

Political Metro to reduce bus service races due to operator shortages

getting crowded

■ With the primary only four months away, more candidates emerge for state political offices.

By Alex Dominguez
Staff Writer

NORWALK - Several local political leaders have officially announced their intent to run for election to the Senate and State Assembly.

Bob Archuleta eyes 30th Senate District

Current State Senator Bob Archuleta will seek the 30th Senate District seat, which is a reconfiguration of the 32nd District, where he is the incumbent.

"It's been an honor and privilege to represent District 32 in the State Capitol, never taking for granted the responsibility and faith the people have bestowed upon me," Archuleta said in a press release. "Now, I will continue that same enthusiasm in the new cities and unincorporated areas that make up the 30th Senate District."

Since being elected in 2018, Archuleta has been a strong advocate of several diverse issues, including the environment, military personnel and their families, veterans, homelessness, and public safety.

He became the first Latino Army Veteran named to Chair the Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, and serves on the Business, Professions and Economic Development, Governmental Organization, Transportation and Insurance committees.

In August 2019, Archuleta was appointed to the Governor's Military Council by Governor Gavin Newsom, which oversees 32 military bases in California. He was also selected to chair the Senate Select Committee on Hydrogen and Energy

If elected, Archuleta would maintain representation of the cities and unincorporated areas of Pico Rivera, Montebello, Whittier, Hacienda Heights, La Mirada, Bellflower, Downey, La Habra Heights, Norwalk, Santa Fe Springs, and Los Nietos, while also adding Walnut, Brea, La Puente, City of Industry, Diamond Bar, Valinda, Avocado Heights, South San Jose Hills, and Rowland Heights. He would no longer represent the cities of Artesia, Cerritos, Commerce, Hawaiian Gardens and Lakewood.

64th Assembly District

More than one official has thrown their hat into the 64th State Assembly ring, challenging Downey mayor Blanca Pacheco, who declared her candidacy last month.

The open 64th Assembly District seat represents the cities of Norwalk, La Mirada, Downey, Santa Fe Springs, Cudahy, Bell, Bell Gardens, La Habra, and the unincorporated area of South Whittier. It replaces the current 58th District seat currently held by Cristina Garcia, who is campaigning for a seat in January.

Ana Valencia

Former Norwalk - La Mirada Unified School District Board member and current Norwalk City Council woman Ana Valencia officially launched her campaign in January.

"I am excited to launch my campaign for State Assembly and for the opportunity to represent our communities in Sacramento," she said in a press release. "I understand first-hand the issues facing our district and we must work together to take on the challenges of the pandemic, the economy, our schools, and inside our classrooms."

■ Among the lines impacted is 111, which runs from Norwalk to LAX.

By City News Service

NORWALK - With bus operators leaving Metro at higher rates than they're being hired, the transit agency will temporarily reduce bus service beginning Feb. 20 to avoid more unexpected cancellations.

The Metro Board of Directors voted last Thursday to reduce service due to a bus operator shortage. Between Dec. 13 and Jan. 12, several bus lines had 20% or more of their trips cancelled due to the shortage, including the 754, 207, 206, 204, 111, 150, 210, 108, 240, 40, 53, 117, 115 and 81, according to a staff presentation given to the board.

Metro officials said the cancellations disproportionately impact "equity focused communities," particularly in South Los Angeles.

Metro is working to "reduce service strategically throughout the network with (an) equity lens" using its NextGen Bus Plan as a framework, and working to have no change to the NextGen route network or operating days and times, they said.

The NextGen Bus Plan is Metro's re-imagined bus system that was implemented last year. The goals of the plan were to double the number of frequent Metro bus lines, provide more than 80% of bus riders with 10 minutes or better frequency, improve service and ensure a quarter-mile or less walk to a bus stop for 99% of riders.

As Metro aims to reduce cancellations during the operator shortage, service will temporarily be reduced based on a line's tier within the NextGen Bus Plan. The first tier, which typically has service every 5-10 minutes on weekdays and 7.5-15 minutes on weekends, may be temporarily reduced to 5-15 minutes on weekdays and 7.5-20 minutes on weekends. Of the lines with high cancellations, 753, 207, 204, 111, 210, 108, 240, 40, and 53 are in the first tier.

Beginning Feb. 20, bus service will be reduced by 800,000 "revenue service hours" or the time per year that a vehicle is available for service. Metro aims to begin service restoration in June 2022 at the earliest.

Metro said the reduction of operators has occurred due to a "perfect storm" that includes the national labor shortage, attrition greater than hiring and employees contracting COVID-19.

Metro bus operators began to leave the agency at higher rates than they were being hired in July 2021. Since that time, 356 bus operators have left the agency and only 207 were hired. In December, 11 were hired and 32 left.

According to Metro, reasons for people leaving include retirement, personal reasons, misconduct, new job acceptance and unsatisfactory performance.

The agency has about 3,119 bus operators, and needs to add an additional 448. It's also down 28 rail operators, with only 298 currently working.

The bus operator shortage



has increased bus service cancellations to about 10%-15%, up from the pre-pandemic cancellation average of about 1%-2%, Metro reported.

To hire additional bus operators, Metro is considering increasing their pay from \$17.75 to \$19.12 an hour as a six month pilot. It will also set up career kiosks at Rosa Parks/Willowbrook, East L.A. and Wilshire/Vermont stations in April.

In order for full service to be restored, Metro said it will

need to have no more than 30 new COVID-19 cases per month among operators, have at least 3,677 bus operators and 326 rail operators, and reduce systemwide bus service cancellations to 2%, down from the current 10%-15%.

The agency will also have to reduce its "mandatory call back" to 200 per week, down from the current average of 800. The call backs are a process in which Metro orders staff to work on their days off, which has been occurring during the operator shortage.

Villanueva visits Norwalk to address hiring freeze



■ Norwalk residents voted to raise taxes to improve public safety but the sheriff's department instituted a hiring moratorium.

By Vincent Medina
Contributor

NORWALK - LA County Sheriff Alex Villanueva came to Tuesday's Norwalk city council meeting to discuss their opposition to his moratorium on the hire of LA County sheriff deputies.

The sheriff's action prevents the hire of Sheriff deputies in the city, despite residents' vote to increase the sales tax to fund public safety.

During their meeting on Jan.18, council members expressed their disdain for the moratorium. Councilmembers Jennifer Perez and Margarita Rios called for a "strongly worded letter" to Villanueva and notifying the county supervisors of the issue.

"We are in crisis mode right now," said Sheriff Villanueva on Tuesday. "We do not have the fiscal ability to extend any

contract just because we do not have the personnel."

He explained that the LA County Board of Supervisors has imposed a hiring freeze on the department and that sheriff stations across the board have a 29% vacancy rate.

"This has become an ideological position from the Board of Supervisors," said Villanueva. "They've embarked on this path of defunding the sheriff's department. It basically starves us out as people are leaving or retiring, we are not replacing them."

The sheriff said he desperately wants to provide more personnel and noted that LA County Sheriff's department remains the most understaffed law enforcement agency in the nation.

Perez expressed frustration with the moratorium because the city had planned to increase public safety and that Norwalk continues to pay its contract in full.

"If the county has a problem and they are taking your funding away, take their officers and their sheriffs away and fund those that are actually paying their bill," said Perez. "Our residents are paying the bill for those additional deputies. So if the problem is not with our contract, relieve some of those deputies that are covering those positions in the county."

While Villanueva supports her position, he explained that they cannot take a body from an unincorporated station and move them to a contract city. However, patrol schools of 40 students from custody in training will be moved out to help cover the deficit in public safety.

Villanueva encouraged the council to continue voicing their thoughts to the Board of Supervisors to change their policies.



Barger calls for mask mandate reevaluation

■ Health officials are being asked to reconsider local policies on mask mandates.

By City News Service

LOS ANGELES - One day after Mayor Eric Garcetti and Gov. Gavin Newsom were caught posing for mask-less photos inside SoFi Stadium, a Los Angeles County Supervisor called Monday for state and local health officials to reevaluate COVID-19 mask mandates, saying it should be up to the individual to decide when to wear one.

"Let's do away with blanket COVID-19 masking policies -- they don't make a difference when they're not consistently followed or enforced. We need to trust the public to make the best personal decisions for themselves based on their unique risks and circumstances," Supervisor Kathryn Barger said in a statement.

Barger pointed to Sunday's NFC Championship game at SoFi Stadium, noting there was inconsistent adherence to the mask-wearing requirement.

Most notably, Laker legend Earvin "Magic" Johnson on Sunday night posted a series of photos on Twitter taken that day at SoFi Stadium with mask- less

officials and celebrities, including Garcetti, Newsom, San Francisco Mayor London Breed and actor Rob Lowe. Some people in the photos with Johnson -- including Garcetti and Lowe -- can be seen holding a mask in the photos.

The photos sparked outrage from some critics who accused the officials of hypocrisy when the public is being told to follow state and county mask mandates. Los Angeles County requires all attendees to wear masks at outdoor mega-events, like football games at SoFi Stadium. The state's mask mandate requires people to wear masks at indoor areas of outdoor mega-events.

Garcetti's office told City News Service, "The mayor was wearing his mask during the game and removed it for a brief moment to take a few photos."

Newsom similarly said at an unrelated news conference in Los Angeles Monday that he was "very judicious" about wearing his mask at the game, and insisted he had his mask in his other hand when the photo with Johnson was taken.

He said he only took the mask off momentarily to take the photo.

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Weekend at a Glance

Friday	72°	
Saturday	74°	
Sunday	78°	

THINGS TO DO



Super Bowl Experience
All Weekend, LA Convention Center

An interactive NFL experience with autograph signings, trophy presentations, replica locker rooms, an NFL Draft set, and more. Plus test your ability to kick field goals and toss a Hail Mary. \$20 adults, kids 12 and under free

ON THIS DAY FEBRUARY 4

1789

Electors unanimously chose George Washington to be the first president of the United States.

1861

Delegates from six southern states met in Montgomery, Ala., to form the Confederate States of America.

1913

Civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks was born Rosa Louise McCauley in Tuskegee, Ala.

1938

The Thornton Wilder play "Our Town" opened on Broadway.

1974

Newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst was kidnapped in Berkeley, Calif., by the Symbionese Liberation Army.

1977

The album "Rumours" by Fleetwood Mac was released.

1983

Singer Karen Carpenter died at age 32.



1999

An unarmed West African immigrant was shot 41 times by four plainclothes New York City police officers on an unrelated stake-out, inflaming race relations in the city.

2003

Yugoslavia was dissolved and replaced with a loose union of its remaining two republics, Serbia and Montenegro.

2004

The Massachusetts high court declared that gays were entitled to marry.

2004

The social networking website Facebook was launched.



Birthdays

Former vice president **Dan Quayle** (75), rock singer **Alice Cooper** (74), football hall of famer **Lawrence Taylor** (64), country singer **Clint Black** (60), actor **Rob Corddry** (51), retired boxer **Oscar De La Hoya** (49), pop singer **Natalie Imbruglia** (47), rapper **Cam'ron** (46), and singer **Gavin DeGraw** (45).

Local candidates hope to advance to state office

Continued from page 1

“That’s why I am running for State Assembly, to champion issues unique to our district. I will fight for working families including prevailing wages, quality affordable health care, clean and safe communities, provide assistance to small businesses and families during the pandemic, housing, modernized schools, and fully fund K-12 education.”

She enters her campaign with \$100K and a myriad of endorsements, including Norwalk City Councilman Tony Ayala, La Mirada City Councilman John Lewis, Downey City Councilman Sean Ashton, NLMUSD Board Members President Norma Amezcua, Vice President Jorge Tirado, Chris Staples and Karen Morrison, Cerritos College Board of Trustees members Carmen Avalos and Dr. Shin Liu, South Whittier School District Board Members Jan Baird and Sylvia Macias, Whittier Union High School District Board Members Jeff Baird and Jaime Lopez, and retired Assemblywoman Sally Havice Morales.

More information can be found at AnaValenciaforAssembly.com

Dr. Rob Cancio

Dr. Roberto “Rob” Cancio

is also hoping to claim the 64th Assembly seat.

Cancio is a current NLMUSD School Board member, a college professor, and a decorated military veteran who served in the United States Navy in Iraq. He announced his campaign in January.

“Service – to this country, to the advancement of young minds, and to our working-class community – is my life,” said Cancio in a press release. “I see so much need and anxiety here locally; from COVID, homeless everywhere, and crime on the rise.”

“Solutions? No, the politicians blame and finger point. It’s time for less talk, and more trust. That’s why I’m running.”

A product of local schools, Cancio enlisted in the Navy after graduating from Southeast Military Academy. He served as a cryptologist, completing two global deployments, and being awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Iraqi Campaign Medal, and Global War on Terrorism Service Medal in addition to various other decorations, medals, and citations.

He attended East Los Angeles College for his A.A., UC Berkeley for his B.A., and the University of Miami for his M.A. and Ph.D.

degrees, and has certifications from Harvard University, the University of Florida, and Loyola Marymount University, where he also has taught and regularly published work on mental health, substance use, and violence including research on sexual violence against women in the military.

He had strong words for both voters and his opponents.

“I was prepared to stay on the school board. But when this seat opened up, I looked at the candidates and decided more of the same just won’t do any longer. So, I’m offering voters a choice: more of the same? Or a change to tested, fearless leadership with integrity,” he said.

Cancio has contributed \$150,000 to start off his campaign. More information can be found at votecancio.com.

Elizabeth Alcantar

Mayor Elizabeth Alcantar of Cudahy made her campaign official last week.

The youngest elected official and first Latina Mayor in the city of Cudahy, Alcantar is already credited with leading her city through two separate emergencies: the 2018 Delta jet fuel dump and COVID-19 pandemic.

“I know what it’s like to serve our community during a time of crisis,” Alcantar said in a statement. “When Delta airlines dumped 15,000 gallons of jet fuel on our community, I took immediate action to help inform residents and push for fair restitution for those harmed. When the COVID-19 pandemic began, I led efforts to protect public health and help our neighbors by implementing rental subsidies, food distributions, and meal delivery services for seniors. We must keep working to empower all Californians. I’m ready to be the fighter that our communities deserve so we can finally achieve tuition-free public college, universal healthcare, and strengthen worker’s rights and protections.”

Alcantar represents the City of Cudahy on the Gateway Council of Governments, the Hub Cities Job Joint Powers Authority, and AQMD’s AB617 Community Steering Committee while serving on the California League of Cities, Women’s Caucus Board of Directors.

She has a host of support from local leaders across the district, including Bell City Councilmembers

Monica Arroyo, Fidencio Joel Gallardo, and Ali Saleh, Bell Gardens City Councilmember Lisseth Flores, Cudahy Vice Mayor Jose Gonzalez, and Cudahy City Councilmember Daisy Lomeli, Alhambra City Councilmember Sasha Renée Pérez, Commerce Mayor Leonard Mendoza, Commerce Mayor Pro Tem Oralia Rebollo, Lynwood Mayor Pro Tem Jose Luis Solache, Lynwood City Councilmember Marisela Santana, Maywood City Councilmember Eddie De La Riva, Montebello City Councilmember Scarlet Peralta, South Gate City Councilmembers Denise Diaz and Gil Hurtado, and Montebello Unified School Boardmember Elizabeth Cabrera.



Pressure mounts to revise mask rules

Continued from page 1

“The rest of the time I wore it, as we all should,” said Newsom.

Jessica Millan Patterson, chair of the state Republican Party, was unimpressed by the explanations, saying in a statement, “While they force California children to wear masks in school, Gavin Newsom and friends get to enjoy a mask-free night of football in a packed stadium. His blatant and insulting disregard for his own COVID rules is a crystal-clear sign that it’s time for his Draconian policies and state of emergency to go.”

The county’s mask mandate and other COVID guidelines are set by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, with guidance from the Board of Supervisors. Along with outdoor mega-events with more than 5,000 attendees, people are required to wear masks in all indoor public settings, venues, gatherings and businesses. The rules allow people to take off their masks when they are actively eating or drinking, are alone in a separate space, showering or swimming or receiving personal care services that require a mask to be removed.

Barger -- the only Republican on the non-partisan Board of Supervisors -- said it’s time for masking mandates to be re-evaluated.

Newsom on Monday reiterated his call for the public to wear masks, but he said in the coming weeks the state will announce its “endemic plan” on practices for the state to live with the virus longterm.

SWEET DEALS



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COMBINATION PASTA PLATTER 1. LASAGNA-FETTUCINI-RAVIOLI 2. MANICOTTI-FETTUCINI-MOSTACCIOLI 3. SPAGHETTI-FETTUCINI-MOSTACCIOLI (Each include soup or salad and garlic bread)	\$31.95
Heart Shape Pizza with any two toppings (Extra Topping Add 95¢) with soup or salad	\$28.95
Heart Shape Pizza One Topping Add 95¢ for Extra Topping	\$20.95

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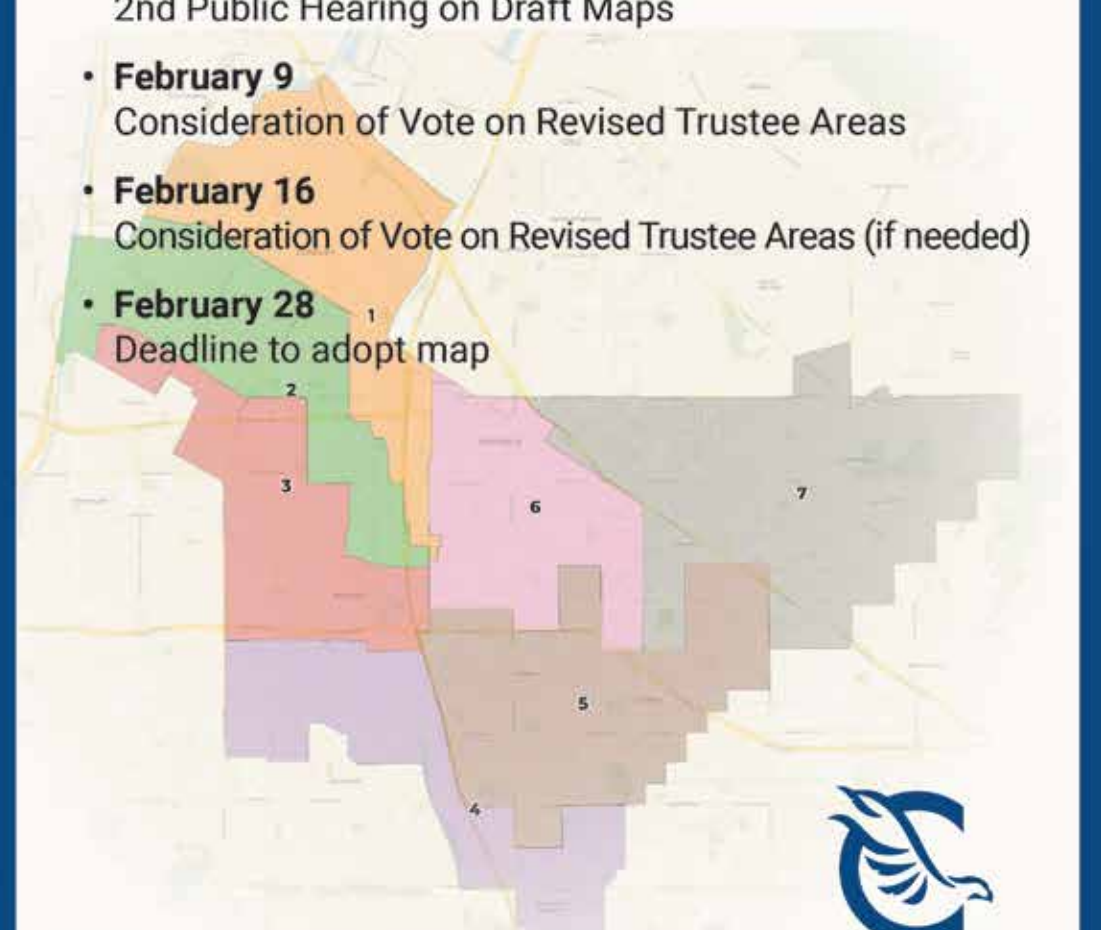
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(562) 923-7248

Redistricting Cerritos College


The Cerritos Community College District is redistricting. Redistricting is the process of adjusting District lines every 10 years after the release of the U.S. Census.

We want public feedback.

- **January 12**
1st Public Hearing and Discussion of Draft Maps
- **January 19**
2nd Public Hearing on Draft Maps
- **February 9**
Consideration of Vote on Revised Trustee Areas
- **February 16**
Consideration of Vote on Revised Trustee Areas (if needed)
- **February 28**
Deadline to adopt map



Visit www.cerritos.edu/redistricting to view the proposed maps and comment.



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Californians look to local leaders for relief ahead of swipe fee increases

By Ali Sajjad Taj

As the holiday season comes to a close and Los Angelenos return to business as usual, one thing that remains is rising prices. Though retail sales spiked well before Christmas, Californians are still finding it harder to grapple with inflation and growing prices at the pump.

One way lawmakers could help reduce the financial strain on Californians is by addressing the root cause of rising swipe fees that unfairly burden small businesses and raise the prices of goods for everyday Americans trying to afford the basic necessities. By promoting competition in the payments marketplace, our elected officials can help end the monopolistic control by the four major credit companies, Visa, Mastercard, American Express, and Discover, that has led to ever-higher swipe fees.

While businesses and the broader economy work to recover from the pandemic-induced recession, Visa and Mastercard, who together control an overwhelming share of the credit card market, are planning to saddle merchants with yet another round of swipe fee increases. The fee hikes were postponed during the pandemic after public and congressional pressure, but have been rescheduled for this April. Californians are now looking to their elected officials on Capitol Hill to stay vigilant and continue their opposition to these upcoming swipe fee increases.

Credit card companies initially used swipe fees to recoup the cost associated with electronically processing card payments by forcing

merchants to pay an additional fee for every transaction. Through technological advances, processing these transactions is now far less costly—though you'd never know looking at the ever-increasing swipe fees.

Instead of keeping swipe fees reasonably priced and closely associated with the cost of processing these transactions, credit card companies have instead lined their pockets and expanded reward offerings for their credit card customers. In 2019, Visa and Mastercard alone raked in over \$67 billion from swipe fees, which is more than double what they earned nearly a decade earlier when there were more costs associated with processing transactions. Given the control these companies have over the payments marketplace, they can continue raising fees indiscriminately.

Swipe fees can range anywhere from 2 to 4 percent, depending on the rewards or bonus points associated with the credit card. Reward offerings are one of the biggest perks to using a credit card, but credit card companies often use a portion of swipe fees to enhance these benefits to attract new card users at the expense of working-class Americans who often do not qualify for the best rewards cards.

Adding a surcharge or banning the use of credit cards would alienate customers and cost more than the business would save on not paying the swipe fees. Therefore, this practice forces businesses like grocery stores and markets—where slim profit margins average around 1 to 3 percent—to raise prices across the board. In California alone, experts say food prices are up an average of 5.3 percent from last year.

Meanwhile, high swipe fees remain hidden to consumers. But across-the-board price increases hit everyone, including under- and unbanked Americans who disproportionately include historically disadvantaged groups. These individuals are far more likely to pay in cash and demographically tend to be younger, poorer, and more diverse. Therefore, already overburdened communities are unknowingly being forced to help pay for credit card reward programs that many of them aren't able to take advantage of themselves. This is particularly true in Los Angeles County where almost one in five neighborhoods lack a bank or credit union, making it hard to cash a paycheck let alone benefit from premium credit card rewards.

In a recent survey, over half of the respondents said inflation was causing either major or minor strain on their financial situation. This increase in the cost of everyday goods paired with sky-high gas prices in Artesia and the surrounding area, which are breaking records, is too much for many families to afford. Credit card companies have acted to increase their own profit with little regard for how they affect merchants or consumers. Californians need their elected officials to keep up the pressure and find ways to increase competition in the payments marketplace to lower prices for everyone.

Ali Sajjad Taj is a city councilman in Artesia.

A beauty queen's tragic death reminds us to always get help

By Froma Harrop

Why did Cheslie Kryst, a former Miss USA with law degree, an MBA and an on-camera gig on "Extra," a celebrity TV show, leap to her death from a posh Manhattan apartment? As the cliché goes, she had everything to live for.

We've heard much about suicides as deaths of despair, with "despair" often defined as drug addictions, job losses and falling income. As far as we know, Kryst did not suffer those afflictions. But then again, neither did fashion powerhouse Kate Spade or celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain, both of whom took their lives.

Despair comes in many forms. Trying to suggest a reason for Kryst's suicide, The New York Daily News landed on the anguish she apparently felt at getting older, a special concern for women who rely on their looks for approbation.

Kryst was 30, perhaps a time when a woman starts aging out of the young-beauty label. But what about her law degree? Lawyers in their 30s are building careers.

For we who can't imagine turning 30 as a cause for despair, much less a reason to die, it may be illuminating to read Kryst's astounding words in a recent essay for Allure magazine.

"A grinning, crinkly-eyed glance at my achievements thus far makes me giddy about laying the groundwork for more," she wrote, "but turning

30 feels like a cold reminder that I'm running out of time to matter in society's eyes — and it's infuriating."

Also, "Society has never been kind to those growing old, especially women."

Though by any standard of beauty, Kryst was still one, it's hard to deny that women getting older don't lose visibility that men of the same age retain. But that all-purpose villain, society, has no army. It is pretty much in people's heads.

We must look at the nature of suicide. Kay Redfield Jamison, an authority on mood disorders, cites mental illness, especially untreated depression, as the most important risk factor for suicide. Downplaying the role of external problems, she quoted a suicide note written in 1931 by a very successful artist, Ralph Barton.

"I have had few real difficulties," he wrote, and "more than my share of affection and appreciation." He said "melancholy" rather than problems in his life were his torment and that people looking elsewhere would have been mistaken.

Suicide attempts are often impulsive, caused by passing crises, experts on the subject say. And that's why suicide rates among owners of handguns are especially high. The death is quick and certain. There's no calling 911 when someone administering a drug overdose has second thoughts.

Marilyn Monroe was another case of a troubled woman who banked on physical attraction. Monroe was 36 when she probably intended to kill herself from an overdose of barbiturates. The Hollywood bombshell was found dead with a phone in her hand, leading police to speculate that she was trying to call for help at the time.

It is notable that Kryst did have other things going for her at the time. She had worked on reforming the American justice system. She did free legal work for prisoners believed to have been sentenced unjustly. And she produced a fashion blog, which enabled her to shine behind a keyboard instead of in front of a camera.

Jumping from a window does not allow for a change of mind, which made Kryst's death extra tragic. Intervention by a mental health professional might have reversed the deep emotional dive that pushed her to self-destruction.

That's the case among so many others suffering mental anguish, who, unlike Kryst, didn't have the financial resources to obtain help. How terribly heartbreaking that Kryst had no one there to pull her from the edge.

Froma Harrop writes about culture, politics and the economy.

Three women tasked with lighting the supreme darkness

By Jamie Stiehm

The new liberal wing of the Supreme Court, if all goes according to White House plan, will be just three women justices defending the Democratic fort of democracy.

Three women aligned with no men on the same side: That's a first in making (or breaking) American history. They are a Latina, Sonia Sotomayor; a Jewish woman, Elena Kagan; and an unknown Black female judge, whom President Joe Biden expects to name this month.

Is there a bright side to a 6-3 Supreme Court, with Republican Chief Justice John Roberts leading the charge against progressive laws?

Outnumbered, these three women can etch the gulf between the parties in crystal clear color. They may be the light in the Supreme Court's heart of darkness.

Perhaps they'll speak to the public square, in a righteous chord that sounds beyond the dry realm of law to live up to the name of justice.

Roe v. Wade is likely up next on the Court's chopping block. It will be imperative for these three women to uphold that reproductive rights are human rights.

Rich diversity from different walks of life — Black, Latina and Jewish — is something Biden and Senate Democrats should embrace and celebrate.

The president promised to change the pool of usual suspects for his pick. Besides, to appoint the arch-conservative Clarence Thomas to fill the great Thurgood Marshall's seat was a blow long ago to the Black community and civil rights movement.

It's all good, to show and tell the American people that Democrats are the party that walks the walk and "looks like America." The phrase originally came from former President Bill Clinton.

Sotomayor, Kagan and a Black woman justice may make the most of their minority status. Like Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a rock star in judicial robes for her eloquent dissents, I expect they'll make their collective presence felt in a sea of Catholic conservatism.

Their life experiences as women will certainly bind them together in a garment of inclusion and cohesion.

Remember, three of the six Republican justices were confirmed in former President Donald Trump's one term. Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett are the Trump Three, the most partisan threesome in history. It's a badge of shame they should never be allowed to forget.

Roberts, who once clerked for Chief Justice William Rehnquist, puts a pleasant veneer on the Supreme Court's most outrageous rulings. Citizens United opened the gates of dark money into campaigns. In 2013, the Supreme Court struck down the heart of voting rights. They have hurt a healthy body politic by ending fair play, especially on race and elections.

Justice Stephen Breyer's retirement, announced last week, opened the way for the triumvirate of women named by Democratic presidents on the bench. Like the late giant, Ginsburg, he was named by Clinton.

"The more women, the better," Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., said.

Three women will hold the fort versus five angry men and a woman

named by Trump while Ginsburg's body was virtually warm in the parlor.

An ultraconservative Hoosier, Barrett didn't bat an eye at swearing in a week ahead of Election Day 2020. ("I'm saving her for Ginsburg," Trump crassly said.)

While her president lost, Barrett won a lifetime post. She's 50.

Biden should name his nominee forthwith, to cut off Republican headwinds sure to blow from Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell's office. Sooner is better. Still, it could be a pitchfork battle.

Plainly put, this Supreme Court is antediluvian. Some say rogue. Roberts may yet earn his place in history next to Roger Taney, author of the antebellum Dred Scott ruling that held that Black people could never be citizens. They often seize on cases for political purposes.

Breyer couldn't contain his disbelief when colleagues ruled against the federal mask mandate to keep workplaces safer in the pandemic.

If the mystery justice came from west of the Mississippi River, not Harvard or Yale, that too would diversify the Court. At least, we'll know she didn't go to Georgetown Prep, the all-male, plush Catholic school (near Washington) that formed Gorsuch and Kavanaugh.

Elite Ivy is growing out of the Court, sinking fast in the public eye. We desperately need Biden's nominee, whoever she may be.

Jamie Stiehm is a syndicated columnist who writes about politics, culture and history.

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www.TheNorwalkPatriot.com

SPEED BUMP DAVE COVERLY



Norwalk Community Calendar

MONDAYS

1st Mon., 6 pm - Public Safety meetings - Council Chambers

TUESDAYS

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

1st & 3rd Tues., 6 pm - Toastmasters Meetings - Registrar Recorder/County Clerks Office

1st & 3rd Tues., 6 pm - City Council - Council Chambers

3rd Tues., 5:45 pm - Housing Authority - Council Chambers

WEDNESDAYS

1st & 3rd Wed., 7 pm - Lions Club - Bruce's Restaurant

2nd Wed., 10:30 am - Norwalk Woman's Club - Faith Church

2nd & 4th Wed., 1:30 pm - Alondra Senior Citizens - Social Services Center

2nd & 4th Wed., 6 pm - Soroptimist International - Via Zoom

4th Wed., 11:30 am - Coordinating Council - Arts & Sports Complex

THURSDAYS

7 pm - Boy Scouts Troop 924 - Norwalk United Methodist Church

2nd Thurs., 6 pm - 605 Kiwanis Club - Mr. Rosewood Family Restaurant

2nd Thurs., 7 pm - American Legion Post No. 359 - 11986 Front St.

2nd Thurs., 7:30 pm - Golden Trowel - Norwalk Masonic Lodge

SATURDAYS

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

2nd Sat., 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. - Pancake Breakfast - 1st Christian Church of Norwalk

Would you like an event listed in the community calendar?
E-mail news@thedowneypatriot.com

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PUZZLE OF THE WEEK

THE NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

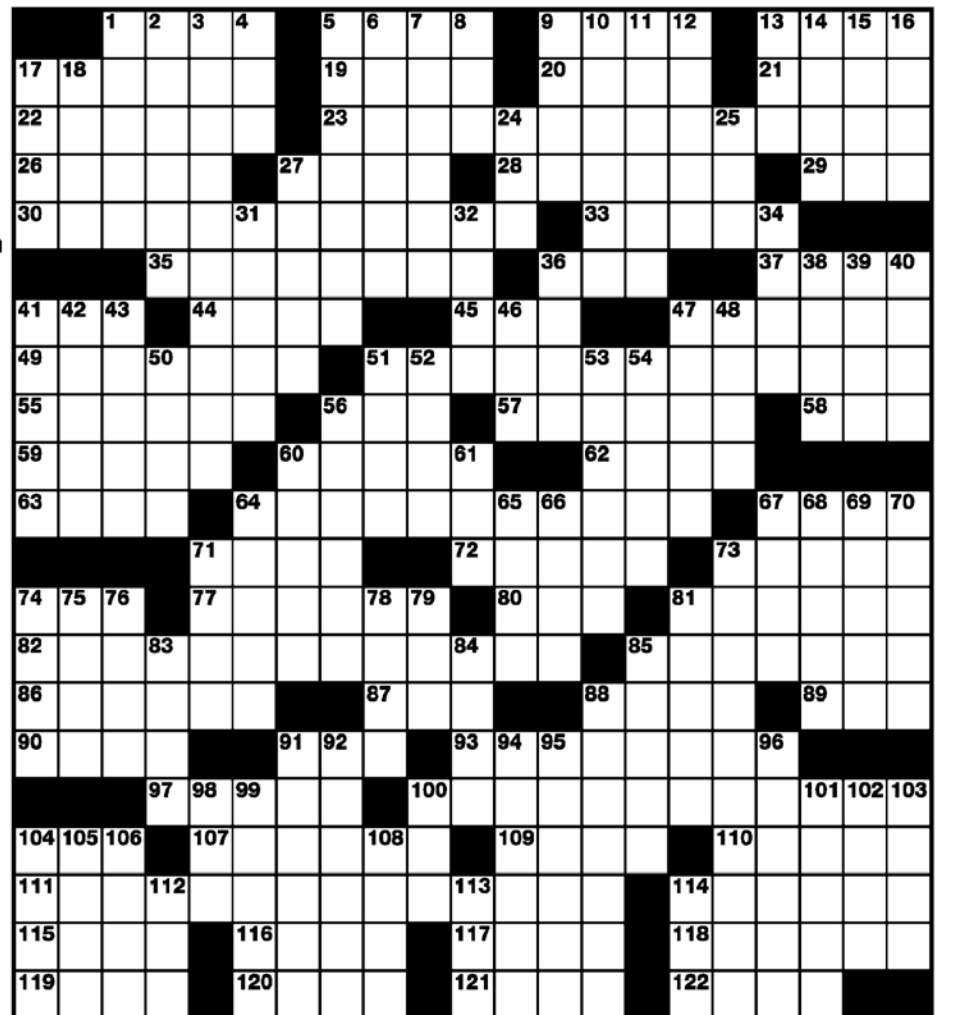
Edited by Stanley Newman (www.StanXwords.com)
DRAWN TWO-SCALE: A doubly notable composition
by Mark McClain

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.

You can contact puzzle editor Stanley Newman at www.StanXwords.com

- ACROSS
- 1 Emphatic Spanish assent
- 5 Shakespearean monarch
- 9 Eisenhower's alma mater: Abbr.
- 13 Uncool one
- 17 Road service responder
- 19 Buck ender
- 20 Street or avenue
- 21 Leaping bug
- 22 Is of benefit
- 23 Certain Caribbean coin
- 26 Raucous battle
- 27 For fear that
- 28 Botanist Burbank
- 29 Moose cousin
- 30 Statement for the media
- 33 Toast opening
- 35 Pass across
- 36 End of an Albertan's alphabet
- 37 Go on the breeze
- 41 Healthful resort
- 44 Poet of ancient Rome
- 45 Reverent feeling
- 47 React to the cold
- 49 Goes quietly
- 51 British nautical measure
- 55 Self-evident truths
- 56 "Jack and the Beanstalk" exclamation
- 57 Worthless
- 58 Devilishly clever
- 59 Mideast money
- 60 Common Western setting
- 62 Engage for work
- 63 Take care of
- 64 Agribusiness enterprise
- 67 ER areas
- 71 Dame __ Dench
- 72 Carousel carving
- 73 Emphatic rebuttal
- 74 Golf pro Ernie
- 77 Panini cheese
- 80 Back muscle, for short
- 81 Treats around a campfire
- 82 Glass or steel, to chemists
- 85 "Sheepskin" certificate
- 86 Big-ticket
- 87 Circus performance
- 88 Female zebra
- 89 Danson of TV
- 90 Fish "found" in a Disney film
- 91 Diversions, for short
- 93 Soothing succulent
- 97 Of fleets
- 100 Genie's place
- 104 Olympic jacket logo
- 107 McDonald's mascot
- 109 Actress Tara
- 110 Skateboarder's leap
- 111 DNA lab procedure
- 114 Choose formally
- 115 Period before Easter
- 116 Creditor's claim
- 117 *Hombre's* house
- 118 Foe of the Cheyenne
- 119 Creative concept
- 120 Throws in
- 121 Coll. near the Rio Grande
- 122 "If all __ fails..."
- DOWN
- 1 Marshy lowland
- 2 Least affable
- 3 Where merchandise is displayed
- 4 Treasury Dept. arm
- 5 Put a tag on
- 6 Whiteboard accessory
- 7 Major arteries
- 8 Steal from
- 9 Language of Pakistan
- 10 Bring comfort to
- 11 Potato order
- 12 Venomous viper
- 13 Whom 49ers toil for
- 14 *Vogue* competitor
- 15 Not made-up
- 16 Not in use, as a theater
- 17 Pack (down)
- 18 All done
- 24 Drink on draft
- 25 Unrefined metal
- 27 Jeans brand
- 31 Envious reviews
- 32 Line of stitches
- 34 Triathlon opener
- 36 Round number
- 38 Rival of Alamo
- 39 Took a spill
- 40 Nickname for a "III" son
- 41 Where to begin
- 42 Playful sprite
- 43 Of bees
- 46 Come in first
- 47 Wet weather
- 48 Literary alter ego
- 50 Related orally
- 51 Colloquial contraction
- 52 Charleston-era architecture
- 53 Far beyond disappointed
- 54 France's longest river
- 56 41 Across treatment
- 60 "Satellite" service
- 61 Princely designation
- 62 Not easily satisfied
- 65 "Seize the day" text
- 66 Actress Drescher
- 67 Object of worship
- 68 French landscape painter
- 69 "I want to get in the game!"
- 70 "What a shame!"
- 71 Green mineral
- 73 Devoid of emotion
- 74 Aired of NASCAR events
- 75 Tales of olden days
- 76 Slender
- 78 Tex-Mex dip
- 79 Nonprescription, for short
- 81 Urban wailer
- 83 Object of worship
- 84 Slanted type: Abbr.
- 85 Michelangelo sculpture
- 88 Health insurance for seniors
- 91 No longer edible
- 92 Ticked pink
- 94 Cowpoke's rope
- 95 Port of Denmark
- 96 Permits
- 98 Creative pursuit
- 99 "And there it is!"
- 100 They pop up on web pages
- 101 Get __ on (learn about)
- 102 Source of salt
- 103 St. __ Beach, FL
- 104 Hybrid citrus fruit
- 105 Tournament ranking
- 106 __ Frank House (Amsterdam museum)
- 108 Monocle, essentially
- 112 Sorority letter
- 113 Ft. Worth campus
- 114 Gibbon or gorilla

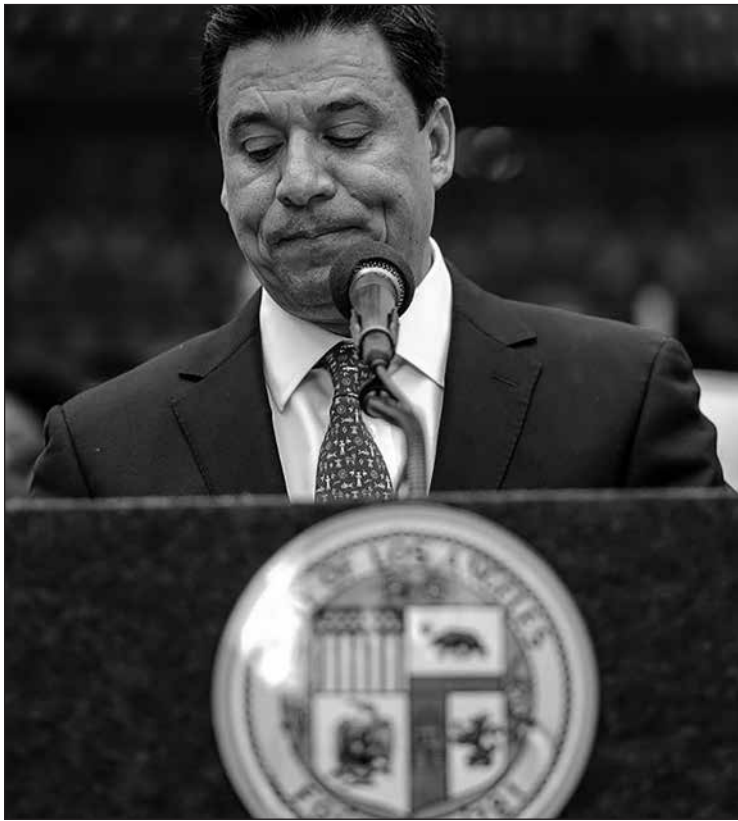
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Reach Stan Newman at www.StanXwords.com

LA judge denies defense bid to have Huizar search results tossed



■ The former Los Angeles councilman is facing federal bribery and corruption charges.

By City News Service

LOS ANGELES — A federal judge Monday denied a bid by Jose Huizar to suppress evidence that the former Los Angeles city councilman was removed from a Las Vegas casino after refusing to reveal the source of tens of thousands of dollars of gambling money he was using when he was identified as an elected city official.

During a lengthy hearing to discuss pending motions, U.S. District Judge John Walter rejected efforts by Huizar's attorney to show that an affidavit used to obtain a search warrant resulting in the seizure of more than three years of Huizar's emails and other documents was overly broad and otherwise faulty. It was one of several defense motions denied by the judge.

In addition, Walter indicated he wants to extend the Huizar trial date from May to Oct. 18. Trials for certain co-defendants could take place earlier depending on the judge's ruling on severance.

Finding that the affidavit discussed in the first motion indicated "a fair probability of Huizar's corrupt intent," the judge determined that "it was

more than reasonable to seek the evidence in the subject's email accounts." The results would be admitted, Walter concluded.

The judge quoted from the 36-page affidavit sworn to by an FBI special agent that details evidence from a variety of sources -- including several witnesses, hotel and casino records, flight records -- establishing that between 2014 and 2016, Huizar made eight gambling trips to Las Vegas with a billionaire Chinese developer alleged to have business in his council district.

Huizar, the central figure in a six-year probe of suspected corruption in City Hall politics, and his associates were allegedly involved in a \$1.5 million pay-to-play scheme in which real estate developers were shaken down for cash and campaign donations in exchange for help getting building projects through the city's approval process.

Defense attorneys contend that Huizar's only crime was acting as an "evangelist for robust development" whose mission as representative of Council District 14 was to bring hotels, apartments, jobs, tourism, and entertainment to the city's downtown, according to court filings.

Huizar's federal public defense attorney, Charles Snyder, alleged there were errors in the government paperwork used to obtain the primary search warrant, and asked Walter to schedule a special hearing to

determine if the agent lied in the affidavit. The judge denied the request.

Huizar, who represented downtown L.A. and was the chairman of the Planning and Land Use Management Committee, has denied all allegations.

The affidavit states that on the ex-city councilman's fifth trip to the Palazzo casino with co-defendant Wei Huang, president of a global development company headquartered in China, casino staff detected "suspicious activity between the two and provided evidence of that suspicious activity to the FBI."

The evidence included surveillance footage of Huizar gambling with Huang and two other co-defendants in a "high-end gambling salon reserved for high rollers" and sharing Huang's casino chips, according to the affidavit.

Additionally, gaming records show that Huizar played and ultimately cashed in tens of thousands of dollars in chips that he did not purchase, and hotel records indicate that the developer gave Huizar private jet transportation and luxury accommodations, prosecutors allege.

The documents include references to the observations of Palazzo employees, some of whom described their interactions with Huizar when they confronted him and asked him to sign documents intended to confirm that, as an elected official and "politically exposed person," he had an "independent source of wealth sufficient to demonstrate that he was gambling with his own money."

Huizar refused to sign the documents, giving the impression that he was trying to "stay under the radar," and was escorted out of the gaming area for failing to provide information "to allay the casino's suspicions that he was engaging in corrupt activity on its premises," prosecutors allege.

He left more than \$14,000 in chips on the table, which Huang then used to continue gambling, according to a witness quoted in court papers.

In addition to the Palazzo trips -- which the affidavit notes ended after the hotel's compliance staffers identified Huizar and asked him to certify the source of his gambling money -- prosecutors allege that Huizar accompanied Huang on three subsequent gambling trips to different Las Vegas casinos.

It is also alleged that Huizar

used his mother's and brother's bank accounts to launder bribe payments that he received from Huang and another person, according to the government.

Attorneys for Huizar argued that 39 months of personal emails held by the government as evidence in the bribery case should be suppressed because the seizure violated his constitutional rights.

Defense lawyers said that in July 2016, as part of the early days of the bribery investigation, the government applied for and received the warrant to search Huizar's personal emails, but the affidavit "lacked probable cause" and provided no basis for obtaining the emails.

During the nearly four-hour hearing, Walter found no grounds to suppress the affidavit or the evidence that resulted from the search warrants.

Huizar's lawyers previously argued that the bribery case against the ex-councilman should be tossed because the alleged conduct does not violate laws cited in the 41-count federal racketeering indictment.

In the indictment, prosecutors confuse favors as bribes, deem that First Amendment-protected contributions are crimes, and treat "virtually everything that Huizar did as an 'official act' no matter how informal or disconnected from government power," according to a defense motion.

The federal probe ensnared lobbyists, developers such as Huang, and political operatives, including former city official Raymond Chan. Formerly the general manager of the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Chan was, more recently, the city's deputy mayor of economic development.

The defense argues that Huizar and Chan saw it as their responsibility to bring development and businesses to downtown Los Angeles. Partly as a result of their work, "the region became a livable and attractive destination for locals and tourists alike. During this period, nearly everyone in Los Angeles talked or heard about how much downtown had improved."

Co-defendants George Esparza, Huizar's former special assistant, real estate development consultant George Chiang, and fundraiser Justin Kim each pleaded guilty in 2020 to federal charges.

It's time to change the homeowners' exemption

By Jeffrey Prang
Los Angeles County Assessor

This month I want to take a moment of your time to visit about a property tax savings program my office offers that's just waiting to reduce your budget. Moreover, I am going to be advocating for an increase in this tax-savings program.

I'm speaking about the Homeowners' Exemption that has been available since 1974 that automatically reduces your tax burden by \$7,000, if the home is your primary residence as of Jan. 1. That translates to an actual reduction of \$70 to a homeowner's tax bill. It's not much and in dire need of an increase.

Let's say hypothetically, the assessed value savings was to increase modestly to \$20,000. That translates to an actual savings of \$200. Since the whole point of the Homeowners' Exemption is to encourage home ownership in the state, it should at the very least keep up with the rising costs of homes. In 1972 the median home price in California was about \$34,500, where now home prices come in about \$790,000 statewide, according to the latest figures from the California Assn. of Realtors.

For now, to get the existing savings, all the homeowner has to do is fill out the application at assessor.lacounty.gov/exemptions/homeowners exemption and they are good to go. The deadline is Feb. 15 to get the entire savings but if you miss the deadline, please file anyway and you will get it prorated this year and the full amount the following years. Homeowners need only apply once in order to receive these savings each year. The savings continue until a change (such as a sale) is recorded.

However, nearly one in three homeowners in Los Angeles County do not take advantage of this tax savings' program, leaving

\$30 million unclaimed each year. Across the County, an additional 435,000 families can be saving on their tax bills.

The Homeowners' Exemption is even more important now than ever before because of Proposition 19. Prop. 19 changes the rules that apply to transfers between parents and children and grandparents to grandchildren. It mandates that any property not being used as the primary residence will not be eligible for the transfer of the existing lower tax rate.

Furthermore, the parent/owner of the home that is going to be left to the children should have the Homeowners' Exemption at the time of the transfer. The child receiving the home does have one year from the date of transfer to acquire the Homeowners' Exemption. If the home does not have the Homeowners' Exemption, the children will not receive the tax benefit, and they could get stuck with a huge property tax increase.

I encourage the state legislature to study the matter and increase the Homeowners' Exemption, even modestly. At the very least, it needs to have a clause that guarantees it keeps pace with inflation.

Our website will be continuously updated to provide general information on Proposition 19 that may assist taxpayers. For more information on Prop. 19 or other tax savings programs, visit assessor.lacounty.gov or call 213/974-3211.

Los Angeles County Assessor Jeff Prang has been in office since 2014. Upon taking office, Prang implemented sweeping reforms to ensure that the strictest ethical guidelines rooted in fairness, accuracy and integrity would be adhered to in his office, which is the largest office of its kind in the nation with 1,300 employees and provides the foundation for a property tax system that generates \$17 billion annually.

Small earthquakes rattle area

CUDAHY — A small earthquake rattled parts of southeastern Los Angeles County Tuesday, but there were no reports of any damage or injuries.

The quake, with a preliminary magnitude of 3.3, struck at 9:26 a.m. less than a mile south-southwest of Cudahy and 1.8 miles northeast of Lynwood, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

Southland earthquake expert Lucy Jones wrote on Twitter that the quake was "quite deep at 14 km," but said it was "probably felt around much of LA basin."

Meanwhile, a 3.3 magnitude earthquake struck about a half mile southeast of South Gate at 2:15 a.m. on Wednesday, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

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Norwalk man charged with murder

NORWALK — A Norwalk man was charged today with killing two people and injuring others in a DUI crash on the freeway.

Freeway off-ramp closed for 3 months

NORWALK — Caltrans announced the scheduled closure of the Norwalk off-ramp of Interstate 5 (Santa Ana Freeway) at 8 p.m. Sunday July 15.

SUMMER CONCERTS ON THE LAWN



Norwalk restaurant grades

- Sancho Grande** 10933 E Rosecrans Ave. Date Inspected: 7/17/18 Grade: A
- Diana's Mexican Foods Market** 11802 S Pioneer Blvd. Date Inspected: 7/17/18 Grade: A
- Pancho's Grill** 12405 E Rosecrans Ave. Date Inspected: 7/17/18 Grade: A
- United Oil** 11934 E Rosecrans Hwy. Date Inspected: 7/17/18 Grade: A
- Tecny Mariscos Mi Pueblo** 12001 Rosecrans Ave. Date Inspected: 7/17/18 Grade: A
- Lima Services Corp.** 11805 E Rosecrans Blvd. Date Inspected: 7/17/18 Grade: A
- AMC Norwalk** 12300 E Civic Center Dr. Date Inspected: 7/17/18 Grade: A
- AMC Norwalk Restaurant Bar** 12300 E Civic Center Dr. Date Inspected: 7/17/18 Grade: A
- Joe's Food Mart and Liquor** 11804 E Rosecrans Hwy. Date Inspected: 7/17/18 Grade: A
- El Paraiso Juice Bar** 15002 Pioneer Blvd. Date Inspected: 7/17/18 Grade: A
- Lucian's Pizzeria** 15000 Pioneer Blvd. Date Inspected: 7/17/18 Grade: A
- Tecny Chihuahua** 11733 The Pl. Date Inspected: 7/17/18 Grade: A
- Home Style Donuts** 12844 Pioneer Blvd. Date Inspected: 7/17/18 Grade: A
- St Paul Market** 12844 Pioneer Blvd. Date Inspected: 7/17/18 Grade: A
- Ana's Biscuits** 10977 Rosecrans Ave. Date Inspected: 7/17/18 Grade: A
- Elle's Cafe** 18200 San Antonio Dr. Date Inspected: 7/17/18 Grade: A

Weekend of a Glance

Friday 86°
Saturday 85°
Sunday 87°

Movie Night "Wonder"
Friday, Norwalk Park, 7:00pm
The City of Norwalk presents a free outdoor screening of "Wonder" along with a special movie night. Free will be available for purchase.

Summer Soul Festival
Friday, Norwalk Park, 6pm
Performances by David F. Reed, DJ, Brady Kane, DJ, and DJ Sarah La Senora Garibaldi.

Jenni and Selena
Saturday, Hope Lounge in Whittier, 8pm
Jenni Blaine and Selena impressively perform live, along with DJ Sarah La Senora Garibaldi.

Columbian Festival
Saturday, Plus Events Sports Arena, 11am

Black history and our Army

■ Black Americans have defended this nation since the Revolutionary War.

By Mario A. Guerra

In February we observe Black History Month. I think it's important that as we consider the contributions of our military, we see Black history as an integral part of American History and the Army's history.

Our military has shaped our American History. This year, our nation's theme for Black History Month is "Black Health and Wellness" and so today, I want to share with you some of the ways generations of Black Americans have served our country, and some of the stories of those who dedicated their lives to the health and wellness of our Soldiers and civilians.

Black Americans have left an indelible mark on history and on our society. We have never fought a war in which Black Americans did not serve proudly.

Approximately 5,000 Black Soldiers, mostly from New England, served in the Continental Army. In April of 1775, Black Soldiers fought at the Battle of Concord, and on Christmas night, 1776, Black Soldiers crossed the Delaware River with General George Washington.

Unfortunately, the contributions of Black Americans to the birth of our nation were, for the most part, unrecorded and soon forgotten. After the Revolutionary War, Black Americans were virtually excluded from the military forces until they volunteered to serve during the War of 1812.

When New Orleans was threatened, a segregated militia unit made up of Haitian refugees called the Battalion of Free Men of Color participated in a raid on the British camp and then held its portion of the line. After the battle, General Andrew Jackson addressed the troops and said: "You surpassed my hopes. The nation shall applaud your valor."

Despite the heroism of these units during the War of 1812, Black Soldiers were again barred from Army service until the Civil War. President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 declared that former slaves could join the armed forces of the United States, and by the end of the Civil War, approximately 180,000 served as Black Soldiers - about 10 percent of the U.S. Army at that time.

As you may know, the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment was one of the first official units of Black Soldiers raised by a state as "U.S. volunteer infantry" during the Civil War and one of the most celebrated.

The 54th volunteered to lead the assault on Ft. Wagner in Charleston, South Carolina. The unit suffered enormous casualties before being forced to withdraw. In the end, the 54th lost two-thirds of their officers and half of their troops. The unit was widely acclaimed for its valor during the battle, which encouraged further enlistment and mobilization of Black Soldiers, a development that President Lincoln credited with helping to secure the final victory of the U.S. Army.

Throughout the Civil War, Black Americans served as nurses and doctors caring for Soldiers regardless of the color of their skin, though they themselves

remained oppressed.

In her memoir, "Reminiscences of My Life In Camp," Susie King Taylor, known as the first Black American nurse, documented her experiences with the 33rd U.S. Colored Troops Infantry Regiment and wrote of the service of Black Americans and her hope for the future, where, as she said, so many of our people have shed their blood with their white comrades, that the stars and stripes should never be polluted.

During America's expansion westward, Black Soldiers again protected our national interests. The 10th U.S. Cavalry, nicknamed "Buffalo Soldiers," served long, isolated tours of duty in the Southwest, protecting settlers; serving as the first park rangers at Sequoia, Yosemite and Yellowstone National Parks; guarding the mail and protecting the engineers and laborers who built the railroads. Their presence was key to the growth of America in the west.

In World War I, more than 350 thousand Black Soldiers served in segregated units, mostly as support troops. The 369th Infantry Regiment - an all-Black National Guard unit commonly referred to as the "Harlem Hellfighters," shattered the lie that Black Americans were unsuitable for combat. The men of the 369th were attached to a division of the French army for 191 days on the front lines, at one point advancing almost nine miles through strong German resistance. For their actions, the Soldiers received the French medal for bravery in combat.

Black nurses also served with distinction in World War I. One historian wrote, "Although these nurses were required to live in segregated quarters, the strength and dignity of the Black women prevailed, and they served their country and practiced their profession with great skill and distinction."

During World War II, more than one million Black Americans served in uniform. Perhaps the most famous segregated unit was the 332nd Fighter Group of the United States Army Air Forces.

These airmen were part of the experimental Tuskegee Training program, which trained Black Soldiers to be aviators. This program turned out skilled fighter pilots who earned 96 Distinguished Flying Crosses for their fighting in Italy and throughout occupied central and southern Europe.

In World War II, segregation initially kept thousands of Black medical professionals from volunteering to serve their country. When Captain Della Raney became the first Black nurse commissioned in the Army, the service had restricted the number of Black nurses who could join to 56 - and they were only allowed to work in segregated camps. As the casualty rate of service members increased and the demand for nurses rose, Black leaders across the country fought to lift the quota and allow the more than 9,000 Black nurses who had volunteered to finally join the fight. In the end, only 500 were able to serve.

Although Black Americans fought with distinction in World War II, this racism and segregation continued when they returned home. Accounts of this racism and physical violence against these veterans garnered national attention, and in 1948, President Harry Truman issued



Executive Order 9981, which called for equality of treatment of the Armed Forces. Sanctioned segregation within the Army was no longer allowed.

The Army simply could not accomplish its missions without the skill and dedication of ALL of its members. We find our true strength in our ability to bring together people of different races, cultures and faiths who share common values like duty, honor, selfless service, loyalty and respect.

In 2021, the nation recognized Sergeant First Class Alwyn Cashe, a Black Soldier who sacrificed himself to retrieve six Soldiers and an interpreter from a burning vehicle in Iraq. Sergeant First Class Cashe, posthumously presented the Medal of Honor, lived those values and gave the ultimate sacrifice to protect and care for his brothers - his people - his country.

Today, we honor the courageous service of Black Americans to our nation. This population makes up about 19 percent of our total Army and serves at every level of military leadership. Many come from a long line of Army service, made especially unique in that their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents served a country that did not honor their citizenship in many ways.

In the Army, we have developed a focused strategy to address policies and procedures to make our organization more inclusive - to create spaces of belonging for everyone in the Army. We recognize that to fight and win our nation's wars we need the strength that comes from our diversity, which enables and drives the high performing



The 369th Infantry Regiment (above) overcame unimaginable discrimination and neglect to earn their infamous nickname The Harlem Hellfighters and become one of the most decorated units of World War I. (Photo courtesy US Army)

and cohesive teams we need.

Our differences and our different cultures make our communities and our Army strong and resilient. When Soldiers know that you're going to take care of them and treat them with dignity and respect, they will go to incredible lengths for our Army and our nation.

Each of us is unique and brings different and valuable

resources to the table, which only makes our Army stronger.

Black Americans, who have defended our nation since the Revolutionary War, have built a legacy of courage and professionalism by serving the U.S. Army with great honor and distinction, inspiring generations to come - we recognize and honor that legacy this month and always.

Thank you for serving our country.

Mario A. Guerra currently serves as the Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army. He is a former mayor of Downey and co-host of the podcast called Talking Downey. He can be reached at www.marioaguerra.com

The Norwalk Patriot



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Norwalk girls make history with CIF Duals wrestling win

■ HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLING ROUNDUP: Norwalk High girls make history, Norwalk and John Glenn boys advance to second round.

By John M. Sherrard
Contributor

NORWALK - History was made by Norwalk High School in only the second year of the CIF-Southern Section Division 1 Girls Dual Meet Wrestling Championships, Saturday January 29 at Bonita High.

After losing in the first round of the CIF-SS Girls Duals last year, the Lancers had a monumental first-round win this year.

Granted, the opponent had a minimal number of wrestlers, but that was not the issue for the upstart girls program under the direction of coach Brian DeVries.

As the final Norwalk wrestler, sophomore Thalia Ariste finished her match with a pin, the team surrounded her with cheers and hugs, and on to the second round they went.

"The girls have worked really hard," third-year Norwalk Girls Wrestling coach Bryan DeVries said. "We have put a big emphasis on family. One thing I like about these girls is the passion that they bring and they all genuinely root for each other."

"They are happy now, but excited for the future."

The dual against Carter started with the first three matches not contested with forfeits. In each of the 170, 189 and heavyweight classes, no matches were held and the Lancers led, 12-0. The 170 Lb. weight class was a double forfeit.

The first contested match came in the 101 Lb. class with sophomore Ruby Hubbard taking on Laura Perez.

It was an even match for most of the first two periods. Leading, 7-4, in the second period, Hubbard buckled down and pinned Perez with 11.5 seconds left and Norwalk led, 18-0.

"It was pretty exciting to get the win in CIF and it was our first

win as a team," Hubbard said. "It's so fun to be around (coach) and he's so supportive with everybody here."

"My match was a lot of hard work and when I did get the pin, it was really cool and exciting to say that I got the first pin in the first round."

The second match was a one-sided contest, with senior Sabrina Sinohui building up a 10-0 first-period lead and a 15-2 second period advantage.

To begin the third and final period, Sinohui quickly scored a two-point takedown and ended the match with a 17-2 technical fall win and the 24-0 lead.

"I was quite proud of myself," Sinohui said. "I was a little frustrated and kept waiting for the call for the pin. But it was ok."

"We look forward going against tough teams and we really proved ourselves in the first round."

Another Carter forfeit in the 111 Lb. weight class gave the Lancers a 30-0 lead after five matches.

Carter saw its first win in the 116 Lb. weight class after senior Liyah Salazar was pinned with just 1.4 seconds left in the second period.

The next two matches (121 and 126) were again Carter forfeits, resulting in the 42-6 lead.

The 131 Lb. match was also a win for Carter, to trail, 42-12.

Norwalk sophomore Celeste Ortega was in a close battle in the first period, as she trailed early, 2-0, after a takedown. Ortega evened the match, 2-2, with a reversal.

After a near fall by the Carter wrestler for the 6-2 second-period lead, Ortega lost by a pin in the third period with 48 seconds left.

Junior Zitlali Sarmiento gave the Lancers a 48-12 lead with her pin in the first period with 1:22 left.

The sixth and final Carter forfeit gave Norwalk a 54-12 lead, that was followed by a loss by junior Mariah Negrette. That was only the third score for Carter, to trail, 54-18.



Norwalk celebrates their first ever CIF playoff win in the CIF Girls Dual Wrestling playoffs at Bonita High School on Saturday. (Photo by Keith Durlinger)

Arista finished the scoring after taking a 2-0 lead on a takedown and followed it up with a pin with 1:25 left in the first period.

In the second round, Norwalk was outmuscled by a quicker and stronger Marina team, but that experience will be used for the future.

Marina, which came into the Duals ranked second in the division, won all but one of the 14 matches.

The only win came from sophomore Mia Farr in the 235 Lb. weight class.

After a loss in the 189 Lb. weight class, the Lancers trailed, 6-0, they evened the score on the very next match, 6-6.

Farr, who competed in last years duals, started the match with a quick takedown for the 2-0 lead and halfway through the first period at the :59 second mark, she pinned her opponent.

"Last year I lost in the first round and it was kind of hard on me," Farr said. "This time I wanted to start off with a win. I saw this girl and we were about the same height, but she was 20 pounds heavier than me."

"I pushed her and we both fell on top of each other and I grabbed her arm and went for it."

Farr, who has a younger sister ready to join the team next year,

talked about the difference in the last year in numbers.

"Last year we had 10 girls and now we have a full lineup," she said.

The two Norwalk wrestlers that lost by decisions were Sarmiento, 137 Lbs. (9-4 dec.) and sophomore Casey Otero. Otero didn't get to wrestle in the first round as it was a forfeit by Carter.

"It was a tough match, she said. "One day I want to be like them."

"The more practice I had, the better I got."

Norwalk Boys complete big comeback

On the other side of the mat, the Norwalk Boys Wrestling team came through with a big

first-round win in Division 5, with a major come-from-behind victory.

Before the big 42-39 comeback win over No. 6 Canyon (Anaheim) by the Lancers, they found themselves in a big hole to start in the first five matches, being down, 33-0. The first five were by pin.

The 138 Lb. match seemed to be "a crucial turning point," said Norwalk coach Frank Soto, as sophomore Ian Wine-Barrego, in a difficult match, lost only by a three-point decision as opposed to a pin.

Sophomore Sean Otero, who was the start of the heart of the Norwalk lineup, won by pin, to trail, 33-6. Otero was an Honorable Mention in the state rankings at the time.

The Lancers proceeded to outscore canyon, 36-6 the rest of the way, winning six of the final seven matches.

The next three wrestlers, the top three on the team - Bryan Echesirim (152), Jonah Fryer (160) and Jason Lopez (170) also won by pin to trail, 33-24. Fryer was also an Honorable Mention.

Junior Pablo Marquez (182) became the fifth consecutive Lancer to record a pin.

That was followed by a Canyon forfeit at 195 for the 36-33 lead, which set the scene for the dramatic finish in the 220 Lbs. weight class.

Sophomore Hector Lopez had a takedown and a pin in the first period for the 42-33 lead and match clincher.

"The kids were going nuts after his win," Soto said. "This season, the boys had some real quality wins."

CIF D6

Glenn Boys Defeat BG, 54-27

Glenn started out with five consecutive wins, all by pins - Julian Rodriguez (106), Alberto Enriquez (113), Emmanuel Enriquez (120), Jacob Enriquez (126) and Robert Renteria (132). The eagles led, 30-0.

BG won the next two classes, 138 and 145, by a decision and a pin and trailed, 30-9.

Diego Lopez (152) pinned his opponent for the 36-9 advantage and Bell Gardens came back with a pin at 160 Lbs. to close the gap to 36-15.

After a BG forfeit at 170, Daniel Espinosa had a pin for the 48-15 lead. Freddie Valdivia (195) finished the scoring for the Lancers with a pin in the first period.

Glenn advanced to the second round and lost to Thousand Oaks, 57-19.

Gaining pins for JG were - Julian Rodriguez (106), Valdez (170) and Valdivia (195).

Emmanuel Enriquez (120) had an early major decision for JG.

The Glenn Girls lost to Schurr, 48-36, in D1 action, while Santa Fe fell to Camarillo, 42-32, in D3.

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