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Pomona Chamber of Commerce



Issue No. 192

Thursday, July 24, 2025

Pomona councilmembers authorize filing abatement actions against three motels amid allegations of prostitution, drugs and gangs

Pomona city councilmembers this month voted unanimously to authorize the city attorney to file abatement actions – if needed – on what city officials called “problematic motels along Holt Avenue” – three motels that have been the source of more than 760 calls for service since 2022 involving everything from prostitution and narcotics to firearms, gang activity and homicides.

“The goal is to put an end to this . . . it will require a multi-pronged approach,” Mayor Tim Sandoval said, adding that the city hopes to work with owners first to resolve the problem.

But he said if the owners of the motels are not “amenable,” then the city will be able to take additional steps which could range



RECOVERED AT HOLT AVENUE MOTELS -- Photos from a staff report to members of the Pomona City Council this month depict some of the weapons and narcotics recovered in incidents resulting in calls for service at three of Pomona's Holt Avenue motels.

from seeking a temporary restraining order to civil penalties up to \$25,000 per defendant to actually shutting down and boarding up the businesses for up to one year, according to a staff report.

Nuisance actions could even lead to the appointment of a receiver to take control of the property and possibly sell it to a responsible owner.

“The city is taking an active



stance to hold the business and property owners accountable and eliminate the blight and illegal activity to protect our community,” city officials said in an official statement.

Action was authorized against the property and business owners of the Pala Motel, at 987 E. Holt Ave., the Deluxe Motel, at 915 W. Holt Ave., and the Super Inn, located at 975 W. Holt Ave.

The city's staff report said the three properties have been the source of numerous calls for law enforcement services from the Pomona Police Department.

“The properties are also known to be frequented by individuals engaged in sex trade work and drug transactions,” the report said.

“Serious crimes of aggravated assault and murder have also occurred at these properties.”

The report added that effective enforcement of the long-standing problems “negatively affecting the quality of life of residents and businesses” will lead to improved conditions such as those experienced after successful legal action taken against the property and business owners of the Passport Inn, at 130 E. Holt Ave.

In that action last year, the city filed abatement actions with the Los Angeles County Superior Court which held the property owner accountable for the illegal activity occurring at the motel.

The city's efforts were successful and, after 330 calls for service there were received from 2022 to 2024, the property “transitioned to a new property owner and the calls for service significantly reduced to under 10,” according to city officials.

According to the staff report, legal and staff costs associated with the new enforcement actions will range between \$150,000 and \$250,000 per property and are recoverable from the property owners.

“While cost recovery cannot be guaranteed, it is anticipated,”

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Pomona councilmembers direct staff to look at options for fire services after receiving ‘notice of termination’ from county fire officials

Pomona city councilmembers this month voted 6-1 to request staff to begin looking at all options available to provide fire department services in the face of a “notice of termination of agreement” for fire services the city received from the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

Staff findings outlining “alternative, financially sustainable models for fire service delivery”

would be considered by the city council before a year-long deadline presented by county fire officials runs out.

Only City Councilmember Debra Martin voted no on the motion which, as it was explained during the council meeting, means she favored looking only at the county option.

As reported in La Nueva Voz in May, Pomona city officials re-

ceived formal notice from county fire officials that they plan to terminate fire services in Pomona “unless significant amendments are made to the existing contract to allow for full cost recovery by the district.”

The city and the fire department have been continuing talks over how to resolve the issue.

Pomona is in the second year

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RIBBON CUTTING FOR POMONA'S NEW GYM -- Members of the Pomona Chamber of Commerce held an official ribbon cutting last month for The Camp Transformation Center, Pomona's newest gymnasium, located at 3284 N. Garey Ave., Pomona. The Camp offers a completely new approach to conditioning including group workout programs and nutrition coaching using all the latest equipment in a beautiful facility. From left are Chamber President and CEO Monique Robles, Chamber Ambassador Tracy Evanson-Norwood of Healed Women Heal, Chamber Executive Board member Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz, daughter Ebony Valadez, owners Juan and Anita Valadez, daughter Destiny Lopez (manager and director), trainer Savannah Castro and assistant director Tony Rodriguez. Not pictured are trainers Josh Kuizon, Xavier Meza, and Dylan Moore. For information, call (909) 905-2996.

Services set for Ron Vander Molen

A “celebration of life” is scheduled next month for Ron Vander Molen who died last month following a lengthy illness. He was 71.

Services are set for 11 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 2, at Pilgrim Congregational Church in Pomona.

He died only 10 days after conducting his last fundraising auction at the Pomona Public Library Foundation’s annual Mayor’s Gala.

Donations can be made in his name at www.pomonalibrary-foundation.org.

Editor’s Note: A full obituary appeared on page 5 of the June 26 La Nueva Voz and is available under “Past Issues” at www.lanuevavoz.net.

Tickets on sale for Historical Society annual barbecue

Tickets are on sale and volunteers are needed for next month’s “Annual Summer BBQ” fundraiser of the Historical Society of Pomona Valley, held each year at the historic Adobe de Palomares at Pomona’s Palomares Park.

Doors open at 5 p.m. and dinner is at 6 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 16, for a menu featuring everything from BBQ beef, chicken and carnitas to corn on the cob, rice, beans, tortillas and salad.

Tickets are \$20 for members and \$30 for non-members, and the event is open to the public. Tours of the adobe are included.

Parking is next door at Palomares Park, 491 E. Arrow Highway, Pomona.

For tickets, visit the web site at www.pomonahistorical.org or at the door on the day of the event (check, cash or “Zelle” only).

Interested in volunteering? Contact pomonahistorical@verizon.net.

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Board Chair Nef Cortez says Pomona Chamber will continue to grow, sets goal of record 500 members by 2027

Healed Women Heal, a non-profit organization serving women, families and individuals with developmental disabilities providing domestic violence workshops and more, was the recipient of this year's "Community Service Organization of the Year" award at last week's annual Pomona Chamber of Commerce installation and awards luau.

Receiving the award was the organization's founder and executive director Tracy Evanson Norwood who Chamber Board Vice Chair Josh Landis of Foothill Transit called an individual who is "passionate about healing those who have experienced emotional trauma in relationships."

She was named California Woman of the Year for Senate District 22 by State Sen. Susan Rubio, she volunteers at her church providing domestic violence support services, she is on the volunteer advisory committee with the San Gabriel-Pomona Regional Center supporting those with disabilities, and she is an ambassador with the Pomona Chamber.

Chamber Board Chair Nef Cortez, of Re/Max Galaxy Realty in Diamond Bar, who will continue on as chair for his second two-year term, told guests the chamber's "strategic priorities" for the next year will be to continue to focus on advocacy and community engagement.

"We'll be working to help empower local businesses, we'll continue of course with our networking events, expand our marketing and promotion and partnership opportunities with our members and our member benefits," Cortez said.



INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS – Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval, at left, installs board members for the coming year of the Pomona Chamber of Commerce. From left are Sandoval, new board members Ata Khan of the City of Pomona; Karla Acevedo of America Jobs Center; Daniel Martinez of Athens Services; Annie Yea of Cal Poly Pomona; returning board members Ron Garner of Inland Empire Fence; Lanae O'Shields of So Cal Gas; Victor Caceres of the Youth and Family Club; Daniela Franco of Metro Event Center; Dave Perez of Valley Vista Services; Vice Chair Daniel Thomas of Pomona Rotary; Executive Member Jill Dolan of Mt. San Antonio College; Chief Financial Officer Jeff Johannsen of Pomona Hope; Josh Landis of Foothill Transit; Board Secretary Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz; Board Chair Nef Cortez of Re/Max Galaxy Realty; Marco Argote of Arteco Partners; Frank Guzman of Pomona Valley Pride; Heidi Ortega of Downtown Pomona District; Luis Rodriguez of San Antonio Regional Occupational Program and Monique Robles, Chamber President and CEO. Not pictured are Executive Member Jim Dale of Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center, Monique Cardenas of Pomona Unified School District, Joe Perez of Credit Union of Southern California, and Robin Farias-Eisner, of Western University of Health Sciences.

He added that in the next 12 months the chamber will align itself with Pomona's mayor and city council on community needs "to ensure that the local business perspectives do influence the local, state and wherever possible federal regulations."

"We're looking forward to continue to work and expand our workforce development training opportunities, develop new job vendor events with our employers in the community to collaborate with the America's Job Center of California, led by our incoming board member Karla Acevedo," he added.

And he said the chamber will continue its work with the College and Career Workforce Development Task Force, a pilot program led by chamber board member Luis Rodriguez.

"We won't lose focus on expanding our membership" with both large and small businesses and



Tracy Evanson Norwood of Healed Women Heal, at center, and her daughter, Essence Guss, third from right, accept the Community Service of the Year Award at the Pomona Chamber of Commerce annual installation and awards banquet at Pomona's Fox Theater.

"will work to strengthen our relationships with the small home based and minority-owned businesses to grow the network and strengthen the community representation," he said.

He said the chamber has grown to include a record number of 400 members and called on members to work together to expand that to 450 in the next year and to 500 by the following year.

Cortez presented the chamber's "Image Award" to Ray and Michelle Adamyk of The Union, formerly the YMCA building originally built in 1922. The completely renovated building has become an important part of the Downtown Pomona community and serves as an "organic community incubator (and) has nonprofit and community-based

organizations within its four floors," he said.

And it offers five event spaces available for everything from concerts and weddings to parties and non-profit events.

The "New Business of the Year" award went to Pomona Mercantile, created and operated by Maricela Rodarte at 351 S. Thomas St., Pomona. The business offers everything from sweatshirts to snacks and serves as a space for local artists to exhibit their work and for musicians to perform.

Josh Landis presented the chamber's "Employer of the Year" award to Phenix Truck and



Maricela Rodarte, second from left, owner and founder of Pomona Mercantile, accepts the Pomona Chamber's award for "New Business of the Year." Pictured, from left, are Maricela's sister, Alma Mendoza, Maricela, Pomona Chamber President and CEO Monique Robles, and Maricela's daughter, Kelsey Jimenez.

Van, Southern California's largest work truck, van equipment and specialty truck body superstore.

Owner Rick Albertini and members of his team accepted the award. Founded in 1978 with fewer than 10 employees, it has grown into a leading provider of

Pomona Chamber... pg. 9



Pomona Chamber Board member Daniela Franco, third from right, accepts award for "Business of the Year."

Official ribbon-cutting opens new ‘demonstration garden’ in Phillips Ranch

Pomona city officials and residents cut the ribbon at a grand opening last week for a new “Meadow View Demonstration Garden” in Phillips Ranch that has transformed an unused piece of property into features for residents to explore – and consider replicating in their lawn – from a California native meadow to a cactus and succulent garden, pathways, seating and viewing areas and more.

The facility, open to all residents and the only one of its kind in Pomona, was designed to provide both the benefits of a city park and an example of how residents can convert their own property into low maintenance and low water use gardens.

Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval called the park “incredibly beautiful” and said it is “intended for people to come out and walk and to get some exercise.”

Pomona City Councilmember and Vice Mayor Steve Lustro, whose fifth city council district includes Phillips Ranch, said the garden park was built at a cost of about \$590,000, using \$400,000 out of the city’s \$46 million in

funding through the federal American Rescue Plan program providing economic relief and recovery during the pandemic.

Lustro said he allocated \$300,000 of his portion of the funding and Sandoval “graciously donated \$100,000 of his,” with the additional funding coming from the city’s capital improvement project reserve fund.

He added he “borrowed” the idea from his hometown of Monterey Park that had developed a demonstration garden on a piece of property roughly the same one-acre size.

Lustro pitched the idea to then-Director of Public Works Rene Guerrero, who attended the ribbon-cutting, who told him it was “potentially a workable idea.”

The property 20 years ago was the site of land movement that caused six families to lose their homes.



Photos by Renee Barbee

NEW 'DEMONSTRATION GARDEN' AND PARK IN PHILLIPS RANCH -- Pomona city officials and residents officially opened the new "Meadow View Demonstration Garden" in Phillips Ranch with a ribbon-cutting last week, turning unused property into a learning experience for residents who will be able to view low maintenance and water conservation-oriented options for their own lawns. Pictured, front row, from left, are residents Edmund and Donna Simien; Jacqueline Elizalde, representing Congresswoman Norma Torres; Greg Thayer, of Hirsch & Associates; Pomona City Councilmember Nora Garcia; resident Sharon Lustro; Councilmember Steve Lustro; Mayor Tim Sandoval; Councilmembers Lorraine Canales and Debra Martin; resident Yvonne Cobarrubias; and Councilmember Victor Preciado. At rear, from left, are Shandy Dittman, public works fiscal and project manager; Rene Guerrero, former public works director; Jason Djapri, facilities engineer; Danny Whaley, parks and facilities manager; Mike Osoff, community services manager; Michael Etheridge, parks and landscape supervisor; and Gina Berman, resident.

“This dedication today . . . closes a kind of somewhat sad chapter in this immediate neighborhood with respect to what happened on this site back in the 2000s,” Lustro said. “This

kind of opens a new chapter that will be an asset to this neighborhood and to the community for the foreseeable future.”

The property has been owned by the city for the past 15 years.

Hirsch & Associates of Anaheim, landscape architects, designed the project.

The garden is located at 38 Meadow View Drive at Blueridge Lane.

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A portion of proceeds will benefit Pomona-area organizations supporting human trafficking survivors.



Photo by Renee Barbee

POMONA POETS RECOGNIZED BY CITY COUNCIL -- Pomona’s poet laureate and, for the first time this year, a junior poet laureate were recognized this month by members of the Pomona City Council. Natalie Sierra, president of Pomona’s Cafe Con Libros Press, a nonprofit bookstore in Downtown Pomona, is serving a two-year term and Kea Lee, also serving a two-year term, has been named the city’s first junior poet laureate. Lee graduated last month from Pomona’s Diamond Ranch High School. The two were selected by two different ad hoc committees of the Pomona Public Library Board of Trustees in consultation with the city’s Cultural Arts Commission. From left are Pomona City Councilmembers Lorraine Canales, Debra Martin, Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole, Victor Preciado, Steve Lustro, and Nora Garcia and Mayor Tim Sandoval. In front are Lee, at left, and Sierra. The city’s poet laureate program was established by the Pomona City Council in 2019.

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the report added. The city recovered more than \$150,000 from the Passport Inn enforcement.

Enforcement costs will come from a dedicated holding account from attorney fees collected from prior enforcement and will mitigate future legal costs as they come up, in addition to the annual budgeted costs for city attorney legal services.

As background, the staff report pointed out that prostitution, drug sales and nuisance conditions have been “persistent historical problems” along Holt Avenue.

And, while law enforcement has engaged in numerous task force enforcement operations, police currently face greater challenges to enforcement in the wake of Senate Bill 357 which, in 2021,

decriminalized loitering for the purpose of engaging in prostitution.

“As a result of this law, sex workers on Holt Avenue more freely walk around in indecent attire and are more casual and open about the illegal activity in which they aim to engage,” the staff report said.

In a recent incident, a murder at one of the properties was reported in which a “pimp” engaged in a dispute with a customer and the pimp shot and killed the customer of the sex worker.

And conditions inside the motel rooms themselves reportedly include torn furniture, graffiti, stains on mattresses, cigarette burns on walls, and bugs crawling around, according to the staff report.

“The owners and operators of these properties are aware of the conditions and the illegal activity occurring on the properties, but allow the nuisance conditions to continue without any regard for residents and the impacts on the community,” the staff report continued.

A staff presentation on the agenda item included 16 photos allegedly depicting a half dozen prostitutes on the premises of the motels, along with photos allegedly depicting illegal firearms, drugs and drug paraphernalia.

The presentation showed totals since 2022 of 172 calls for service at Pala Motel, 341 calls at Deluxe Motel, and 251 calls for service at Super Inn, for a total of 764.

Four speakers, including repre-

sentatives of owners of all three motels, appeared at the meeting offering to work with the city on the clean-up project.

City Councilmember Nora Garcia said the topic of prostitution in 2019 prompted her to propose a ban – later enacted by the city council – on hourly rentals of motel rooms in the city.

Her effort resulted in the approval of an ordinance in October 2020 banning the practice and prohibiting motels from renting the same room more than twice within a 24-hour period.

“These are the type of practices that lead to it being a nuisance,” she said. “I never want anyone to lose their livelihood or their property, but . . . in order to put Pomona first, we need to make sure

our businesses align with what our community needs, and right now these three businesses are not doing that.”

Councilmember Debra Martin said the number one complaint she heard during her political campaign last year was that something needs to be done regarding the prostitution on Holt Avenue.

The city staff report on the city council agenda item was submitted by City Manager Anita Scott with input from City Attorney Sonia Carvalho, Police Chief Mike Ellis, and Development Services Director Betty Donavanik.

The staff recommendation to councilmembers was to authorize the city attorney to file the nuisance abatement actions in Los Angeles Superior Court.

EDD is there for you with the resources you need when faced with job loss

By Dr. Ciriaco “Cid” Pinedo, President and CEO
Mexican American Opportunity Foundation (MAOF)

Latino communities are often viewed as tight, connected networks of families, schools, churches, and neighbors who offer each other support. That sense of mutual aid is a cultural strength. It’s in our character to offer assistance and support to each other in times of need.

However, this strength and close community bonds can also lead to an insular mindset, one that may foster distrust toward authority, government, or individuals who do not look like us or speak our language, even when they are offering support. This understandable mistrust can, unfortunately, prevent many from accessing essential services.

At the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation (MAOF), we partner with trusted entities to bridge that gap. Our mission is to provide for the socio-economic betterment of under-resourced individuals and families across California. One of our most valuable partners in this mission is the California Employment Development Department (EDD), a state agency with a wide range of programs and resources. At MAOF, we actively share information about EDD’s offerings through workshops, social media, and community events.

Losing a job can be a traumatic experience. It often happens suddenly, bringing fear and financial stress. While family and neigh-

bors can offer emotional support, only a comprehensive institution like the EDD can provide the structured help needed to recover and move forward.

According to recent data from the non-profit “think tank” Economic Policy Institute, unemployment among under-resourced populations in California remains elevated. The Hispanic unemployment rate is as high as 6.1 percent, compared to the overall state average of 5.4 percent. That seemingly small gap represents thousands of individuals struggling to regain stability.

The EDD is there to help, offering in-language services that make applying for unemployment benefits easier, whether online or in person. Recent updates to its website now include a multilingual chat bot that provides quick, anonymous assistance and helps users navigate to more detailed information. In addition, the EDD offers career search tools, training opportunities, and vocational

certifications, along with access to apprenticeships that can open the door to new, sustainable careers.

MAOF’s guiding motto, “empowering families from child to senior,” aligns closely with the EDD’s work, from unemployment insurance to disability benefits and paid family leave. Through our partnership, we hope to continue encouraging under-resourced individuals and families to access these critical resources. Together,



Dr. Cid Pinedo

we can build a future where more families achieve self-sufficiency and contribute to a thriving, resilient California.

Visit edd.ca.gov to learn more. The Mexican American Opportunity Foundation, a non-profit statewide community-based organization with an annual budget of more than \$160 million, was established in 1963 to serve disadvantaged individuals and families in the Los Angeles area. It offers more than 60 service locations and has nearly 900 employees serving seven California counties. For more information, visit maof.org.

Editor’s Note: Dr. Pinedo has led MAOF since 2022. He is the son of Mexican immigrants and is a first-generation college gradu-

ate. He guides the organization in realizing its vision of being the preeminent provider of comprehensive human services that empower families to attain self-sufficiency and contribute to a dynamic community. He was previously the president and CEO of Children’s Fund, which helps children experiencing poverty, abuse, and neglect. He is the former president of the Hope through Housing Foundation, chief operating officer of National CORE, and associate superintendent of business services and economic development at Chaffey College. He served as a board member of the Los Angeles County Fair Association from 2012 to 2024 and board chair from 2017 to 2019.

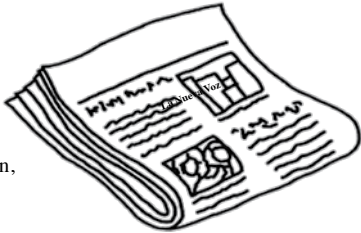
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 - Discount Market, Philadelphia Street and Towne Avenue, Pomona
 - LaunderLand Coin Op Laundry, 744 E. Holt Ave., Pomona
 - Pomona Eagles, 854 W. Mission Blvd., Pomona



Options for fire services... from pg. 1

of its “rolling” five-year renewal term with the fire department.

And while both sides are suffering from financial issues, the city’s money picture took an exponential turn for the worse following passage in the November election of Measure Y, the so-called “Pomona Kids First” initiative.

Councilmembers were told by staff in February that implementation of the initiative would create an annual general fund operating deficit of \$18.6 million and the general fund balance will be \$89 million in the hole by fiscal year 2035.

The impact already is being felt – Pomona City Manager Anita Scott told councilmembers this

month that there is already a \$5.5 million deficit in this year’s budget, in which 75 percent goes to public safety including police and fire.

Immediate effects include freezing 14 police officer positions (previously budgeted positions that will not be filled). In addition, she said Pomona is dealing with a 3 to 5 percent budget cut across the board for all city departments.

“We’re having to adjust to the measure,” Mayor Tim Sandoval said.

Measure Y went into effect in January after passing in November by a 62 percent to 38 percent outcome.

The short version of a summary

of the measure is that supporters touted the advantages of kids’ programs to the community, and opponents have objected to the plan’s method of budgeting by charter amendment and diverting public funding to private groups.

Measure Y required the amending of the city charter “to require that at least 10 percent of the city’s annual unrestricted general-purpose revenues be allocated to children and youth programs and services by fiscal year 2030-2031” through a phase-in process.

In terms of what this means in the fire department contract talks, the city staff report made it clear that staff would need to be directed to prepare general fund reduction recommendations to offset

anticipated increased costs associated with continuing fire services with Los Angeles County.

The fire department in 2023 in a letter to the city requested full reimbursement for services to be phased in over three years, resulting in a \$9 million increase to the city over that period compared to “traditional annual increases averaging \$1.5 million observed over the past six fiscal years.”

The fire department’s current 2024-2025 contract with Pomona is for \$35,999,656, according to a recent response by fire officials to a La Nueva Voz e-mail. According to the city staff report, that figure would increase to \$51.3 million by fiscal year 2028-2029.

Fire officials said the city is served by seven fire stations with a total of 87 employees.

Discussions between the city and the fire department stalled

and county fire officials issued their year-in-advance notice of termination of services in April. Fire officials told La Nueva Voz a 365-day notice of termination is required “pursuant to the service agreement.”

While the staff report did not touch on alternative options, cities typically either provide their own fire services, contract with their local county or, in some instances, contract with neighboring city or county fire departments or fire districts. In some areas, they rely on CAL FIRE (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection) and some partner with non-profit organizations for additional support.

Pomona shut down operation of its 100-year-old fire department in 1994 and transferred fire support to the county in a still-controversial move.

Cuentito for today

He swallowed the tool!

By Susie Perales

Today turned out to be far more eventful than I expected. I took my husband to get some dental work done. We arrived at 1 p.m., and the dentist estimated the procedure would take about two and a half hours. Since I’m not one to sit still for long periods of time I decided to leave for a bit, although I don’t like leaving him alone.

A few hours later, they called me to come pick him up. When I arrived at the dentist’s office, he pulled me aside and told me I needed to keep a close eye on my husband. Apparently, while inserting his dental implants, the tool used to screw in the implant somehow slipped – and my husband swallowed it! I couldn’t believe what I was

hearing! Que la Chihuahua!

The dentist advised us to go straight to the ER if he started experiencing any stomach pain.

Naturally, I asked my husband what had happened. He explained that while the dentist was screw-

ing in the tiny implant screw, the tool suddenly came loose and lodged in his throat! He couldn’t breathe and started panicking. They gave him some water to help him swallow it, and after a few terrifying moments, the tool went down. He said it felt like he was choking to death.

After that little mishap I took him to have dinner at Corky’s and he was very happy to be eating real food. He’s been eating soup for the last two weeks and today a dental tool!

I thought to myself, I really can’t leave this man alone anywhere. Now, we’re keeping a close watch to make sure everything – you know – comes out okay. So far, so good. Y se acabó el cuentito.



Susie and Angel Perales

Cal Poly Pomona Model UN team wins top national honor for third straight year

For the third consecutive year, Cal Poly Pomona’s Model United Nations team has earned top national honors, winning the “Outstanding Delegation Award” at the National Model United Nations Conference in New York City.

The team competed for an entire week in April against 147 universities from around the world.

Political science students Amara Corona and William Haden served as head delegates of the university’s 20-member team, which represented Mexico across 10 committees addressing global issues like human rights, nuclear disarmament and criminal justice.

After months of preparation, they received national recognition for excellence in diplomacy, research and public speaking.

Their performance in the formal sessions required delegates to present and debate draft resolutions.

“They were so passionate with every single word that came out of their mouths,” Haden said. “They treated it like it was the only time they were able to speak – and I noticed that the audience noticed that.”

Founded in 1974, Cal Poly Pomona’s Model UN team has maintained a strong presence in

the competition since 1977. Team members included students majoring in political science, electrical engineering, criminology, biotechnology and business administration.

Team members are selected through a competitive application process and enroll in an actual college class at Cal Poly that prepares them for the national conference.

“It’s an opportunity for everyone,” said Marc Scarcelli, a political science professor and the team’s advisor. “The skills that are gained on the team are ones that will help everyone in their careers.”

La Nueva Voz

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Honorees, parents and officials pose for a group picture this month at the annual celebration in Pomona by the local Vietnamese community of students completing the school year with high grades, many with grade point averages well above 4.0. In the accompanying photo, Dr. Huu Vo, president of the Vietnamese Community of Pomona Valley (holding the microphone), congratulates all of the students for their accomplishments. From left are Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz, Pomona City Councilmember Lorraine Canales, Dr. Vo, and Thich (Reverend) Chon Tri, of the Phap Van Buddhist Temple in Pomona, which hosted the event again this year.



Photo by Renee Barbee

POMONA ARTIST GARY LETT SHOW CLOSING CEREMONIES -- Pomona artist and art educator Gary Lett poses with part of his exhibit last month during closing ceremonies for his "Gary Lett Art Showcase" at the dA Center for the Arts in Downtown Pomona. Lett told La Nueva Voz the exhibit was part of an "inter-generational conversation based on fabric portraiture art," and was something that began two years ago at Pomona's African-American Museum of Beginnings where his grant-funded work became part of the museum's reading room. He taught seniors -- and later youths -- how to create portraits strictly out of fabric, and a total of 15 portraits were on display. While he said he had not intended to create one of the portraits, one project was left incomplete, so he finished it. "The main objective is to bring the young people and the elders together to kind of bridge that generational," Lett said, adding that his wife Lisha created a self-portrait, which is pictured behind him. Pomona City Councilmember Debra Martin, who visited the exhibit, said the show was "nothing short of amazing." "Witnessing the talent of Gary's art students was incredibly inspiring -- their beautiful work filled the space with creativity and passion," she added. Lett is the owner of the company Letts Do Art.

Supervisor Hilda Solis motions on federal immigration raids approved by board

In response to a surge of aggressive federal immigration enforcement raids targeting residents throughout Los Angeles County, the County Board of Supervisors this month unanimously approved two motions authored by Board Chair Pro Tem Supervisor Hilda Solis to authorize legal action and to help residents know and understand their rights.

One motion, "Protecting the Constitutional Rights of Los Angeles County Residents," directs county counsel to pursue legal action against unconstitutional immigration enforcement tactics.

A second motion, "Empowering Youth Through Know Your Rights Education for Civic Engagement," calls on several county departments to launch a comprehensive initiative to inform youth engaged in civic activism on their rights.

According to a news release from Solis' office, recent data from the UC Berkeley Law's Deportation Data Project shows that between June 1 and June 10, ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) arrested 722 people in the Los Angeles area.

The news release cited a Los An-

geles Times analysis that found 69 percent had no criminal convictions and 58 percent had never been charged.

Most were men, and nearly half were from Mexico. Many arrests took place in public spaces like car washes and parking lots, where ICE still is required to follow constitutional protections.

"Advocates report increasing cases of warrantless detentions and excessive force, adding to community fear and instability," the news release continued.

"These motions represent a decisive stand by Los Angeles County on federal practices that undermine the constitutional rights and dignity of our residents," Solis said. "Our communities are living in fear of warrantless raids, racial profiling, and unlawful detentions that are tearing families apart and threatening the very fabric of our democracy."

She added that youth are "leading the charge for justice and equity," and she said they deserve to be equipped with the knowledge to safely raise their voices

and avoid unjust criminalization or retaliation.

"Now is the time for bold, united action, and I am committed to standing strong with our communities," Solis said.

The motion directing county counsel to take legal action orders county attorneys to immediately explore all legal remedies available to the county to protect residents' civil rights and prevent federal law enforcement personnel from engaging in unconstitutional or unlawful immigration enforcement.

It would address stopping, questioning or detaining individuals without reasonable suspicion and arresting individuals without probable cause or a valid warrant.

"Los Angeles County will not stand by while our communities are terrorized and our Constitution trampled," said County Supervisor Lindsey Horvath, who co-authored the motion.

And the motion calling for an informational program directed at youth, co-authored by Supervisor Janice Hahn, will "provide culturally relevant and linguistically

Immigration raids... pg. 10

JOIN US! Pomona North Station Art Event



The Glendora to Pomona project was funded by LA County's Measures M & R, along with state funds (including SB1).



Foothill Gold Line

A community event to unveil the station art by artist Stephen Farley at the new Pomona North Station is being held on Saturday, July 26. All are welcome!

Pomona North Station Art Event

When: Saturday, July 26, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.

Where: Pomona North Station Parking Lot
205 Santa Fe St., Pomona, CA 91767

Stay updated: foothillgoldline.org



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Pomona Chamber... from pg. 3

custom fleet solutions employing more than 200.

The “Business of the Year” award was presented to Metro Event Center and was accepted by Daniela Franco, one of the owners and a member of the chamber board.

The award each year goes to a business that demonstrates excellence in leadership and extraordinary support of the business community.

Metro Event Center hosts celebrations, corporate events and community gatherings and offers two beautifully appointed ballrooms.

“Ambassador of the Year” went to Frank Carrillo of On Time Photo Booth Rentals. The award each year goes to a chamber member who has demonstrated commitment, leadership and advocacy



Ron Garner



Rick Albertini, owner of Phenix Truck and Van, at center, accepts the award for “Employer of the Year.”

in promoting the local business community.

“This award honors a member who exemplifies the spirit of collaboration and outreach,” Landis said, “serving as a bridge between the chamber and its diverse stakeholders.”

Chamber President and CEO Monique Robles presented her own award, the “President and CEO Award,” to Ron Garner of Inland Empire Fence and Construction.

The award was created two years ago to recognize an individual who has gone above and beyond the support of local business.

“This special recognition is

awarded to an individual or organization that has demonstrated exceptional leadership, unwavering dedication and a profound commitment to the mission and values of the Pomona Chamber of Commerce,” she said.

Garner is a chamber board member and chair of the chamber Ambassador Committee.

“The chamber has been an amazing experience for me and our company and what we have just been involved with, and the relationships that we’ve built,” Garner said.



A Polynesian fire dancer was part of a dance team that set the tone for the “luau” with a Hawaiian theme.



‘The Union’ owners Ray and Michelle Adamyk, at right, and members of their team receive the Pomona Chamber of Commerce “Image Award” at last week’s installation and awards banquet.



Pomona Chamber Ambassador Frank Carrillo, second from right, owner of On Time Photo Booth Rentals, receives the award for “Ambassador of the Year.”

Not a member yet? Garner told the group he can sign them up on the spot.

“You will benefit from the chamber, I promise you,” he added.

Nearly 200 guests attended the event held this year for the second consecutive year on a Hawaiian theme, this time at the Pomona Fox Theater.

Drownings called leading cause of death for children; Pomona Valley Hospital offers tips

Officials at Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center have cited statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention which report that July is the month with the highest drowning rates – and there are steps that can be taken to

prevent them.

According to the statistics, drowning is the leading cause of death for children ages one to four, and the second leading cause of unintentional-injury death for children ages five to 14.

Hospital trauma physicians recommend selecting swimsuits for children with colors that can be seen best in the water. In addition, physicians recommend parents learn how to administer CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation).

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POMONA WINNERS IN UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION ESSAY CONTEST -- Four Garey High School students were winners in the United Nations Association-USA Pomona Valley Chapter's annual high school essay contest, this year with a theme on "policies that mitigate the climate change that threatens the globe" and discussing policies the U.N. should implement to transition to green energy. The Garey winners, all coming in tied for second place, were, from left, Joshua Mireles, Gabriel Castellano-Espinoza, Ezra Santillon and Manuel Vargas. First place went to Dorhle Davila Mendoza of Claremont High School, and Isaac Bass, also of Claremont High School, also tied for second place. The first place winner received \$500 and second place winners received \$300. A total of 42 essays were submitted.



NEW ROTARY AFFILIATE AT IPOLY -- Pomona Rotary members recently recognized members of the "Interact Club" at Pomona's iPoly High School with their "certificate of origination." The newly formed club will work closely with Pomona Rotary on projects to make a positive impact in the community. The Interact Club program, sponsored by Rotary International, provides a service organization for young people and is designed to develop leadership skills and provide opportunities for community service. Pictured, from left, are Aileen Ramirez, ninth grader; Itzel Silva, 11th grader; Reyah Landis, 10th grader; and Alexis Miranda and Madeline Ferreira, both ninth graders.

Immigration raids... from pg. 7

appropriate workshops and materials to educate young people on their legal rights during protests and more.

“Young people have always been at the forefront of the great protest movements throughout American history,” she said. “We want to make sure that when they go out and protest . . . they’re fully aware of their rights and of the resources available to them.”

In a related action, Pomona city officials announced this week in a news release that

the city has joined a federal lawsuit to protect residents from unconstitutional immigration enforcement actions.

City Councilmembers voted during a special meeting earlier this month to join the City of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles and eight other cities in the action filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and various immigration and civil rights organizations.

Councilmembers voted 6 to 0 in favor with Councilmember Debra Martin absent.

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Photos courtesy of Toi Jackson

JUNETEENTH OBSERVANCES IN POMONA -- Donna Jackson-Houston, at left, a Pomona resident and president and founder of the Nogales Buffalo Soldiers Legacy Association, poses at the "Nogales Buffalo Soldiers Tribute" exhibit last month during an annual Juneteenth celebration in Pomona's Ganesha Park. From left are Jackson-Houston, Rachel Hilliard, president of the Buffalo Soldiers San Diego chapter, and Dr. Larry Thornton, of the Buffalo Soldiers Los Angeles chapter. The Buffalo Soldiers opened the ceremony with the presentation of colors.

Members of the Pomona chapter of the Sigma Gamma Rho sorority pose for the camera at last month's Juneteenth activities in Pomona's Ganesha Park. The collegiate sorority, incorporated in 1922, works to make society better through sisterhood and empowerment. It has more than 500 chapters worldwide with members including both students and professional women. Juneteenth commemorates the emancipation of enslaved people in the U.S. following the Civil War under the terms of the 1862 Emancipation Proclamation. Pictured, clockwise from front left, are chapter members Zeretha Brickhouse, Oone Houston, Lisa Andrews, Confidence Johnson and chapter friend Patricia Andres.



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Tri City Mental Health launches ‘Mobile Crisis Care’ initiative

A capacity crowd in the former YMCA gymnasium – now known as “The Cathedral” in the building now known as The Union -- this month learned of resources available and the importance of seeking those resources out in a community wellness fair and launch of Tri City Mental Health’s Mobile Crisis Care initiative.

The new initiative was billed as “a significant step in strengthening mental health support in Pomona, Claremont and La Verne.”

“It’s a service that we consider to be very important to . . . all the communities we serve,” said Tri City Executive Director Ontson Placide. “It’s about giving the community emergency service response in real time, real services . . . and creating access for folks – there’s no wrong door to be able to receive the services.”

He explained that the agency’s mobile crisis mental health services are designed to create “stabilization” and to “connect folks with ongoing community support and/or programs.”

Placide added that this is important because “collaboration is one of the big things that we feel very strongly about – the power of collaboration and community support.”

Sandra Grajeda, Claremont’s community representative on the Tri City Board, told the group she had an opportunity to meet representatives of all of the Tri City Departments and other community partners.

“I just want to thank you all for all the hard and so very important work that you do,” she said.

Liz Renteria, Tri City’s chief clinical officer, explained the Mobile Crisis Care initiative, a program that was “about three years



Tri City Mental Health Board member Sandra Grajeda

in the making,” incorporated input from many in the room who “participated to give feedback on how this program should evolve and develop.”

“And it’s continuing to develop,” she said. “So, thanks to all of you that helped us design this program through our stakeholder engagement process.”

She said stakeholders involved in the program’s development included law enforcement, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health’s psychiatric mobile response team and others.

“I know we have representatives from Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health working directly with Pomona PD,” she said. “A lot of the cities have specific crisis care programs as well.”

“Even though there are things already in place . . . there’s still a great need,” she said, “and it’s an



Tri City Mental Health Executive Director Ontson Placide, at right, kicks off a community celebration at The Union in Downtown Pomona for a new Mobile Crisis Care initiative developed by Tri City over the past three years.

opportunity for us to come together as a community and leverage all those resources to fill the gap.”

Included is Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center and Pomona Unified School District, among others.

The actual mobile crisis care team includes three therapists who help triage individuals in need of mental health services over the telephone and see to it that they are referred to the appropriate support group.

Tri City’s mobile crisis care unit is prepared to “roll” to the scene of incidents and provide immediate psychological care when and

Mobile Crisis Care... pg. 15



Speakers at the Tri City Mental Health Mobile Crisis Care initiative launch this month included, from left, Markie Sterner, manager of Mobile Crisis Care, and Deputy Chief Clinical Officer Deborah Johnson.



Tri City Mental Health Executive Director Ontson Placide, at left, takes a look at the offerings at one of Tri City’s tables at this month’s launch of a new Mobile Crisis Care initiative at The Union in Downtown Pomona.



Pomona’s Galan Cultural Center provided dancers to entertain the crowd at this month’s Tri City Mental Health’s launch of its new Mobile Crisis Care initiative. And the dancers included everything from “flappers” from the Roaring ‘20s to folklorico dancers and even dancers performing the Mexican Hat Dance.



Assemblymember Michelle Rodriguez announces community awards at annual summer event

Pomona's Ethel Gardner, founder and executive director of the non-profit Kennedy Austin Foundation which supports families that have lost a child, was honored with the "Woman of the Year" award for Pomona this month at Assemblymember Michelle Rodriguez' inaugural summer barbecue event outside her office in Chino.

Gardner's non-profit serves families in Pomona, Claremont and La Verne and was founded in 1993 after Gardner lost her teenage son in an auto accident.

In her opening comments, Rodriguez said the event "is a reminder that every neighborhood and in every city represented here today, there's something worth protecting, building, and someone worth recognizing."

"You are the reason I go to Sacramento and fight every single day, and I mean fight," she said.

"And that is why I introduced Assembly Bill 63, a bill rooted in both compassion and common sense . . . (and) a critical tool to help victims of human trafficking and restore peace."

She explained the measure will reinstate the ability to address loitering with intent to commit prostitution while not criminalizing vulnerable individuals but instead intervening, connecting them to services and offering them a way out with dignity.

Introducing Gardner, whose first book "A



Pomona's Ethel Gardner, at left, receives the "Woman of the Year" award from Assemblymember Michelle Rodriguez at this month's annual summer "hoedown" barbecue and awards presentation in Chino.

Mother's Cry" was published in 2004, she said "if you haven't read her book, you will cry."

She added that Gardner's sup-

port group "has become a beacon of light for the community" and has "touched countless lives"

through support, domestic vio-



Pomona Police Officer Jacqueline Gonzalez receives Pomona's "Veteran of the Year" award from Assemblymember Michelle Rodriguez.

lence education, youth groups and parent empowerment workshops.

"I have a special relationship

with Ethel as I was athletic director for Junior All American Football, the Pomona Steelers, the football team her late son played for," she added. "Thank you, Ethel, for your unwavering dedication and helping of others."

Her "Small Business of the Year" award was presented to Rick Albertini, owner of Phenix Enterprises, a truck body and equipment company.

"They are a proud family-owned company and have been a cornerstone of Pomona's community and economy for over 25 years," Rodriguez said. "Founded in 1978 with fewer than 10 employees, Phenix has grown into a leading provider with custom fleet solutions employing over 200."

She added that the company "actively collaborates with the Pomona City Council, Cal Poly

Community awards... pg. 14



Garey High School graduate Leslye Solano, at left, receives the "Everybody Loves Raymond" scholarship award from Assemblymember Michelle Rodriguez. The annual scholarship honors Garey graduate Raymond Garcia, who lost his life during his senior year in high school in a drive-by shooting. Raymond's mom, Loretta Garcia, looks on, at right.

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Community awards... from pg. 13

Pomona business school, and the Pomona Chamber of Commerce, exemplifying their dedication to local industry and community impact.”

Rodriguez called all of the small businesses recognized “the backbone of our community.”

Rodriguez introduced Pomona educator and Pomona native Ruth Alvarez, recipient of the Pomona “Teacher of the Year” award, adding that she “has dedicated her career in giving back to the community that shaped her.”

She said Alvarez currently is teaching eighth graders and AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) classes at Pomona’s Simons Middle School.

Alvarez is entering her 11th year in education and her ninth

with Pomona Unified School District. She received her master’s degree in education and her teaching credentials from Claremont Graduate University after attending Cal State Fullerton.

She has served as president of the Pomona Optimist Club, volunteers to support local families, and is a member of the Historic Preservation Commission.

Rodriguez called all of the educators honored individuals who “educate our youth and mold our futures.”

Pomona’s “Veteran of the Year” award went to Pomona Police Officer Jacqueline Gonzalez who, Rodriguez said, “exemplifies the strength, service and spirit that uplifts the Pomona community.”

She served in the U.S. Navy

from 2017 to 2022 as an operations specialist and air intercept controller, achieving the rank of Petty Officer First Class and completing two combat deployments aboard an aircraft carrier.

Gonzalez began her law enforcement career with the Pomona Police Department “where her dedication to public safety and mentorship shines,” Rodriguez said, adding that she serves as a Police Explorer advisor, guiding youth interested in law enforcement, and supports the “Cops for Kids” program.

“Her commitment to service, both in uniform and in the community, is a testament

Community awards... pg. 16



Long-time Pomona educator Ruth Alvarez receives the “Teacher of the Year” award for Pomona from Assemblymember Michelle Rodriguez.



Assemblymember Michelle Rodriguez presents the 53rd Assembly District “Small Business of the Year” award for Pomona to Rick Albertini, owner of Phenix Enterprises of Pomona, a truck body and equipment company.



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Keeping an ear out for hearing loss issues

By Tasha Takeshita, AuD, CCC-A, F-AAA

Director of Audiology

Casa Colina Hospital and Centers for Healthcare

Our daily lives are filled with a symphony of sounds: construction, conversations, television, traffic, and even our pets. We also actively immerse ourselves in audio, from music to podcasts. Yet, this constant auditory input, even the entertaining kind, can

noise of a busy restaurant, can all reach 85 dBA. Research shows that exceeding these recommended limits significantly increases your risk of NIHL. Crucially, the louder the sound, the less time it takes to inflict permanent damage.

Protecting Your Hearing: Practical Strategies

1. Avoid Unnecessary Exposure: Be mindful of your surroundings. Distance yourself from excessively loud noises whenever possible.

2. Limit Exposure:

a. Lower the Volume: If someone nearby can hear your headphones, it's too loud.

b. Reduce Duration: Shorter exposures to loud sounds are always safer.

c. Take Breaks: Brief pauses from listening can significantly reduce overall sound exposure.

3. Utilize Hearing Protection:

When damaging noise levels are unavoidable, actively protect your ears. Earplugs and earmuffs are effective for reducing sound volume and are indispensable for activities with known high noise levels. For noisy hobbies or professions, custom earplugs offer superior comfort and protection.

Prioritizing awareness of potentially damaging sounds is crucial for maintaining a healthy lifestyle and preserving your hearing. If you have any concerns about your hearing, or experience symptoms like ringing in your ears (tinnitus) or difficulty understanding conversations, consult your physician. They can provide a referral to an audiologist for a hearing evaluation. For comprehensive audiology services, consider the Casa Colina Audiology Center at <https://www.casacolina.org/programs-services/audiology/>.



Tasha Takeshita

unknowingly lead to significant long-term health concerns. Nearly one-quarter of middle-aged adults experience some degree of hearing loss directly attributable to noise exposure. This condition, known as Noise-Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL), can be temporary or permanent, and results from sudden, excessive, or prolonged exposure to loud sounds. NIHL can manifest as sudden or gradual hearing loss at any age.

NIHL can develop in two primary ways. Sudden NIHL typically results from a single, intensely loud event, leading to immediate partial or complete hearing loss. In contrast, gradual or progressive NIHL develops over time from repeated exposure to loud sounds. The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends limiting noise exposure to 85 A-weighted decibels (dBA) for no more than eight hours. To put this in perspective, common household items like vacuum cleaners, blenders, and hairdryers, as well as the ambient

Mobile Crisis Care... from pg. 12

where it is needed.

It is a transformative new program designed to bring mental health crisis support directly into the communities of Pomona, Claremont, and La Verne, and is designed to meet individuals where they are – both physically and emotionally. The team provides person-centered, compassionate,

and timely support for those experiencing a mental health crisis, with a focus on safety, dignity, and connection.

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GIFTS FOR CANCER PATIENTS AT POMONA VALLEY HOSPITAL -- Staff members from Subaru Puente Hills delivered 80 blankets, 10 patient care kits, and "messages of hope" (written by visitors to the Puente Hills Subaru showroom) last month to Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center's Robert and Beverly Lewis Family Cancer Care Center in Pomona. The gesture was part of the "Subaru Loves to Care" initiative of Subaru and The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Subaru has supported nearly 300,000 cancer patients across the country through this initiative. The Robert and Beverly Lewis Family Cancer Care Center provides comprehensive oncology services including state-of-the-art radiation treatment, chemotherapy and other infusion options, and more.



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Pomona Valley Memorial Park is a nonprofit corporation.

Pomona’s Casa Colina Hospital and Centers for Healthcare launches specialized center for disorders of consciousness

Casa Colina Hospital and Centers for Healthcare has opened a new Center for Disorders of Consciousness – Southern California’s only facility of its type – to provide clinical management and innovative therapeutic interventions for those with acquired severe brain injuries.

A disorder of consciousness occurs when a person experiences severe impairment in their awareness of themselves or their environment, typically following a major brain injury such as traumatic brain injury, stroke or anoxia.

Long-term care often is required due to the complexity of conditions which can persist for months or even years.

Casa Colina’s new intensive four-week program is designed to determine level of consciousness, prevent and treat secondary complications such as contractures and infections, maximize arousal, alertness and response consistency, and identify barriers and assess the need for augmentative communication systems.

The program is led by Caroline Schnakers, Ph.D., associate direc-



Caroline Schnakers

tor of the Research Institute at Casa Colina Hospital, who has 20 years of experience as a clinical scientist in the neurorehabilitation field.

She said the program “addresses a critical gap in care” for individuals in need of these services.

“Our comprehensive, evidence-based approach, combined with cutting-edge research, offers a pivotal pathway for patients and their families, guiding them on the complex journey of recovery and enhancing their quality of life,” she said.

For more information, visit www.casacolina.org.

Community awards... from pg. 14

to her leadership, discipline and optimism,” she said.

“Thank you, Officer Gonzalez, for your unwavering dedication and for inspiring those around you,” she added.

Rodriguez also continued a tradition her husband Freddie started when he was a member of the Pomona City Council, presenting an “Everybody Loves Raymond” scholarship, named after the late Raymond Garcia, whose life was tragically cut short by a drive-by shooting when he was a senior at Garey High School and an athlete in the Pomona football program.

This year’s award went to Garey High School graduate Leslye Solano who, Rodriguez said, “not only excelled academically but also demonstrated remarkable strength and resilience despite facing extreme hardships.”

“Inspired by her grandmother’s battle with cancer, she found her passion for helping others and is now pursuing a career in radiological technology with a focus on cardiac imaging,” Rodriguez said.

She is the youngest of three siblings and is the first in her family to attend college.

“She hopes to inspire others to never give up, and she leaves behind a legacy of hope, courage and commitment to make a difference,” Rodriguez said.

Raymond Garcia’s mom, Loretta Garcia, participated in the award presentation.

The annual event was launched by former Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez and recognizes award recipients throughout the 53rd Assembly District in Chino, Montclair, Ontario and Upland along with Pomona.

It includes hot dogs, live music, a huge resource fair and more. The format changed things up a bit this year and was held on the theme of a western hoedown with many guests attending in western boots and hats.

In her news release announcing the event, Rodriguez said it was an effort to “bring our community together, share the work we are doing in Sacramento, and celebrate the incredible people and resources that make the 53rd Assembly district so special.”

Elected last November, she has been assigned to Assembly committees on banking and finance, governmental organization, insurance, military and veterans affairs, and rules. She was also appointed by Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas to serve as Assistant Majority Whip.


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Info on student group programs at AGRIsCapes:
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Memorial plaque unveiled to honor Manuel Castillejos

City officials, family and friends gathered in Downtown Pomona last month to unveil a plaque in a memorial garden to honor long-time Pomona musician, professor and leader Manuel Castillejos who died in July 2023 at the age of 72.

The garden named “Manuel Castillejos Plaza” in his memory is located at the southeast corner of Garey Avenue and Second Street. The memorial plaque called him “an advocate for the arts who fostered respect and pride within the Latino community.”

Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval told participants that Castillejos “contributed to the City of Pomona and beyond.”

“We wanted to recognize Mr. Castillejos for the work that he contributed to this city,” he said, “and I’m thinking particularly our young people -- as many of you know, he was instrumental in the youth orchestra for our community.”

Sandoval added that Castillejos made a space located next to the garden and above the El Merendero restaurant available to many organizations “that were doing important work in the community.”

“This is really a dedication to his work and his commitment to particularly helping the most vulnerable community members in the City of Pomona,” he added. “(He) contributed to nurture enhanced re-



Miriam Boada Castillejos



Cristina Carrizosa

spect and pride for the members of the Latino community of Pomona” and was an advocate for bilingual education, he assisted in the formation of a children’s mariachi, and he taught many children how to play the guitar.

“As a Spanish professor at Mount San Antonio College, he involved his students, many who were Pomona residents, in activities that furthered their education while enriching Pomona’s community life,” Sandoval said.

He said Castillejos also served on the city’s cultural arts and historical commissions, along with organizations like the Latino Chamber of Commerce, received the Cesar Chavez Award in 2016 and was named a Pomona Community Hero by the LA



An authentic Aztec dancer offers a blessing through dance for the new memorial garden honoring long-time Pomona musician and leader Manuel Castillejos in Downtown Pomona.



Jose Calderon



Miriam Boada Castillejos

City of Pomona officials join family and friends of the late Manuel Castillejos in unveiling a plaque memorializing his work in Pomona. Pictured, at center, from left, are Pomona City Councilmember Nora Garcia, Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval, Pomona Unified School District Board member Arturo Jimenez, former Pomona City Councilmember Cristina Carrizosa and Castillejos’ wife, Miriam Boada Castillejos. At far right, from left, are Goretty Ornelas of Galan Cultural Center who worked with Castillejos, Pomona City Councilmember Victor Preciado, and Pomona City Manager Anita Scott.

County Fair.

Former Pomona City Councilmember Cristina Carrizosa described Castillejos as being very respectful, very friendly, very honest and someone who never said no to anybody.

She said he helped families in need of assistance and provided students with a place where they could practice, study or simply discuss issues.

“His place was always open,” she said. “He never said no to me when I was on the council.”

She said she worked alongside him trying to incorporate bilingual education in Pomona which she said probably became one of the first programs of its type in the area.

Pomona Unified School Dis-



Arturo Jimenez



A plaque in Downtown Pomona’s new Manuel Castillejos Plaza recognizes Castillejos as an advocate for the arts within the Latino community.



Manuel Castillejos

trict Board member Arturo Jimenez told guests that it is because of Castillejos that Jimenez is supporting the construction of

a performing arts center in Pomona.

“Manuel put that in my heart that we need a performing arts

Memorial plaque... pg. 19

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OPINION

Curb painters descend on Pomona; tactics show need for increased regulation

OK, class — show of hands. How many of you received a notice on your door that curb painters would be around and how many of you were asked to pay for those new street numbers that you didn't ask for and didn't approve?

Well, if it makes you feel any better, at La Nueva Voz, we raised our hands both times, as well.

Of course, the problem is City of Pomona Municipal Code section 58.5, “unauthorized painting of curbs,” says “no person or agency, unless authorized by the city traffic engineer, shall paint any street or curb surface.”

And the other problem is when you ask if they have a business license, they tell you they have a permit from the city. But when you ask to see it and an entire City of Pomona letter is on their phone screen, you can't read the little letters.

Ask to take a photo so you can read it later? Oh, I'm not going to let you take a picture of it.

With that kind of response, the thought comes to mind that “official permit letter” really could be about anything — even a letter to residents reminding them the days they are allowed to water their lawn, right?

Plus, there's a caveat — “provided, however, that this section shall not apply to the painting of numbers on a curb surface by any person who has complied with the sections of this code or the provisions of any ordinance or resolution of the city pertaining thereto.”

Best we can figure, that means the painting company at the very least would need to have a business license from the city (required elsewhere in the code). But would it need insurance, bond, that “permit” they show you in their phone, or a waiver from the police department indicating they don't believe the painters are

really in the neighborhood to see which homes are vacant so they can come back later for a “visit?”

We're just not sure. So we did a Google search. Reddit, under “curb paint scam,” says it is a scam, especially if they paint your number on the curb BEFORE coming to your door asking for money.

The next search result from September 2023 said police (not Pomona police) were reminding people in communities all across the country “not to fall for a common scam . . .”

It turns out just such a company surfaced in Westmont this month (see notice found taped to a door). In one instance, where the little guy was the painter and the big guy came back the next day to collect, one Westmont resident was confronted by the “big guy” and the resident said she would not pay either by cash or credit card (yes, they accept credit cards!).

The word “irate” was the word the resident used to describe the conversation.

In another instance, somebody called the cops and two units responded — one to detain the “little guy” while the other interviewed the informant.

The two Pomona police officers drove off with the necessary contact information and handed it all over to Pomona code enforcement officers to follow up. Apparently best they can do is write an administrative citation for doing business in Pomona without a business license, and other possible alleged violations to be determined. We're guessing the little company smiles, writes a check and writes off the expense as a cost of doing business. (After all, their only other costs are a small paint roller for the white paint, a five gallon can of paint, and black spray paint for the stencils. Oh,

and there's a clipboard.)

La Nueva Voz checked with Pomona City Hall where officials confirmed code enforcement officers were on it, that they have received the contact information for the business, and that the city will be issuing an administrative citation. But they also confirmed that once that list of alleged violations is finalized and the citation is forwarded to the painting company, the fine for first time alleged unpermitted activity and/or violations of city ordinances would be only \$100. There's that cost of doing business we were talking about.

(Generally, in California, administrative citations for code violations increase with repeated offenses — often the second

number placed on the curb face; and it says the person requesting to paint your house number on the face of the curb has been required to obtain a Department of Public Works permit in order to comply with the law.

Finally, the notice states that



This “Ring Security Camera” photo shows a curb painting representative following up with a Westmont resident requesting payment.

ADVISORY NOTICE!!

Curb Addressing Service will be painting all house numbers on the curbs in your neighborhood. New curb numbers greatly improve visibility, day and night, for deliveries, emergency services, visitors, etc. Work will begin in 1 - 5 days. There is no charge. Your donation is voluntary and sincerely appreciated, regardless of the amount. **The Value is \$25.00.** (Checks are accepted) payable to Curb Addressing Service. Donations are collected at the door, after work is completed. Thank you for letting us serve you!

This notice taped to doors announced that curb painters were on their way.

violation within a year is \$200, and a third or subsequent violation can be \$500. City officials here said fines can “progressively increase up to \$1,000 per day if non-compliance continues.”

Then what can Pomona residents do to prevent being scammed and what can the city do to help? (And by the way, La Nueva Voz noted that “Next Door Neighbor” readers were already calling the local incident a scam.)

There are a couple of things out there that immediately come to mind.

First, the County of Los Angeles has done a pretty good job. While their rules only apply to unincorporated areas, they provide a pretty good model for the cities.

For example, they require the “solicitor” to provide residents with a copy of the county's “Notice to Owner or Occupant Painting of House Numbers on Curb.”

That document specifically states the resident is not required to pay for this service but can make a donation if they wish; it says the solicitor is not a county employee; it says the county does not require you to have a street

if the person is rude, insistent or misrepresents the above facts, call the local sheriff's office.

Oh, and the solicitor is required to carry with them a copy of the county's encroachment permit AND must obtain the property owner's or resident's permission PRIOR to painting the house number on the curb.

Ding, ding, ding, ding, ding!

Sounds to us like the county nailed it. We're guessing “big guy” doesn't send his painter into unincorporated areas like Bassett or Valinda, right Supervisor Solis?

But wait, there's more! The City of San Dimas, less than a third the size of Pomona, in their own municipal code, Chapter 5.72 House Number Painters, requires a permit beforehand from the city clerk — and then only with the consent of the owner or the occupant

of the property.

“Every person so painting or placing numbers on curbs shall at all times while engaged in such activity have in his possession a valid, unrevoked identification card issued by the city clerk, stating his name and address, the name and address of the permittee or licensee, and the date of expiration of such license.”

Not bad, right?

But there's more here as well. In actual practice, after La Nueva Voz reached out to the city clerk's office in San Dimas, even though it doesn't say so in the code, San Dimas only provides curb painting permits to local non-profits so they can do the job as a fundraising project — Boy Scouts, Lions Club, whoever. A spokesperson for the city clerk's office there said that practice was in use as recently as last year.

So, here's the deal — La Nueva Voz is recommending that Pomona city councilmembers and staff go to work to beef up their municipal code requirements starting with, of course, the county requirements and the model of San Dimas.

In fact, it can be as simple as enacting a new ordinance OR updating the municipal code, or even both.

Still reading? Well, District Five to the rescue! La Nueva Voz reached out to District Five City Councilmember Steve Lustro at a couple of points along the way in this saga.

Bottom line? He agreed to take essentially all of this information in to his next “one on one” meeting with Pomona City Manager Anita Scott to discuss how best to get the ball rolling on this.

Like what you hear? Then get your cards, letters and e-mails going to your own councilmembers and tell them so — just to help keep the pressure on until this gets fixed.

And thanks to Councilmember Lustro for taking the first step.

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Executive Board Member, Pomona Chamber of Commerce

Memorial plaque... from pg. 17

board on this," he said.

Miriam Boada Castillejos, Manuel's wife, thanked organizers of the memorial "for making this tribute to my late husband" who, she said, "would have been truly honored for this recognition."

"He was always dedicated to helping his students, the community and his family in every way he could, sharing his knowledge, time and support," she said.

Community volunteer and organizer Jose Calderon said he wanted "to remember Manuel in terms of what he gave to the artistic community from the very beginning."

He also remembered Castillejos working with Mt. SAC on organizing the first Cinco de Mayo celebration at the college.

"Manuel was one who always put theory into practice, and he always connected the classroom to the community and then, as much as he could, he involved the students in the community and all of you," Calderon said.

The two worked together, Calderon said, on getting an ethnic studies degree at Mt. SAC,

along with a multicultural center on campus.

"We fought to protect undocumented students, which is still going on right now," he added. "He led a lot of amazing things in our community and Mt. SAC . . . and I'm just blessed to have been his student and a part of his life."

And he said that while his "profile is physically gone," he added that "energy doesn't disappear . . . it transcends and moves to different people and different things."

In his obituary written by Carizosa and published two years ago in La Nueva Voz, Castillejos was described as "an unsung hero who spent years of his life, talent and expertise preserving, teaching and expanding the knowledge of history, art, music and culture of a large segment of Pomona's population."

"Without his efforts and participation, much of our folk music and traditions would have sadly been forgotten to the detriment of future generations."

He was remembered as a professor at Mt. SAC, the owner of the School of Fine Arts in Pomona, and more.



PRETTY SCARY -- HALLOWEEN MUST BE COMING! -- Hope Quiroga, 15, a student at Oak Hills High School in Hesperia (and granddaughter of Pomona activists David and Dee Dee Ybarra), poses last month next to her latest artistic creation -- characters of "horror people" -- during her Friday the 13th birthday party. In addition to her artistic talent, she is in the drama class and plays the electric guitar. She has been drawing for about four years.



RIBBON CUTTING FOR KLOWNSKI STUDIO -- Elected officials and Pomona Chamber of Commerce members held an official ribbon cutting ceremony this month for the new home of Klownski Studio in The Union at 350 N. Garey Ave., Pomona. The company, located off the lobby of the old YMCA building, offers everything from audio and video recording sessions to pod casts. Pictured cutting the ribbon is owner Sergio Franco. From left are Chamber Ambassador Domenica Carrillo, owner of Pomona's On Time Photo Booth Rentals, and her son Kobe, Chamber Board member Daniel Thomas, Executive Board member Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz, Chamber Ambassadors Essence Guss and Tracy Evanson-Norwood of Healed Women Heal, Franco, Pomona City Councilmembers Victor Preciado and Lorraine Canales, Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval, and Three Valleys Municipal Water District Director Carlos Goytia. Chamber President and CEO Monique Robles is behind Franco.

Services held for Juan Robledo, father of former Pomona councilmember

Funeral services were held last week at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Pomona for Juan G. Robledo, a Pomona resident, Cal Poly Pomona retiree and father of former Pomona City Councilmember Adriana Robledo, who died last month. He was 75.

Robledo, a native of Mexico, came to the United States in the 1970s. From his youth in Mexico to his time in the United States, he worked farms and fields in agriculture. In the 1980s, he found the job he loved -- a farm technician at Cal Poly Pomona harvesting, pruning, helping with student learning, and assisting with the Cal Poly Farm Store from its early times in a small building on Citrus Lane to its newest location on Campus Drive.

Robledo appeared regularly with his wife at events in Pomona, always beaming with pride, when his daughter Adriana participated during her time on the city council from 2013 to 2018.

He retired from Cal Poly after 40 years at the end of March.



DOING WHAT HE LOVED -- Juan Robledo, pictured doing what he loved outside the Farm Store at Cal Poly Pomona, just happened to be spotted by La Nueva Voz harvesting the season's first strawberries and only moments later in a conversation mentioned his daughter was Pomona City Councilmember Adriana Robledo. The photo appeared in the March 26, 2015, La Nueva Voz (www.lanuevavoz.net, click on "past issues").

He is survived by Graciela, his wife of more than 50 years, and their three children -- Adriana, Juan, and Eric. Robledo also is survived by his own father, Carlos Robledo, three brothers and six

sisters.

The Robledo family extends its gratitude to everyone who attended services which were held on July 14 and 15. Burial was at Holy Cross Cemetery in Pomona.

Celebrating the clown of the art or the art of the clown!



CLOWN'S NIGHT OUT -- It was "Clown's Night Out" in Downtown Pomona last week as clowns, many of them also local and regional artists, dressed up for an event that included dramatic performances (we know, how many times do you hear the words "dramatic" and clowns in the same sentence), live music, a juggler, a lot of artists filling up two blocks, and more. The entire celebration was organized by The Alley Gallery, at 101 S. Main St., Pomona, with exhibits set up right outside the gallery doors. Gallery owner Geo Esparza told La Nueva Voz they were "just clowning around." Pictured in



clown costumes with their art are, from left, artists Meraki Diaz and Oscar Cano, along with half a dozen of the finest clowns Pomona has to offer.



Please visit our web site at www.lanuevavoz.net to see the latest issue of La Nueva Voz, past issues and more!



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