

Friends, Norwalk leaders pay tribute to Luigi Vernola

■ The former Norwalk mayor died Jan. 1 of Covid-19. Friends and former associates shared their memories.

Contributed by the City of Norwalk

NORWALK – Former Norwalk mayor, City Council member, planning commissioner, businessman, philanthropist, family man, friend and neighbor, Luigi Vernola has sadly passed away. Luigi passed away on New Year's Day at the age of 76 due to complications of Covid-19.

"Luigi was more than a colleague; he was a family friend and mentor, one who has taught me more than anyone can ever find in a book. He lived by his word, loved his family completely..." said Norwalk Mayor Jennifer Perez.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 56 years Joan, his son Thomas J. Vernola, and his daughters Lisa M. Vernola-Salas and Kristina A. Vernola-Freesmeier, in addition to his 11 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Councilmember Tony Ayala remembers Luigi as a person who "... worked hard to make city government more responsive to the people and as such, he was a champion of community policing and maintaining a safety net for Norwalk's residents in need."

Luigi's parents, Tomas and Marta Vernola, emigrated from Italy and eventually settled in Norwalk. They raised three sons and one daughter in the city and they instilled values in their children that Luigi always lived by: attaining an education, hard work, being a provider for your family, and always giving back to your community and church.

Luigi received his education in the Norwalk School District, graduating from Norwalk High School in 1964. While a student at Norwalk High, Luigi met his future wife, Joan Yacobowich. They married in 1965 and remained residents in Norwalk, where they raised their children.

At the age of 20, Luigi purchased his first service station, the first of many, including garages and a towing service.

"I'm saddened to hear of the loss of Mr. Vernola, who was a pillar of the Norwalk Community. He gave so much to the city of Norwalk with his

charities and philanthropy" said Councilmember Rick Ramirez.

Luigi began his public service in the 1980's when he was appointed to the Norwalk Planning Commission. Then, during a special election in 1987, Councilmember Cecil Green was elected to the California State Senate, leaving his council seat vacant.

Luigi was appointed by the remaining members of the council to fill the vacant seat until a new member could be elected. Luigi was proud to fill the temporary seat and eventually ran for, and won, the city council seat in the general election.

Luigi chose to run for City Council because he, like other Norwalk residents, believed Norwalk's best days were ahead. He faithfully served the City from 1987-1994.

As a local businessman, he knew firsthand the responsibilities of running a successful company and city. He made fiscal accountability his top priority. As a councilmember, he was always committed to improving public safety and community engagement as crucial components to the health and success of Norwalk.

Luigi would later serve again on the Norwalk City Council from 2013-2020. He served as mayor several times throughout his public service tenure and most recently served as mayor from 2017-2018.

Time and again, Luigi demonstrated his dedication to the city he loved. He founded and co-founded several nonprofits to promote worthy causes, both in Norwalk and around Los Angeles County.

One such nonprofit is the Santa Sleigh Foundation, which was exceedingly special to Luigi. As part of this program, Luigi would host a breakfast event wherein children could eat breakfast and visit with Santa Claus and they would also receive a gift.

During the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, Luigi would give out over 600 turkeys and other food items to senior citizens and families throughout the community.

"One of the things that 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," stated Councilmember Margarita L. Rios. This was evident in the fact that Luigi would even sponsor



Luigi Vernola was a lifelong Norwalk resident, graduating from Norwalk High School in 1964.

He died New Year's Day after contracting Covid-19.

Photos courtesy City of Norwalk

students for their trips to visit Washington, D.C. with their schools. Councilmember Ana Valencia remembers Luigi as "... a generous and energetic man." Councilmember Valencia stated that she "... had the privilege of witnessing countless times the sparkle in his eyes when he brought joy to the children of our community with Santa's sleigh."

Luigi also helped establish The Friends of the Norwalk Sheriff's Station, an organization that helped the families of our law enforcement community, who had loved ones injured or killed in the line of duty.

Shortly after 9/11, Luigi had a monument erected and dedicated to the first responders of Norwalk's area.

He placed life-size statues of a firefighter, deputy sheriff, California Highway Patrol officer and one of Norwalk's own public safety officers.

He also placed a tableau that is located on the north/east corner of the City Hall lawn, with a bench facing the statue so that people can sit and show gratitude to Norwalk's hometown heroes.

Luigi also helped establish



the Hometown Heroes Banners that line Norwalk's city streets to honor their local servicemen and women.

A Norwalk press release stated that "Over the years, Luigi strived to make Norwalk's motto a reality and help make

it 'A Connected Community.' Luigi Vernola was truly a man who loved his family, city, and country. He will be greatly missed."

LA County Library surpasses 3.1M digital downloads

■ A record number of digital books were checked out in 2020, increasing 34% from 2019.

NORWALK – The LA County Library processed more than 3 million digital book checkouts last year, making it one of the top 15 public library systems worldwide for total annual digital circulation.

LA County Library reached a record-breaking 3,109,225 digital book checkouts via OverDrive in 2020, a 34% increase from 2019.

The high volume illustrates the continued growth and importance of library digital lending of eBooks and audiobooks, especially in a year with building closures due to the global pandemic. LA County Library is one of 102 public library systems worldwide that surpassed 1 million checkouts.

LA County Library has been providing readers 24/7 access to eBooks and audiobooks for several years through OverDrive and its Libby reading app. Reader interest and usage has grown every year.

"The tremendous increase in checkouts of eBooks and audiobooks this year illuminates their growing importance to the people we serve, who want to be able to access library materials, wherever they are. This digital access has been especially important this year, when access to library buildings has been limited," said Sky Patrick, library director.

The highest-circulating title LA County Library readers borrowed through OverDrive in 2020 was "Becoming" by Michelle Obama. The top-circulating genre -- romance -- represents the most popular in a vast catalog that also includes thrillers, mystery, biography/

autobiography, and children/young adult.

The top 10 eBook titles borrowed through LA County Library's digital collection in 2020:

- "Where the Crawdads Sing" by Delia Owens
- "Becoming" by Michelle Obama
- "Educated" by Tara Westover
- "Little Fires Everywhere" by Celeste Ng
- "Crazy Rich Asians" by Kevin Kwan
- "The Giver of Stars" by Jojo Moyes
- "City of Girls" by Elizabeth Gilbert
- "American Dirt" by Jeanine Cummins
- "Nine Perfect Strangers" by Liane Moriarty
- "The Silent Patient" by Alex Michaelides

The top 5 audiobook titles borrowed through LA County Library's digital collection in 2020:

- "Becoming" by Michelle Obama
- "The New Jim Crow" by Michelle Alexander
- "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" by J. K. Rowling
- "The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck" by Mark Manson
- "Where the Crawdads Sing" by Delia Owens
- "Educated" by Tara Westover

"Talking to Strangers" by Malcolm Gladwell

"You Are a Badass" by Jen Sincero

"1984" by George Orwell

"Girl, Wash Your Face" by Rachel Hollis

Visit [LACountyLibrary.OverDrive.com](https://www.lacountylibrary.org) or download the Libby app to get started and borrow eBooks and audiobooks anytime, anywhere.

Editor's note: A story in last week's issue regarding the death of former Norwalk mayor Luigi Vernola was missing a byline. The story was co-written by Daniel Suarez Jr. and Vincent Medina. Suarez is the news editor for Talon Marks and Medina is the community editor.

Weekend at a Glance

Friday 88°

Saturday 86°

Sunday 86°

ON THIS DAY JANUARY 15

1559: England's Queen Elizabeth I was crowned in Westminster Abbey.

1870: The Democratic Party was portrayed as a donkey in a political cartoon.

1889: The Coca-Cola Company, then known as Pemberton Medicine Company, was incorporated in Atlanta.

1892: James Naismith published the rules of basketball.

1947: The mutilated remains of 22-year-old Elizabeth Short, who came to be known as the "Black Dahlia," were found in a vacant Los Angeles lot; her slaying remains unsolved.

1965: The Who's first single, "I Can't Explain," was released.

1967: The first Super Bowl was played as the Green Bay Packers of the National Football League defeated the Kansas City Chiefs of the American Football League, 35-10

1978: Serial killer Ted Bundy murdered two students in a sorority house at Florida State University in Tallahassee.

2001: Wikipedia, a free web-based encyclopedia, made its debut.

2004: The NASA Spirit rover rolled onto the surface of Mars.

2009: US Airways Capt Chelsey Sullenberger guided a jetliner disabled by a bird strike just after takeoff from New York's LaGuardia Airport to a safe landing in the Hudson River. All 155 people aboard survived.

Birthdays

Retired middleweight boxer **Bernard Hopkins** (56), former Dodgers second baseman **Delino DeShields** (52), wrestling executive **Shane McMahon** (51), Academy Award winning actress **Regina King** (50), actor **Eddie Cahill** who portrayed Tag Jones on "Friends" (43), New Orleans Saints quarterback **Drew Brees** (42), Latin rapper **Pitbull** (40), DJ **Skrillex** (33), Emmy Award winning actress **Dove Cameron** (25), and pop singer **Grace VanderWaal** (17).

Deaths

Broadway actress **Carol Channing**, who won three Tony Awards and earned an Academy Award nomination, died on this date in 2019 at age 97.

Dan Haggerty, the actor best known for playing the title role in the film and TV series "The Life and Times of Grizzly Adams," died in 2016 of spinal cancer. He was 74.

Rocky Johnson, a professional boxer who later transitioned to become a championship pro wrestler, died in 2020 of a pulmonary embolism. He was 75.

Professional wrestler **Jimmy "Superfly" Snuka** died in 2017 after battling stomach cancer. He was 73.

Book Recommendation

"Better Luck Next Time" by Julia Claiborne Johnson

It's 1938 and women seeking a quick, no-questions split from their husbands head to the "divorce capital of the world," Reno, Nevada. There's one catch: they have to wait six-weeks to become "residents." Many of these wealthy, soon-to-be divorcees flock to the Flying Leap, a dude ranch that caters to their every need.

All Shook Up

By Yolanda Adele

The summer of 1969 was Elvis Presley's opening night at what was then The International Hilton Hotel in Las Vegas. It was the first time he performed in public for more than nine years.

According to a Newsweek article dated August 11, 1969, the showroom was filled with 2,200 seats two times per day during

four weeks; total attendance reportedly topped 101,509, a new Las Vegas record. The gross receipts were \$1,522,635 also a Las Vegas record.

My husband made reservations six months in advance to be there for our seventh wedding anniversary; it was his anniversary gift to me. The orchestra played the powerful theme from 2001 Space Odyssey to a reverberating crescendo when Elvis finally made his highly anticipated

appearance and took command of the stage, wearing a white jump-suit.

The air seemed to fill with electrifying energy and euphoria as the audience stood and applauded with thunderous frenzy. My husband bribed a couple of waiters and a maitre'd to sit me up front center stage. I didn't sit for long.

I rose and pressed my body up against the platform as some women from behind me rushed the stage when Elvis teasingly pulled his scarf off his neck to wipe his brow (which I now know contains his DNA) before offering it to his adoring fans. I raised and waved my hand to

plea for the apprised scarf. I screamed out his name.

He turned and looked right at me, giving me his trademark, upper lip curled smile, and said "Hold on honey, I'll get to you."

One of his bodyguards pointed a flashlight beam on my burnt orange hot pants and matching calypso blouse that I wore, that seemed to cue the lighting technician, because changing color lights washed over me repeatedly before panning the rest of the audience in the auditorium. Then a single large spotlight followed Elvis as he moved nearer to me and knelt down on one knee directly in front of me.

I was mesmerized by his sapphire-blue eyes as he sang "Love Me Tender." I was sure he was singing just to me.

Slowly Elvis leaned forward to slip his scarf over my head until it reached the back of my neck pulling me closer to him. I stood on my tip-toes, closed my eyes... then he kissed me on the lips softly and tenderly. Women shrieked fervently, but he chose me.

I opened my eyes feeling a bit shook up and disorientated. All sounds seemed muffled before everything went dim and I fell to the ground.

I vaguely heard someone say, "She's fainted, give her

some room!" And I remember thinking, If only Elvis could give me mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

That was 40 years ago, yet the images of that magical time in my life are vibrant in the recesses of my mind; where I visit from time to time when I need a break from the doldrums and I'm once again feeling vital and all shook up.

Yolanda Adele 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.

The Hitch-Hiker

By Sharon Benson Smith

Mom was an avid fan of the movies. She particularly liked the classic black and whites such as "Casa Blanca", "Key Largo" and "The Postman Always Rings Twice." So, I say I came by my love of movies naturally.

I was watching TV last night and "The Hitch-Hiker" was on. It is a true story and thriller of a psychotic escaped convict who goes on a killing spree that terrorizes the entire Imperial Valley. The movie stars Edmond O'Brien, Frank Lovejoy and William Tallman, and it was directed by Ida Lupino who is credited as being the first female director in Hollywood. You might say it was during the golden days of the Hollywood studio system.

I recall that hitch-hiking and the movie were very worrisome

for Mom. She remembered hearing about the hitch-hiker as she and Dad were raised in Imperial. The hitch-hiker murdered a family of five, a travelling salesman, and kidnapped a deputy from Blythe (in later years, Dad and Mom vacationed here at Walter's Camp).

The reason the movie is so memorable to me is that during the 1950's, before they had cars of their own, brothers George, Cal, and their friends often hitch-hiked to the Pike, the Coliseum, the Atlantic Plunge, to one of the movie theatres on Whittier Boulevard, or just about anywhere they needed to go. Mom voiced her opinion and, as usual, she worried, as "boys will be boys."

The movie portrays two longtime fishing buddies, who are family men from El Centro (this was like going downtown if you lived in Imperial), deciding to go on a fishing trip to San Felipe,

Mexico.

Just south of Mexicali (and again, if you lived in Imperial or El Centro it was just over the border for great Mexican food), they picked up a hitch-hiker, and their world would be turned upside down.

The hitch-hiker outright told them that he would kill them at the end of the trip, and that his destination was Santa Rosalia. It was a hostage situation and escape seemed impossible, as the hitcher held them at gunpoint night and day, and forced them to do his bidding.

The Mexican police got wind of him being in Mexico and they started their pursuit of him. He was eventually caught; the two men survived the ordeal and were reunited with their families.

Billy Cook was put to death in the San Quentin gas chamber at the age of 25. Shortly thereafter, filming began of "The Hitch-Hiker."

Sharon Benson Smith 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.

Paging Dr. Frischer...

By Dr. Alan Frischer

We are still in the midst of this worldwide pandemic. Amazingly, scientists have developed a safe vaccine in record time. In my office, the doctors and staff have already received our COVID vaccinations.



We are all now hearing of a new mutated form of COVID-19. In December, it was announced that the variant, dubbed B.1.1.7, had accumulated 17 mutations and was spreading rapidly in the United Kingdom. It has now reached the USA.

What are the implications for the pandemic? What does this mean regarding the new

vaccines? What do these mutations change about the disease itself?

Please note this: Viruses mutate all the time. COVID is no exception, and mutates regularly, acquiring about one new mutation in its genome every two weeks. Many mutations are silent, meaning they cause no change in the structure of the proteins they encode. Other mutations may lead to structural changes. The key question is whether the virus mutates enough to be considered a significant deviation.

Here are the important concerns about any newly mutated virus:

Does it spread more rapidly?

Mathematical models suggest that this new mutation might be up to 70% more transmissible than the original virus. That could be because eight of the 17 new mutations on the B.1.1.7 variant are on the spike portion of the coronavirus shell, allowing it to more easily bind to receptors on the cell surface, and thus to infect the cell. (One source called it "stickier.")

Does it cause a milder or more severe illness?

It probably does not cause a more severe disease, and at this point, does not appear to be any more fatal than the original virus.

Is it still susceptible to therapeutic agents such as monoclonal antibodies?

This new variant may affect the ability of some treatments currently in development against the virus. Time will tell.

Will the current vaccines still produce immunity?

The new vaccines do appear to be effective against this new mutation. For the virus to evade the vaccines currently in use, it would not only have to change significantly, but do so in a way that changes the way the virus functions. That has not happened to date. Even if the virus mutates that much, the major vaccine makers have the ability to modify their vaccines, and it could be possible to have a new vaccine in a matter of weeks.

For now, a more contagious COVID virus means that EVERYONE needs to take public health measures even more seriously, including social distancing and mask wearing. I urge you to become vaccinated with one of the new vaccines just as soon as you are given the opportunity. They are extremely safe and highly effective, protecting some 95% of us against COVID, even in the face of these new (and inevitable) mutations.

Let's all do our part during this pandemic, and get past it as quickly as possible.

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

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Georgia delivers a victory for moderation

By Steve Chapman

In recent years, the American political system has featured a clash of extremes. Republicans moved so sharply to the right that even past presidential nominees Mitt Romney and John McCain no longer fit in, and Donald Trump stoked the ire of the sort of people who stormed the Capitol building yesterday. Meanwhile, leftists such as Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren have gained greater influence over Democratic policies.

But last week's election in Georgia was a thumping victory for moderation. How so? First, because voters rejected the candidates endorsed by Donald Trump even as he strove to overturn Georgia's presidential vote. Second, because both Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue emphasized their allegiance to Trump at his most outrageous.

The president is very good at revving up the base of the Republican Party. He got 11 million more votes in 2020 than in 2016 election. The problem for him and his party is that he's even better at mobilizing Democrats. Joe Biden outdid Hillary Clinton by more than 15 million votes.

The stunning outcome of the two Senate races in Georgia, with Democrats winning both, is more proof that the king of Mar-a-Lago is often his own worst enemy. Republicans typically win the state's runoff elections because they've been better at getting to the polls. On Monday, veteran Republican strategist Karl Rove predicted they would win both races.

The GOP did all it could to make this an election about ideology, portraying Democrats Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff as radical leftists. With control of the Senate hanging in the balance Perdue's campaign theme was "Win Georgia, Save America." Loeffler insisted,

"We are the firewall to stopping socialism."

But they may have alienated more people than they persuaded. Warnock and Ossoff leaned toward the center — declining to embrace the Green New Deal, "Medicare for All" or defunding police. In the end, their comparative moderation was more appealing to voters than fire-breathing conservatism.

It has been 20 years since Georgia elected a Democrat to the Senate. The state hasn't voted for a Democrat for president since 1992. But with Trump antagonizing suburbanites and driving Democrats to the polls, Georgia has lost its place as a GOP stronghold.

Maybe Republicans who have become evangelists for the cult of Trump should reassess. Four years ago, the GOP held not only the presidency but both houses of Congress. Today, Democrats control all three.

But anyone panicking about the onset of socialism should switch to decaf. The Senate will be dealing with a president who represents the moderate wing of the Democratic Party — and who has made it clear that his agenda will not be plagiarized from progressives. In striving for bipartisan cooperation, Biden will be looking for solutions that stand a chance of winning over at least a few Republicans.

He also has to placate centrists in his own party, who are not about to indulge any left-wing fantasies. The Moderate Democrats PAC has channeled support to 10 Democratic senators. The group includes Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Jon Tester of Montana, who represent red states, as well as Bob Casey of Pennsylvania and Gary Peters of Michigan, who represent swing states.

Some Democrats who aren't on the Moderate Democrats PAC list nevertheless earned an "F" on the leftist website Progressive Punch.

Among them are Michael Bennet of Colorado, Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire and Mark Kelly and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona.

It's senators like these who will decide the fate of legislation in this Congress. With the thinnest possible margin, Democratic leader Chuck Schumer will have to keep the moderates on board to have any chance of success. Far from empowering socialists, the new Senate lineup will erode their influence.

Incremental change, not radical reform, is the only realistic way to advance Democratic policies. Likewise, in his judicial nominations, Biden will have to steer down the middle of the road.

Democrats also have to contend with their dismal showing in 2020 down-ballot races. They lost seats in the U.S. House and failed to wrest control of a single state legislative chamber from Republicans.

I asked Jerry Taylor, president of the moderate Washington think tank the Niskanen Center, what he made of the new alignment. "The governing coalition in America during the 117th Congress will be built from the center of American politics," he said. "And happily, the extreme wings of each party have beclowned themselves and lost political strength."

Americans, by and large, are a moderate people, gravitating to sober, practical policies. This year, they may finally have a government that matches.

Steve Chapman is a syndicated columnist and blogs for the Chicago Tribune.

Trump's apologists owe America an apology

By Jeff Robbins

The neo-fascist mob that bashed in Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick's skull with a fire extinguisher, wielded lead pipes, ransacked Congress and terrorized members of Congress have a plausible claim that they were only following orders — those of the president of the United States. Donald Trump had told them it was their duty to come to Washington, D.C., on the day Congress would count the electoral votes that would make Joe Biden the next president, promising them a "wild" time if they did.

He personally addressed them, exhorting them to go to the Capitol and express their hatred with all their might. "We are going to have to fight much harder," he told them. "You will never take back the country with weakness."

Namesake and certified nitwit Donald Trump Jr. urged the crowd to make it painfully clear to legislators that they had better swallow the fraudulent fiction that his father had won the election. Or else, "We are coming for you," he said. Donald Trump lawyer and frantic pardon-seeker Rudy Giuliani was blunter yet, telling the thousands of storm trooper-wannabes that they should engage in "trial by combat."

The mob did as it was told, savaging the Capitol and inflicting on the country one of the gravest acts of domestic terrorism in our history. But it was backed by innumerable enablers and fawners and acolytes, politicians and right-wing commentators and ordinary Americans alike, who have gushed and giggled as Trump has

trashed decency and democratic values — not merely since Nov. 3 but daily over the last four years. These individuals bear a share of responsibility for our national shame.

Some of them who have coddled Trump and defended him day after day for years now pronounce themselves shocked — shocked! — at last week's attack on America.

It's a nice try. But they own it. And they owe their country an apology.

The president assured the insurrectionists he assembled that he would accompany them to the Capitol, which doubtless reinforced their confidence that they were doing their Fuhrer's will. Evidently, however, he was stricken with a bout of Sudden Onset Bone Spurs (SOBS) and instead slipped back to the White House to watch on television while his people (to whom he said: "We love you. You're very special.") laid siege to the Capitol on his behalf. After 24 hours of unflattering media coverage of the attempted putsch, Trump was persuaded to tape a statement that he condemned violence, a performance so patently insincere that it made videotaped confessions by hostages held captive by Hezbollah seem voluntary by comparison.

To his credit, Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa., called out his fellow Republicans, who had hyped Trump's garbage claim that he won the election, stoking unhinged conspiracy theories that helped trigger Wednesday's assault and that leave our government vulnerable to further domestic extremism. These Republicans are, Toomey noted,

"complicit in the big lie." But the Trump presidency has been rife with lies since its inception. The talk-show jocks, the Fox News celebrities, the Republican loyalists and the small-time right-wing commentators who thrilled to Trump's diseased machismo have done America incalculable damage.

The risible, Goebbels-like lying about a "rigged" election (it wasn't) that Trump won (he didn't) did not suffice to stir these individuals' somnolent sense of decency. But this was unsurprising. They supported Trump when he attacked Dr. Anthony Fauci, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, even when those attacks placed them in physical danger. They supported him when he called for retaliation against journalists and political opponents, when he mocked a reporter with a physical disability, when he derided war hero John McCain because McCain was captured while serving his country. They supported him when he tried to extort a foreign leader into fabricating an "investigation" intended to defame the likely Democratic presidential nominee, and when he fired devoted public servants for telling the truth.

Donald Trump's defenders do not merely share the blame for last week's events. They have let America down. And whether America will ever fully recover is an open question.

Jeff Robbins, a former assistant United States attorney and United States delegate to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, was chief counsel for the minority of the United States Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.

The presumption of liberty

By Judge Andrew Napolitano

The concept of personal liberty is that our rights come from our humanity. If you believe in a Supreme Being, as I do and as the Declaration of Independence presupposes, then you acknowledge these rights as a gift from the Creator. If you doubt or reject the existence of a Supreme Being, you can still accept the personal origin of these rights. Humans are rational beings and the essence of natural rights is the exercise of reason to seek the truth. The individual employment of unimpeded reason is the exercise of a natural right.

Either way — whether divinely created or humanly adapted — under the Natural Law, our rights come from within us. This is not a mere academic argument. Rather, it has profound everyday consequences. A right is an unconditional claim against all others that does not require validation or approval. Thus, your right to the freedom of speech enables you to think what you wish and say what you think and publish what you say. Nature — or as Thomas Jefferson said, "Nature's God" — has given you that right.

The origin of natural rights is self-evident. How is it self-evident that our rights are natural and not governmental in origin? Because we have them in the absence of government.

Thus, when government, whether by legislation or executive command, purports to interfere with your natural rights, it does moral violence to you. The framers of the Constitution — who had suffered such violence under British rule — understood this and provided for protection against government assaults upon natural rights.

That protection is called due process. This is a complex area of the law. Yet, reduced to its essence, it means that the government can only

interfere with life, liberty and property after a fair trial, before a neutral judge and jury, at which the government must prove fault on the part of the person whose life or property it wants or whose liberties it seeks to curtail.

I offer this primer to address a troubling issue now facing Americans: voluntary servitude. After nine months of the COVID-19 pandemic-induced experiment in totalitarian-leaning governments, many of us still live in cities or states where — to paraphrase University of Sydney Professor John Keane — the popularly attractive exercise of arbitrary power has produced a level of comfort in popular compliance, and this comfortable compliance is voluntary servitude.

Stated differently, the government and its medical personnel have scared the daylight out of so many people that they take comfort in complying with government commands to stay home, shut their businesses and socially distance. This voluntary servitude is a pernicious evil as it encourages those in power to continue to trample natural rights. And the more those in power get away with rights trampling, the more common it will become and the more folks will accept it.

The 13th Amendment, which was enacted to abolish slavery, only prohibits involuntary servitude. Its drafters and ratifiers never imagined this voluntary version.

Among the rights most severely restricted today are those of assembly, travel and commercial intercourse. And none of these restrictions has come about via popularly enacted legislation. All have come about through unlawful and unconstitutional executive commands.

Last week, a federal judge in upstate New York became the first in the nation to order a governor to produce hard evidence to justify his closures of businesses, particularly restaurants. Lamentably, the governor's own evidence revealed that 35 times more people have been infected with COVID-19 while in their homes than by the patronage of restaurants.

I applaud this judge — he is skeptical of government commands and is moving in the direction of human freedom — but he has largely missed the point. The point is that freedom is the default position because we are born with the right to exercise it. Government can only interfere with personal freedom not by demonstrating the evidentiary basis for its commands but by proving wrongness on the part of the people whose freedom it wants to curtail.

The exercise of a natural right — so long as it does not nullify another's natural right — simply can never be wrong.

When government interferes with natural rights outside of due process, it fails its obligation to uphold the Constitution. And when governors and mayors use the power of the state to interfere with rights that are guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, they explicitly violate federal law and expose themselves to federal prosecution.

Government is essentially the negation of liberty. What liberties may government morally negate? It may only interfere with the liberty of a person who has nullified someone else's natural rights. Suppose the rights nullifier is the government itself? When that happens, according to Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, it is the duty of the people to alter or abolish the government.

That's where we are today, at the beginning of 2021. We live under governments that not only fail to protect personal liberties, not only fail to recognize their validity and primacy, but actively assault them. And these assaults have been accompanied by sometimes soothing and sometimes terrifying scientific-sounding language, which has induced voluntary servitude.

The danger of voluntary servitude cannot be overstated. When accepted by the masses, it will make the exercise of personal liberties the exception rather than the norm. And it will take the personal courage and public sacrifice of revolutionaries to resist it.

The only reason we have even a modicum of personal liberty today is because of determined and often unpopular men and women who refused to surrender their natural rights. Where are courage and sacrifice when we need them?

Judge Andrew Napolitano is the senior judicial analyst for Fox News.

Letters to the Editor:

A mistake to impeach

Dear Editor:

The impeachment against President Trump started by the House of Representatives is a futile exercise with a foreordained result because the Republican led Senate will not follow the House leadership.

Although is politically correct to impeach the President, I think is a mistake because it will make him a martyr and enhance his image among his followers.

It is better to let him fall on his own, which is likely to happen because his vanity does not allow him to accept that he lost the election and will continue to argue that the election was stolen from him without providing any proof of how it was done.

I don't believe that the President will do any harm to the country in the few days that he still has in the Executive branch. He has to be careful to not destroy whatever chance he has of running again for elective office. He is not a doofus.

Jorge Montero Downey

Calvary Chapel

Dear Editor:

For a church not to obey a health directive that is killing 200 people a day in L.A. County is unbelievable. ("Calvary Defies Health Orders," 1/7/20).

Basically Calvary is saying we are not required to help stop the spread of a deadly virus. This shows how much they care for our community.

But Calvary Chapel is special. They feel that duty to God, as they see it, is more important than the protection of its members and our local population. I don't think God would agree with this mentality.

The division in our country is evident. Must it now spread to our places of worship and divide us there as well?

David Casillas Downey

The Norwalk Patriot STAFF

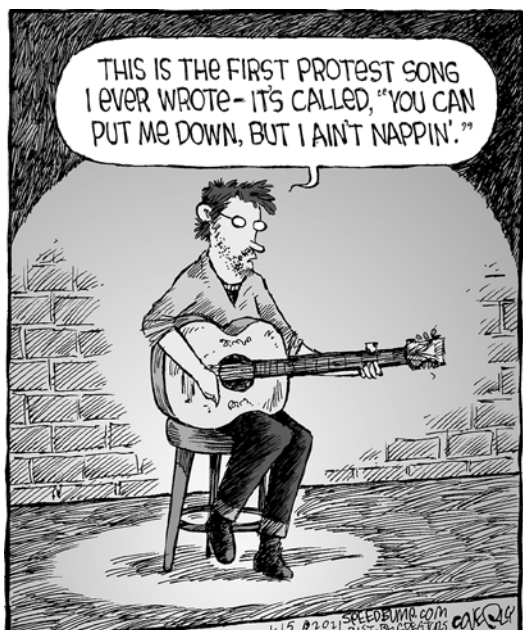
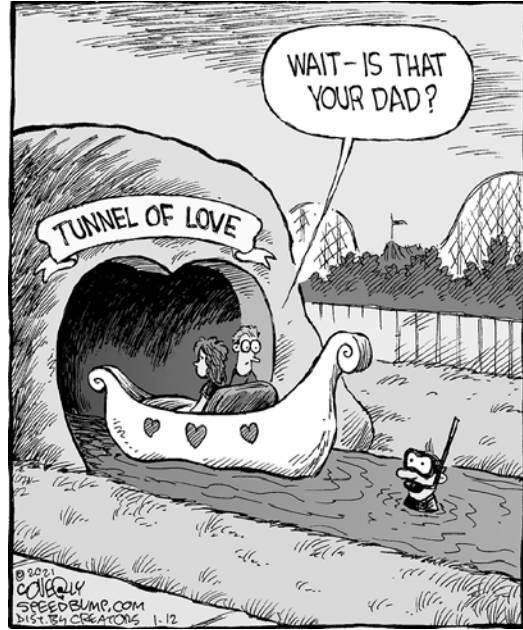
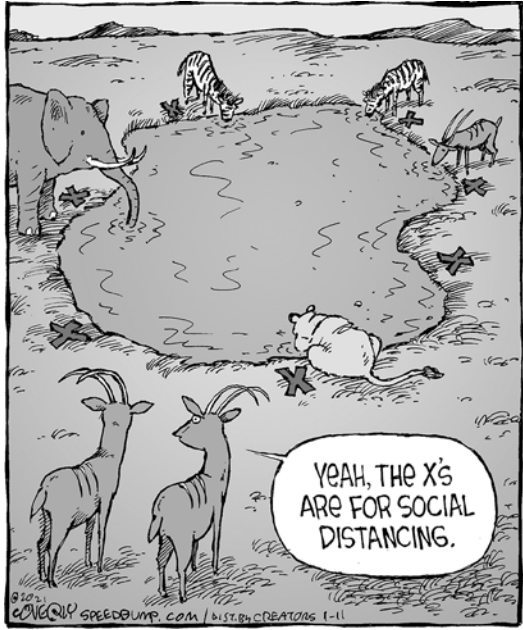
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONDAYS

1st, 6:00 p.m. - Public Safety meetings - Council Chambers

TUESDAYS

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Farmers Market - Norwalk City Hall
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, 7:00 p.m. - American Legion Post No. 359 - 11986 Front St.
2nd, 7:30 p.m. - Golden Trowel -Norwalk Masonic Lodge

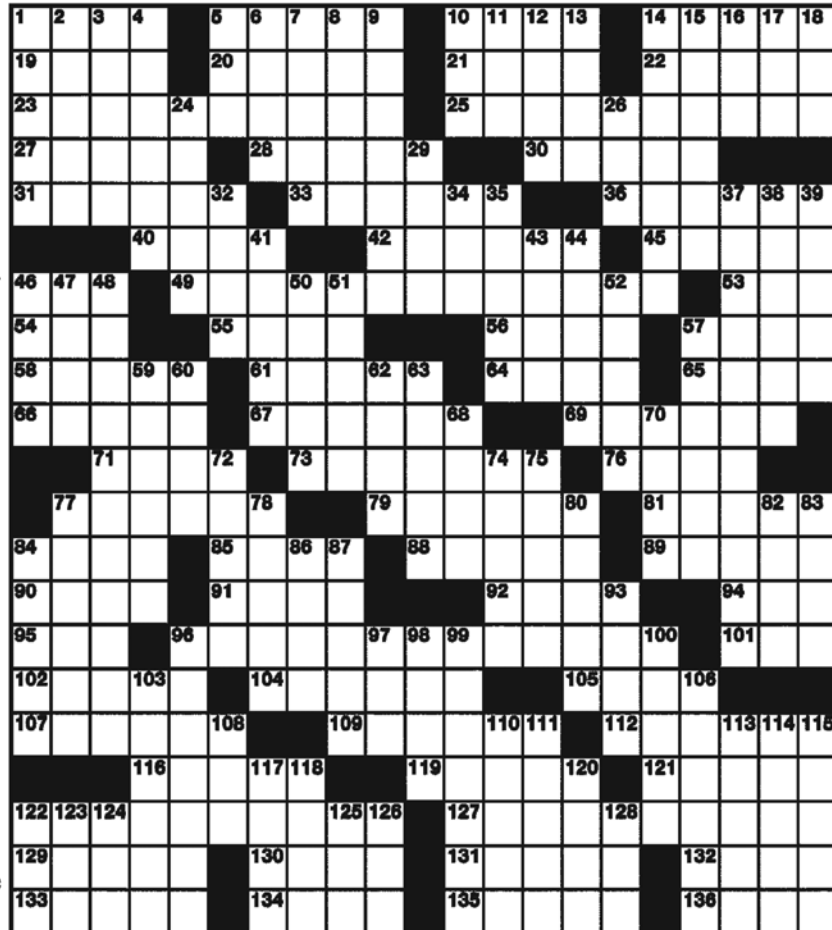
SATURDAYS

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Farmers Market - Norwalk City Hall
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

THE NEWSDAY CROSSWORD Edited by Stanley Newman (www.StanXwords.com) TASTY TRIO: Explained at 128 Down by Gail Grabowski

- ACROSS: 1 Take a spill, 5 La Scala's city, 10 Like many a 46 Down, 14 "To recap..."

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

half of Munch's lifetime output. over 1,200 of his paintings, over Edward Munch's birth, and holds opened in 1963 at the centennial of the Latin word for "high." Oslo's surprising, FEMUR (1 Down) is and built by three years. Not luxury car make, preceding Lexus (Across) was the first Japanese Created in 1986, ACURA (102

LEGALS

of earned retentions directly to an escrow agent at the Contractor's expense. No such substitutions shall be accepted until all related documents are approved by the City Attorney.

Dated: January 7, 2021

By: Glen W.C. Kau Director of Public Services/City Engineer

The Norwalk Patriot 1/15/21

may request that the City make payments of earned retentions directly to an escrow agent at the Contractor's expense. No such substitutions shall be accepted until all related documents are approved by the City Attorney.

Dated: January 7, 2021

By: Glen W.C. Kau Director of Public Services/City Engineer

The Norwalk Patriot 1/15/21

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:

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01/29/2021 10:00am

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Diana Crouch Household items

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Carlos Torres Household items

Ella Enciso Household items

The auction will be listed and advertised on www.storagetreasures.com. Purchases must be made with cash only and paid at the above referenced facility in order to complete the transaction.

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

NOTICES

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner DEVIN BROWN filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:

Present name (1) TRESTIN BRACKENS to 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.

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

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

PROBATE

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.

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.

Attorney for Petitioner JENNIFER A. LUMSDAINE - SBN 232751, MEGAN A. MOGHADDERI - SBN 312998 TREWDAY, LUMSDAINE & DOYLE, LLP 3900 KILROY AIRPORT WAY SUITE 240 LONG BEACH CA 90806 BSC 219218 1/1, 1/8, 1/15/21 CNS-3428120# THE NORWALK PATRIOT

CNS 3428120 The Norwalk Patriot 1/1/21, 1/8/21, 1/15/21

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF RHONDA L. SINGLETON AKA RHONDA BURLEY-SINGLETON Case No. 21STPB00001

To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the will or estate, or both, of RHONDA L. SINGLETON AKA RHONDA BURLEY-SINGLETON A PETITION FOR PROBATE has been filed by: KERI C. BERNSTINE in the Superior Court of California, County of LOS ANGELES, STANLEY MOSK

A HEARING on the petition will be held on FEBRUARY 8, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. in Dept. 67 Room N/A located at SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, 111 NORTH HILL STREET, LOS ANGELES, CA 90012, STANLEY MOSK

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.

The Norwalk Patriot 1/15/21, 1/22/21, 1/29/21

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Head coach Dave Holmquist leads the men's basketball team practice in preparation for their game on Saturday at Biola University in La Mirada. (Photo by Keith Durflinger)

Finally! Live sports returns to Biola

The men's and women's basketball teams will play a condensed conference schedule with no fans in attendance.

By John M. Sherrard Contributor

LA MIRADA - At long last, the first live sporting event on the campus of Biola University in 10 months.

The men's and women's basketball games will take place Saturday when the NCAA DII Eagles host Northwest Nazarene of Nampa, Idaho.

With the 2020-'21 season delayed 11 weeks due to Covid-19, the teams will take to the hardwood in Chase Gymnasium.

The men will tip off at 2 pm, followed by the women at 5 pm. No fans will be allowed at the game, but it will be live streamed for free on the Biola Athletics YouTube page.

Because of the concerns of Covid, both teams will only play a 13-game season, instead of the usual 30-plus games.

The 11-team conference will be broken up into three "pods." The Hawaii pod features Hawai'i Pacific, Hawai'i Hilo and Chaminate, while the Northern pod consists of Academy of Art, Fresno Pacific, Holy Names and Dominican.

The SoCal pod is Biola, APU, Concordia and Point Loma. Each team will play the other three teams four times, to make up the 12-game conference schedule. Throughout the six-week season, the teams will play each opponent in a back-to-back format on Friday and Saturday.

At the conclusion of the regular season, the NCAA DII postseason is scheduled to start in the second week of March. NNU and Biola are both in the West Region.

The last games played by the Biola men's and women's teams were held 10 months ago in the PacWest Conference Championship Tournament.

The women lost a close semifinal game to DII No. 3 Hawai'i Pacific, 68-65, while the men had a similar heartbreaker in the championship game, losing to Point Loma, 98-95 in overtime.

"I am very excited about our season," sixth-year Biola Women's coach, Alan Nakamura, said. "We have a wonderful group of high quality young women. They are intelligent, talented, coachable, and really care about each other.

"We are going to need to be ready. We are playing an NCAA-mandated reduced schedule, and every game on our schedule

is against the best of the West Region."

The Biola women are a young team with just one senior and six freshmen.

Senior captain Jazz Benn, a 6 ft. forward who averaged 10.7 PPG last year, will be counted on to lead the team along with the other two captains, redshirt junior guard/forward Danita Estorga (10.7 PPG) and junior guard Aysia Johnson (7.4 PPG).

"They personify the high character athletes we are building our program with," Nakamura said. "They are accomplished and are givers, on and off the court. Their desire is to do all they can for the benefit of the team. They are excellent representatives of all that is good about Biola."

Nakamura also had high praise for Johnson and Estorga's basketball skills as well.

"In addition to their leadership skills, they can also run the offense, attack off the bounce, knock down three's, and grab tough rebounds," he said.

Benn is a four-year starter, earning All-Conference recognition each year. In addition, she is President of Biola's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.

"We've been working out way longer than a normal preseason," Benn said. "It's definitely going to be exciting. These are crazy circumstances right now."

Benn was no doubt referring to having no fans in the gym for the games.

As for the opening game Saturday against Nazarene, Benn said, "Any game that we have, it will help us in the future. I think we're really ready for it. I'm trying to use this time to have a good year."

Nakamura added how valuable Benn will be to the team this year.

"She is a versatile six-foot player who can defend all five positions, is an excellent play-maker and can score at all three levels."

A top returner out of Brea-Olinda High School is sophomore guard Stephanie Lee. Last season she earned the PacWest Freshman of the Year Award, earning five Freshman of the Week Awards along the way.

"In addition to her top level ability to score, Stephanie's real strengths are her knowledge of the game, teachable spirit, and ability to make the right play for the team," said Nakamura of the long-range specialist.

Lee led the team with a conference-leading 62 three pointers last season.

"Jazz and Stephanie are high quality young women," Nakamura said.

Benn had high praise for the

sophomore. "As a freshman (last year), she was a big part of our team."

Lee, along with the rest of the team, is ready to start the season.

"Our whole team is very excited," she said. "We've been preparing for this for six months.

"At first it was pretty different, wearing a mask and all. But wearing a mask has helped our conditioning. Our coaches have done a great job getting us ready for the season."

As for her take on Nazarene, Lee added, "We just want to go out there and do the best we can. It's going to be a lot different."

"We haven't got a lot of chances to play anyone. We have just scrimmaged each other."

Nazarene, a member of the Great Northwest Athletic Conference (GNAC), is playing an independent schedule this season due to only two remaining teams (Nazarene and St. Martin's).

"They are a very strong program and have done very well in the West Region under fifth-year coach Steve Steele," Nakamura said of the NNU Women's team.

The NNU Women, who have won 73 games over the last three years, finished 22-7 last season and were ranked No. 5 in the NCAA DII West Region.

Biola Men are ready

The Biola men are chomping at the bit to get on the court for a real game after months of conditioning and limited practice.

"Everyone is excited to finally play a game after so many months of just practicing," said longtime Biola coach Dave Holmquist.

In the PacWest championship tournament last March, the Eagles came up just short of their first title since entering DII. This year marks the second season of post-season eligibility for Biola.

After the three-point, OT loss in the title game, three of the six All-Tournament selections were Eagles and they all return this season.

Senior guard Michael Bagatourian, who stands 6-7 and was All-Conference, senior guard Chris Rossow and 6-5 junior guard Alex Wright all are expected to lead the team in this shortened season.

"Chris played very well down the stretch, especially in the conference tournament," Holmquist said.

In addition to those three starters, the other two starters return, 6-9 senior forward Jesse Elrod and junior guard Whitten Dominguez.

Continued on page 14

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Basketball season gets underway at Biola University

Continued from page 13

conference.

“With the five starters returning from last year, we are an experienced team,” Holmquist said. “Our biggest challenge relates to a lack of depth.

“For different reasons, we will only be suiting up nine players for the first few games. Because of these problems we haven’t done any five-on-five scrimmaging in practice since last March.”

It will be a wait and see for the coaching staff for the first game of the season.

“We have good players though, so if our conditioning can hold up in the early games, we should be very competitive,” Holmquist added. “I’m not sure what to expect in the first game since we haven’t competed five-on-five against anyone, including ourselves, in practice.”

Holmquist added two new freshmen to the 11-man squad, Maximo Milovich, a 6-7 forward from Argentina and Malvin Payero, a 6-0 guard from the Dominican Republic.

Also returning is Solomon Ruddell, a 7-0 junior forward and sixth man for the Eagles.

“Our team is full of strong players, who have great character and are enjoyable to coach,” Holmquist added. Saturday’s opponent, Northwest Nazarene (1-0), opened the season with a win over DI Portland State and was led by senior point guard Ezekiel Alley with a game-high 27 points.

The Nighthawks are on a west coast, four-game swing with additional games against Concordia and Point Loma this week.

They finished 15-11 last season and were 12-8 in

What they said:

Women’s coach Alan Nakamura: “We had to follow strict Covid guidelines throughout the Fall, and the players handled everything with humility and a strong work ethic. Thank the Lord that we have not had any positive Covid tests, and the team has done everything they can to get ready to compete.

“Following Covid guidelines from the state and county, we started the school year with semi-isolation in dorms, online classes and then we progressed to practicing outdoors only. We wore masks, kept our distance and couldn’t share or pass basketballs. We had the usual NCAA limit of eight hours per week in the pre-season.”

Jazz Benn, Sr. forward: “Everything was different, from housing to even having practices outside. After a couple of months, we finally got in the gym.

“(Coach) Alan reaches out to us every day, on and off the court. When I got recruited here, I was super welcomed and when I met coach, I knew I wanted to play here.”

Stephanie Lee, sophomore guard: “Coach is a great guy and cares so much about us. He leads us well.

“In our conference pod, we are playing some great teams and we’ll have to adjust after each game.”

Men’s coach, Dave Holmquist: “We’ve worked hard during the fall. We’re lacking some depth right now, but we have five character guys and good players. We’re trying to find out where we are, because we don’t have a gage on that right now. A lot of things about the team, we’ll learn this Saturday.



Madi Chang passes the ball during the women’s basketball team practice in preparation for their game on Saturday at Biola University in La Mirada. (Photo by Keith Durflinger)

Alex Wright, junior guard: “I’m so excited. It’s game week. You have to just roll with the punches. I just want to be out there in a game. I look forward to be back in the game. I miss the game atmosphere. It’s been 10 months since we last played. We are going to attack every team. This year it’ll (schedule) be a little different. Getting the energy up for the second of the back-to-back in the double header format is crucial.

“We’d really like to come out on top in those games. We can’t take days off this year. We have one of the toughest pods in DII.

“As for Nazarene, we’d rather play a tough team (like NNU), who just beat a DI Portland St. team, than a lesser opponent. We won’t shy away from anything.”

Michael Bagatourian, senior guard: “I’m looking forward to our first game in 10 months. It’ll be a little strange (with no fans). My parents have gone to every game since I was a little kid. It will be strange for them. Nothing really changes. It’s still five-on-five.

“With this first game, we just want to make sure that everything that we’ve been working on these last couple of months before the season is important. The things that we’ve been talking about need to show

up in the game.

“Hopefully all of the work that I’ve put in during the off season is going to come to fruition. It’s been tough with Covid. We haven’t been able to do everything we wanted to do, as far as live basketball goes. I’m just hoping that we go out there and our team plays together.”

Game notebook:

Women: Biola and NNU have played four times in their history, with the Nighthawks holding a 3-1 edge.

The last time the two teams met was two years ago, as the Biola women lost, 97-64. Biola defeated the Nighthawks in 2017, 67-64, with Benn the only remaining player on the current Eagles roster that faced NNU.

Nazarene’s coach Steele

is a local product out of Troy High School, played soccer at Concordia and began his coaching career at Brea O’Linda (Girls basketball), Concordia and Seattle Pacific before taking the head job at NNU in 2016.

NNU, for the first time since 2000, won the regular season conference title and conference championship in 2018 and ’19, respectively.

Men: Biola and NNU have played five games in their history, with the Eagles winning the last three. The last game played was December 11, 1998, with the eagles winning a low-scoring affair, 42-41. Only nine Biola players will be able to play in the first game.

Road to 1,000 wins:

With the season finally getting underway Saturday, longtime coach Dave Holmquist is nearing a milestone that only four other NCAA Division I, II or III coaches have achieved: 1,000 career wins.

Holmquist is currently 992-406 overall and will become one of only five NCAA coaches with 1,000 or more career victories.

Holmquist will eventually join longtime Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski in the 1,000 win club, who has the most wins with 1,157 and is still active.

Only one of the other three coaches is active. Herb Magee of Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia is second to Krzyzewski with 1,123.

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