-6833, Meeting ID: 709 573 2685; and Passcode 784059, to speak on the item. If you challenge the proposed matter, you may be limited to only those issues raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered prior to the public hearing.

More Information: Questions concerning the public hearing matter should be directed to Theresa Devoy, City Clerk, at (562) 929-5720 or clerk@norwalkca.gov.

Accessibility: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in a City meeting or other services offered by this City, please contact the City Clerk's Office at (562) 929-5720. Notification at least 48 hours prior to the meeting or time when services are needed will assist the City staff in assuring that reasonable arrangements can be made to provide participation in the meeting or service.

Dated this 8th day of January 2021.

Theresa Devoy, CMC
City Clerk

The Norwalk Patriot
1/8/21, 1/15/21

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE
FOR CHANGE OF NAME
CASE NUMBER: 20LBCP00305**

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner DEVIN BROWN filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Present name (1) TRESTIN TAING Proposed name (1) TRESTIN TAING

THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.

NOTICE OF HEARING
Date: FEBRUARY 5, 2021, Time: 8:30 a.m., Department: 27, Room: N/A
The address of the court is 275 MAGNOLIA, LONG BEACH CA 90802, GOVERNOR GEORGE DEUKMEJIAN COURTHOUSE
A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once a week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in the county, THE NORWALK PATRIOT, DECEMBER 24, 2020
JUDGE MARK C KIM
Judge of the Superior Court
Petitioner or Attorney, In Pro Per
DEVIN BROWN
4325 KEEVER AVE
LONG BEACH, CA 90807
(562) 726-0548

The Norwalk Patriot
1/1/21, 1/8/21, 1/15/21, 1/22/21

PROBATE

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF: THERESA GREEN CASE NO. 20STPB10481

To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the WILL or estate, or both of THERESA GREEN.

A PETITION FOR PROBATE has been filed by ROBERT A. SASLOW in the Superior Court of California, County of LOS ANGELES.

THE PETITION FOR PROBATE requests that ROBERT A. SASLOW be appointed as personal representative to administer the estate of the decedent.

THE PETITION requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the personal representative to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the personal representative will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.

A HEARING on the petition will be held in this court as follows: 01/19/21 at 8:30AM in Dept. 29 located at 111 N. HILL ST., LOS ANGELES, CA 90012

IF YOU OBJECT to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.

IF YOU ARE A CREDITOR or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58(b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law.

YOU MAY EXAMINE the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk.

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STEPHANIE CHAO- SBN 294712
BORDEN LAW OFFICE
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TORRANCE CA 90501
12/25/20, 1/1, 1/8/21
CNS-3426206#
THE NORWALK PATRIOT

CNS 3426206
The Norwalk Patriot
12/25/20, 1/1/21, 1/8/21

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF: GARTH L. RUFFNER CASE NO. 20STPB10586

To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the WILL or estate, or both of GARTH L. RUFFNER.

A PETITION FOR PROBATE has been filed by MEGAN RUFFNER in the Superior Court of California, County of LOS ANGELES.

THE PETITION FOR PROBATE requests that MEGAN RUFFNER be appointed as personal representative to administer the estate of the decedent.

THE PETITION requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the personal representative to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the personal representative will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.

A HEARING on the petition will be held in this court as follows: 01/21/21 at 8:30AM in Dept. 79 located at 111 N. HILL ST., LOS ANGELES, CA 90012

IF YOU OBJECT to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.

IF YOU ARE A CREDITOR or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58(b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law.

YOU MAY EXAMINE the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk.

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A Dear Neighbor - John Lukacs

By Vickie Williams

John was 10 years old when his Uncle Isodoro Lukacs, his father's brother, returned home 30 years later reduced to skin and bones.

Isodoro's eyes were sunken with dark circles around them. His chin bones seemed thin as razor blades, and he weighed only 50 pounds.

He looked like he had been eaten by cancer, a fossil of what he once was - a ghostly figure, barely alive. Emotionally dead on the inside. His skin was pale. Once muscular, tall and handsome, he had lost his sense of self.

Isodoro was a prisoner of war captured by the Russians during WWI in 1917 and hauled off to a lead mine in the bowels of Siberia, a place of biting cold - no place to be somebody.

It was dark, dank and dangerous: void of sunshine and fresh air, nothing green or lively about it. He returned home with legs like sticks. Starved. Scarred. Broken. Only God knows what he suffered.

He was only 17 when he was drafted and captured, robbed of his youth, his life, his personhood, his family, the things he loved. Barricaded in the perils of the unfamiliar. Slammed in a dungeon with no way out.

Upon returning home in 1947, Isodoro had forgotten how to speak his native language and only spoke Russian. He could no longer feed himself and wore a diaper.

John's mother, with a torn heart, fed him and changed him like a baby with tenderness and compassion. "My mother was a strong woman. Her name was Helen." John admired her deeply.

Isodoro was a counterfeit of what he once was, a stranger to himself and others, useless as a hole in a paper bag, and stripped

of human function beyond medical interventions, prayers, miracles and hope. He trembled. He mumbled. His eyes teared.

He passed away in 1947, two months after returning home. It was a year John would never forget: a year of sadness, pain, tragedy and mental torture, a reminder of the devastation of war and man's inhumanity to man.

Isodoro's condition and death left indelible memories in John's mind. Two other uncles never returned from WWI, possibly buried in a mass grave without a proper burial, without closure or the family's final goodbyes. "War. War. War." John hated it.

During WWII in 1945, John's father, Carl, went to war and was captured by the Russians. He was put on a train headed to a concentration camp in the Ukraine. His five-year-old sister Elizabeth died of pneumonia that same year.

On the shoulders of his mother's strength, courage, resolve and faith, she guided the family through dismal times in the absence of John's father and the loss of his sister Elizabeth. Food was scarce and rations were thin.

Vouchers were issued for sugar, flour, coffee, canned goods, meats and cheeses. Beans and more beans and rotten potatoes. Cigarette shortages. Overwhelming starvation and grief. War ... clouds upon clouds of darkness - more and more trials, troubles and tribulations.

While John's father and two other soldiers were being transported by train to a prison camp in the Ukraine, they used a pocketknife to cut a hole in the wooden floor and crawled under the train to escape. As they maneuvered through danger, fate shined favorably on them.

A Ukrainian family housed them, buried them in the loft of their barn under bales of hay, and fed them for 27 days. They met other extended hands

along the way. It took the three escapees a year to find their way home.

They combated hunger and the elements and skillfully stayed out of harm's way. Confronted with an intolerable winter, sunshine birthed hope. They had no compass, followed the stars and traveled roads from memory.

If caught, they would be shot on the spot. In 1946, John's father made it home and brought light into the family.

However, the Russians won WWII, confiscated the land and Hungary became a satellite state of the Soviet Union. The vineyards, wineries and farmlands of the people, including John's family, became state-owned property.

Ironically, families that owned the land were paid by the government to work on it. "Americans know nothing about socialism or communism." John's words rang with strong conviction.

War ... an abomination, immense suffering, immeasurable grief, and incalculable loss that turned his family's and countless others' worlds upside down.

John Lukacs was born on August 11, 1937, in a lush green village known as Somlovasarhely, south of the Danube, fertile in vineyards on the Pest side of Budapest where the less affluent lived.

His native land is known for thermal baths, storybook castles, and colorful floral gardens. Vineyards were plentiful. When John was seven, his father, Carl, put him to work. Carl owned a vineyard and a winery. He also owned land on the other side of town.

He taught John how to tie grape leaves to prevent them from falling. John grew up in a close-knit, self-sustaining community.

Continued on page 16

LIEN SALES

Extra Space Storage will hold a public auction to sell personal property described below belonging to those individuals listed below at the location indicated:

- 10950 Firestone Blvd Norwalk, CA 90650
- 01/29/2021 10:00am
- Richard Rollyson Household Items
- Hiliodoro Manjarrez Household items
- Diana Crouch Household items
- Catherine Alonzo Household items
- Carlos Torres Household items
- Ella Enciso Household items

The auction will be listed and advertised on www.storage-treasures.com. Purchases must be made with cash only and paid at the above referenced facility in order to complete the transaction. Extra Space Storage may refuse any bid and may rescind any purchase up until the winning bidder takes possession of the personal property.

The Norwalk Patriot
1/8/21, 1/15/21

NOTICES

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA,

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Eric Dickey

Eric Jerome Dickey, a bestselling author whose work depicted modern black life, died Jan. 3 at the age of 59 after a long illness.

Dickey was a stand-up comic before becoming a popular author. His books sold over 7 million copies, many of them ending up on best-selling book lists including USA Today and the Wall Street Journal.



He wrote in the crime thriller genre and his books were praised for their depiction of contemporary black life. His bestsellers include "Friends and Lovers" and "Milk in My Coffee."

His 1996 debut novel, "Sister, Sister," was named by Essence magazine as one of the 50 Most Impactful Black Books of the Last 50 Years.

His last book, titled "The Son of Mr. Suleman," will be released in April.

Helen Jackson

Helen Jackson, the last known surviving widow of a Civil War veteran, died Dec. 16 at a Missouri nursing home. She was 101.



Jackson volunteered as a caregiver to Civil War veteran James Bolin when she was a young woman and he, a neighbor, was in his final years.

He appreciated her help, but he couldn't afford to pay her - so he offered to marry her so she would inherit his Civil War pension when he died. The two were wed in 1936, when she was 17 and he was 93.

Jackson told few people of the marriage, not wanting to invite salacious gossip about the arrangement. She kept her name and continued living at her own home even after the marriage, though she still helped care for Bolin until his death in 1939.

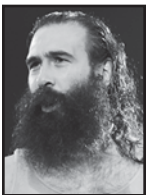
It was only in recent years, as she planned her own funeral, that Jackson disclosed the truth of her early marriage. Prior to the disclosure, the last known surviving widow of a Civil War veteran had been Maudie Hopkins, who died in 2008.

Jackson's marriage was verified by the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War via testimony of a witness, as well as a notation of the ceremony in Bolin's family Bible.

Jackson never remarried, and she was active in her community as a member of her local garden club, historical society, and other groups.

Jon Huber

Jon Huber, a professional wrestler known by his ring names Luke Harper and Brodie Lee, died Dec. 26 at the age of 41 from a lung issue.



Huber was

best known by his professional wrestling monikers Luke Harper and Brodie Lee. He wrestled as Brodie Lee on various independent circuits until he signed a development contract with WWE.

With the WWE, he used the ring name of Luke Harper. He teamed with Erick Rowan as part of "The Wyatt Family" and the pair won the NXT Tag Team Championship.

Harper competed in the "Royal Rumble" in 2014. He then entered singles' competition and won the WWE Intercontinental Championship.

Most recently, he wrestled for AEW and won the TNT Championship.

Paul Westphal

Paul Westphal, a five-time NBA All-Star who later became a head coach, died Jan. 2 at the age of 70 from brain cancer.

Westphal, a California native, was a star guard at USC who was an All-American. Known as a fierce competitor, he was drafted in the first round by the Boston Celtics and helped them win the 1974 NBA championship.

He was traded to the Phoenix Suns, whom he led to their first NBA finals appearance in 1976, where they lost to the Celtics. He also played for Seattle and the New York Knicks and then finished his outstanding career back in Phoenix.

After his playing days were over, Westphal coached for many years, including head coaching stops in the NBA and college. He was elected to the Basketball Hall of Fame in 2019.

Phyllis McGuire

Phyllis McGuire, the last living member of the McGuire Sisters, the pop singing group that had hits including "Sincerely" and "Sugartime,"



died Dec. 29 at her home in Las Vegas at the age of 89.

McGuire began singing with her sisters, Christine (1926-2019) and Dorothy (1928-2012), when she was just a small child. They began singing at church and their audience grew over the years until they signed a record deal in 1952. The youngest sister, McGuire became the group's lead singer as they topped the charts with their sweet harmonies.

The McGuire Sisters had No. 1 hits with "Sincerely" in 1955 and "Sugartime" in 1957, as well as many other Top 40 hits.

McGuire notoriously became romantically involved with crime boss Sam Giancana, though she said she knew nothing about his criminal activities. The relationship damaged the group's public image, and they disbanded in 1968.

McGuire embarked on a solo career, though she often returned to perform with her sisters, including for five U.S. presidents and Queen Elizabeth II.

Dawn Wells

Dawn Wells, the actress who played the down-to-earth farm girl Mary Ann on the 1960s sitcom "Gilligan's Island," died Dec. 30 at the age of 82 in Los Angeles from complications related to Covid-19.

Wells was beloved by generations of fans for her role as Mary Ann, a counterpoint to the glamorous Hollywood star Ginger, played by Tina Louise, who is now the last surviving cast member.

The silly sitcom about a group of tourists stranded on a desert island was very popular during its original run and for years after in syndication. Wells reprised the role of Mary Ann in the three reunion TV-movies that aired years later.

She started out mostly in guest roles on TV shows such as "Bonanza" and appeared on "Alf" and "Roseanne" after "Gilligan's Island."



Joe Clark

Joe Clark, the former principal of Eastside High School in Paterson, New Jersey, who inspired the 1989 film "Lean on Me," died Dec. 29 at his home in Gainesville, Florida after a long illness at the age of 82.



Clark became known for his unusual disciplinary methods as principal, which included walking the school's hallways carrying a baseball bat and a bullhorn. He expelled hundreds of students who were troublemakers or frequently tardy and absent, insisting on a culture of respect toward teachers and learning.

Though Clark's unorthodox methods brought criticism, they did result in a modest increase in test scores and were hailed by some as a success and an inspiration.

Clark was featured on the cover of Time magazine and invited onto TV shows including "60 Minutes," and in 1989, Morgan Freeman portrayed him in the hit movie "Lean on Me."

In later years, Clark worked as the director of a New Jersey juvenile detention facility.

K.C. Jones

K.C. Jones, the steady point guard for the Boston Celtics who helped lead the team to eight NBA titles as a player and then two more as the head coach, died Dec. 25 at the age of 88 from Alzheimer's disease.



After his playing career, Jones won three more championships with the Celtics, one as an assistant coach and two more as head coach.

He also won the 1955 and 1956 NCAA championship at the University of San Francisco and an Olympic gold medal with Bill Russell, who would also be a teammate with Boston.

While in the NBA, Jones was

one of the league's best defensive players. As a head coach, he won the 1984 and 1986 NBA titles for the Celtics with star Larry Bird.

He was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1989.

Leslie West

Leslie West, guitarist and vocalist for the pioneering hard rock band Mountain, best known for their song "Mississippi Queen," died Dec. 22 at the age of 75 in Florida after being taken to the hospital following a cardiac arrest.

West formed Mountain in 1969 with Felix Pappalardi, who was working with the hard rock trio Cream on their album "Disraeli Gears." West played guitar while Pappalardi was on bass; they shared vocal duties.

Mountain played at Woodstock with drummer N.D. Smart on the second day of the legendary rock fest.

After Woodstock, Corky Laing replaced Smart and the band recorded their hit rock song "Mississippi Queen." The song is a staple of classic rock radio with a signature guitar riff and cowbell.

The band were pioneers of a heavier rock sound that was highly influential on the emerging heavy metal genre. West, looked up to by many rock guitarists, was known for his unique tone.

Mountain broke up in 1974 but would re-form on and off throughout the years.

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A Dear Neighbor - John Lukacs

Continued from page 14

They used horses and mules for transportation and transporting goods. The people raised sheep, goats, cattle and pigs. It was excellent land for grazing and farming.

John's grandfather Joseph donated land to a priest to build a small Catholic chapel. John has a prized painting on his living room wall of the village where he was born, and his eyes sparkled as he proudly pointed to the small chapel Joseph's donation made possible.

John said he was a quick learner and a bright student. He spoke two languages: Hungarian and English. At the age of 14, he had the option of going to trade school or high school.

He enrolled in trade school to become a machinist: four hours in the classroom and four hours of workshop, five days a week. After completing the first year and passing the exam, he earned 25% of the master machinist's pay. After the second year, he earned 50% of the master machinist's pay.

Each year, if the criteria of completing the course work and passing the exam were met, the pay increased by 25%. In 1956, John's life was interrupted and he did not finish the course.

An uprising led by university students in Budapest against Russian oppression and occupation became a revolution once the masses joined in.

The first two weeks the Hungarians won, but the Russians sent in 2,000 tanks and recaptured the cities. Twenty-five hundred Hungarians and 700 Soviet troops were killed during the conflict, significant casualties on both sides.

A no-win situation, the ugly facts of war. John was drafted in the Hungarian Army in 1956

and was to report in April 1957. He failed to report and escaped to Austria in January 1957, landing in a refugee camp.

Over 200,000 Hungarians escaped from Soviet occupation. Over 6,000 people were in the camp. It was overcrowded and people were being shipped to other countries, including the U.S.

John had relatives in America, an uncle who had a beer bar and a grocery store in Detroit and a grandfather who worked in a coal mine in Pennsylvania. He had hope.

He went to the U.S. Embassy and was told he would be granted a visa to America if he volunteered to join the military for five years. He accepted the deal and received his visa in October 1957.

He landed in New York on October 17, 1957. It was his ticket out of the refugee camp, his escape from communism. John joined the U.S. Army and did his basic training at Fort Jackson in South Carolina for 16 weeks.

This included heavy weapons training with 50-caliber mortars and scorpion tank maneuvering. He went to North Korea in 1958 as a Private First Class E-3.

While in North Korea, John developed appendicitis and didn't know it. He almost died. He couldn't eat. An Army physician gave him some pills and told him to return to the frontline.

He had dropped from 156 to 112 pounds. Three days later, he had emergency surgery in Japan that saved his life. The physician who gave him the pills was removed from duty. John spent 39 days in the hospital.

When John returned to the States in 1960, after two years in North Korea, he was stationed at Fort Louis in

Washington and received a Specialist E-4 rank as a squad leader. In 1962, he became an E-5 and was a platoon sergeant.

He took a test to earn the rank. That same year, John passed the test to become a U.S. citizen. During his five years in the military, John took correspondence courses. "I'd do anything to get the rank. I'd clean the toilets, if necessary."

In 1963, the U.S. military needed advisors to go to Vietnam and John volunteered. In order to become an advisor, he had to take special training, and his paperwork was sent to the Pentagon for approval.

A month later, he received notice he was rejected because his parents lived in a communist country. His parents were interviewed by the Pentagon in Hungary. John met with his commanding officer and was told he was not approved.

However, the commander encouraged John to stay in the Army. He advised John to join the Green Berets. "I told him 'adios'." On May 8, 1963, John received an honorable discharge from the U.S. Army.

He lived in Detroit for a while and in other places in the States, eventually finding his way to California.

John attended Compton College and Cerritos College and also a technical institute in Rosemead for ultrasonic x-ray, isotope and magnetic rays. His resume includes working for Rockwell, Boeing and Aerojet.

He worked on the Apollo program, a GPS satellite program for five years, and a nuclear project for 12 years. John had Department of Energy and Secret clearances. Although he didn't earn a college degree, John was grandfathered in as an engineer.

He has been married for 56 years and has two sons. One

son is an emergency room physician assistant in Florida and the other is an executive in marketing in Irvine, California.

He has four grandchildren. Lauren graduated from Cal Poly Pomona. She is an office administrator. Gavin is studying at Fullerton College and is an outstanding soccer player.

Dylan will be completing high school in 2021 and is in a gifted program. He received the top student academic award for the state of Florida and a letter of congratulations from the Governor.

His goal is to become a physician. Katrina is a sophomore in high school and has been a ballerina since she was five years old.

John and his wife, Renee, knew each other only two months before they were married. She laughed as she told the story about their wedding, while showing me their wedding pictures.

One of the church member's daughter was married two months before and graciously loaned Renee her daughter's wedding dress. John had black hair and was in an elegant black and white tuxedo with military spit-shined black shoes.

Renee looked pristine with a flowing veil and a flowing white gown tailored to her body. (I never would have guessed that the gown was borrowed.) Renee commented, "I think that wedding dress was a blessing to more than me."

"We were so poor we couldn't afford to pay for the wedding dinner." An uncle gave them the wedding dinner as a gift.

John and Renee have lived the American dream and are grateful to be Americans. I am proud to have them as my neighbors.

In 2013, when John and Renee first moved next door, John extended his hand to me while introducing himself. He volunteered to cut a branch off my persimmon tree, which was hanging over my brick wall into public space.

He seems to always be volunteering for something. "If



The village of Somlovasarhely.

you need help or anything, let me know."

Recently, for his 83rd birthday, John bought himself a new car. I asked him what his APR was. He smiled. "I paid cash. I can't take it with me when I die. I might as well spend some of it."

Later, I thought, "What a foolish question to ask. I know John's got bank."

John rides his bike, patrolling the neighborhood and keeping a watchful eye on the surroundings. He picks up trash and cleans up fallen leaves from my sidewalk. He helped me get rid of an opossum.

I had ten skunks in my backyard. John spotted them and informed me. He graciously volunteered to call our councilwoman to ask if the city of La Palma could assist me in getting them off my property.

He also provided me with her phone number. Surprisingly, the councilwoman knocked on my door weeks later. That was kind of her, but I had researched and knew the city wouldn't do anything, and the skunks had already been removed.

John and Renee offered to split the cost of getting rid of them. However, I cordially declined. I felt strongly that it was my responsibility to get rid of the skunks. I appreciated their offer.

On hot days, John gives bottles of cold water to the

postal workers who drop off the mail. He proudly displays the American flag every day. He keeps his vegetable and floral gardens manicured and does the work himself.

He has assisted me charging my battery in Miss Daisy, my 1988 Fleetwood Cadillac, and helped me in my vegetable garden. Renee says he looks for my bedroom light to be sure I'm home and safe at night.

When he doesn't see me for several days, he worries. Just recently, when John didn't see me turning the corner for several days waving and saying, "Hey John, how's it going?" nor my bedroom light, I received a message from him (with a thick accent) on my answering machine.

"Hi, Vickie, this is John, your neighbor. I haven't seen you in a couple of days. Are you alright?" - typical John. I called John right away to reassure him that I was okay.

I've not only grown to appreciate John's skills at cultivating yellow and red roses and purple and magenta gladiolus in his manicured flower beds, but I appreciate his people skills at cultivating friendships. I am blessed to call him my neighbor and my dear friend.

Vickie Williams is a member of the writing class offered through the Cerritos College Adult Education Program. It is held off-campus at the Norwalk Senior Center.



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