

**TOO MUCH TO DREAM**



Judy Garland (played by Nicole Cassesso) gets some help from the hotel doorman (Jon Michell) in the Gem Theater's presentation of "End of the Rainbow," telling the story of the troubled Garland at the end of her career. It's on stage through Feb. 23. For a review, go to Arts & Living, pages 5 and 8 (One More Productions photo).

**State pushes back on voter ID**

The legal tug-of-war between the State of California and the City of Huntington Beach continues as a petition for a writ of mandate has been filed asking for a resolution of the conflict between the two over a requirement that voters in Surf City present identification

when casting ballots.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta and Secretary of State Shirley Weber filed the motion with the California Fourth District Court of Appeal on Thursday.

At issue is the voter-approved "Measure A," which a lower court said

was "not ripe for adjudication."

A special election will be held on Feb. 25 to fill the 36th state Senate seat vacated by Janet Nguyen, who was elected in November 2024 to the Orange County Board of Supervisors, representing District 1.

**City attorney will be replaced**

After several evaluations, the Westminster City Council voted on Wednesday night to select a new city attorney.

On a 5-0 vote in closed session, the council voted to find a replacement for Christian Bettenhausen.

**WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL**

He will remain in his post until a new city attorney is selected.

Bettenhausen has served Westminster as its legal counsel since 2021 and

also is city attorney for Placentia.

While there was no open comment made about the reasons for his dismissal, he has come under criticism of his legal work from some members of

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**HUNTINGTON BEACH CITY COUNCIL**

**'MAGA' Plaque Stirs Objection Among Some**

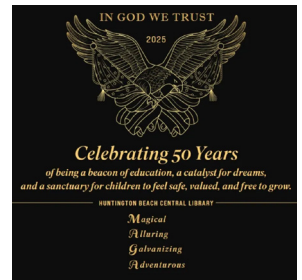
Would be placed at library

By Jim Tortolano  
Orange County Tribune

The Huntington Beach City Council, which has backed several controversial policies and positions, may be the center of more contention on Tuesday when it meets to consider approval of a plaque which critics consider too "partisan."

Planned for placement at the city's Central Library in observance of the 50th anniversary of the opening of the facility, it features a slogan which mirrors that of the campaign slogan of President Donald Trump: MAGA.

It's in the form of an



**PLAQUE** proposed for placement in the Huntington Beach Central Library.

acrostic, such as in Scrabble and reads:

**M**agical  
**A**lluring  
**G**alvanizing  
**A**dventurous  
**P**resident Trump's cam-

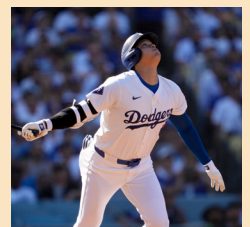
Continued on page 2

**Inside The Tribune**



**Ducks' Gibson hits 500th**

SPORTS Page 6



**Dodgers look loaded for 2025**

SPORTS Page 7

# MAGA and HB City Council

Continued from page 1

paigned used the slogan “Make American Great Again” and it was featured in the red caps worn by Trump and his supporters.

Reactions in social media from some include the comment that the MAGA acronym was an overly political reference, inappropriate for a non-partisan city building and operation.

Mayor Pat Burns referred to the city council as the “MAGAnificent Seven” after the Nov. 6 election resulted in a conserva-

tive sweep of the city’s governing body.

Also on the agenda is a decision on the council’s response to a citizen initiative seeking to repeal the controversial “Community-Parent Guardian Review Board” for children’s library materials, and an agreement for establishment of the “Flowers of the Sky” light show to be staged in Central Park.

The council will meet in closed session at 3:45 p.m. with the regular meeting at 6 p.m. in its chambers at 2000 Main St.

# Westminster City Council dismisses the city attorney

Continued from page 1

the public.

Also on Tuesday night, the council:

- made a presentation for Black History Month;
- approved for second reading and adoption an ordinance “terminating” the Commission on Aging.
- approved the purchase of playground equipment in the amount of \$202,001.24 for Elden F. Gillespie Park.

The council will next meet on Wednesday, Feb. 26 at 6 p.m.

## The Tribune

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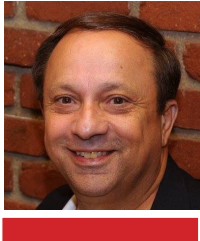
# News & Views

## Stop me if you have heard this witty acronym ...

Laughter is the best medicine, right?

The Jolly Pranksters on the Huntington Beach City Council are – I think – seeking to have some fun with their critics with an item on the agenda for Tuesday’s meeting.

They’ll be asking for permission to spend \$7000 to place a plaque on a wall at the Central Library, decoration that includes a motto whose initial letters are MAGA.



**Retorts**  
Jim Tortolano

No kidding. Or maybe, yes kidding.

The plaque kicks off with the phrase, “In God We Trust” and celebrates the 50-year anniversary of the five-story landmark library in Central Park, arguably the largest public library in Orange County.

Right smack dab in the middle is this motto:

Magical  
Alluring  
Galvanizing  
Adventurous

Hmmm ... what could that mean?

Some folks are convinced the the council –which has been called by the new mayor, Pat Burns, the “MAGAnificent Seven” – is seeking to further tweak the liberals in Huntington Beach who have been generally routed by the new council. And what better way to the hammer the point – humorously – of course, on the bitterly divisive issue of content and management of the library?

I mean, get real. Nobody could seriously come up with an “acrostic” like that and expect it to be taken literally. I remember

Continued on page 8

## FULL SERVICE FIREFIGHTERS



Firefighters from the Orange County Fire Authority revived a dog and a cat they rescued while searching for victims in an apartment fire on Springdale Street in Westminster on Wednesday. Unfortunately, another cat did not survive. There were no injuries to people and firefighters were able to contain the blaze to a single apartment. The cause of the fire is under investigation. Assistance was provided by the Westminster Police Department, Huntington Beach Fire Department and Fountain Valley Department. (OCFA photo).

## ■ G. GROVE PLANNERS

### Townhome project goes to commission

The construction of a 26-unit two-story townhome project in a residential area of West Garden Grove goes before the Garden Grove Planning Commission when it meets on Thursday, Feb. 20.

Brandywine Homes is requesting approval of a site plan, variance, general plan amendments and other permissions for the proposed project at 5802 Santa Catalina Avenue between Valley View Street and St. Mark Street.

The existing 3.025-acre lot, now occupied by Grace Baptist Church, would be subdivided into two lots, one for the townhomes and the remainder for the church.

Restriping of parking lanes in the portion used by the church should meet current parking requirements.

Also on the agenda are:

- a conditional use permit for a new 18,183-square foot adult day care facility for 463 adults

Continued on page 8

## GGPD accepting job applications

Are you, or someone you know interested in a career of courage, courtesy, and commitment?

The City of Garden Grove is seeking qualified candidates who are service-oriented and passionate about making a difference in the community to join the Garden Grove Police

Department. The City is now accepting online applications for sworn and non-sworn positions with the Garden Grove Police Department. The deadline to apply is Monday, March 3, 2025.

To apply online, visit [ggpd.org/join](http://ggpd.org/join).

Job openings for full-time and

part-time positions include:

- Police Recruit
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- Police Cadet

For sworn police officers, the Garden Grove Police Department offers in-service training programs and specializations in the areas of canine handling, gang suppression, investigations, juvenile services, motorcycle traffic enforcement, patrol, special weapons and tactics, vice-narcotic enforcement, and more after sufficient experience in the police department.

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# NewsUpdate

## Ukraine Needs ‘Security Guarantees’

### Zelensky meets with VP Vance in Germany

Before his nation will sit down with Russia to negotiate an end to their three-year war, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Friday that “security guarantees” must be provided.

According to the Associated Press, he made those remarks before conferring with Vice President JD Vance in Munich, Germany. “We want peace very much,” said Zelensky. “But we need real security guarantees.”

“Fundamentally, the goal is, as President Trump outlined it, we want the war to come to a close,”



THE WAR between Russia and Ukraine has lasted three years (Shutterstock).

Vance said. “We want the killings to stop. Not the kind of peace that’s going to have Eastern Europe in conflict just a

couple of years down the road.” Vance also lectured European leaders about illegal immigration into their countries, as well

as “free speech” issues in which some nations sought to curb the rise of authoritarian political parties.

## Massive cuts at federal agencies are proceeding

The slashing of worker rolls continued on Friday as the Trump Administration continued its efforts to downsize the federal government.

The New York Times is reporting that an estimated 1,000 employees in the Department of Energy had been notified they would be terminated and thousands of workers at the Internal Revenue Service would be laid

off as well.

Additionally, federal agencies have been told to terminate most of their probationary employees, estimated at around 200,000 people.

The Trump Administration said that it has accepted the resignations of about 75,000 people who will resign as part of a deal to be paid through September.

### Great Thoughts

“Power never takes a backward step – only in the face of more power. Power recognizes only power and all of them who realize this have made gains.”

– Malcom X, writer, activist

“Bureaucracy, the rule of no one, has become the modern form of despotism.”

– Mary McCarthy, writer

## ‘Bad data’ cause of crash between jet, helicopter?

Incorrect information may be the cause of the deadly crash of a commercial jetliner and a U.S. Army helicopter.

According to United Press International, the helicopter crew might not have been aware of the proximity of the jet, said Jennifer Homendy, chair of the National Transportation Safety Board.

“We are looking at the possibility that there may be bad data,” she said. “We have a lot

of work to do until we get to that.” NTSB investigators will be examining the contents of the flight recorders – known as “black boxes” from the downed aircraft.

There is apparently some confusion about whether the helicopter was at an altitude of 300 or 400 feet. It’s also believed that the Blackhawk crew was wearing night vision goggles, which limits peripheral vision.

### Weather: Rain is finally gone

Well, the lawn may have benefitted from the rain, but it’s gone from our West Orange County cities for a while. The forecasts call for partly cloudy skies and temperatures in the high 60s and low 70s.

Saturday’s daytime high is expected to hit 67 with an overnight low of 47 under partly cloudy skies.

Sunday will warm a bit to 71 (47) with mostly cloudy skies. Monday and Tuesday will bounce down to 65 and 68 daytime highs.

# Arts & Living

## A Spell-Binding 'Rainbow' At Gem

Nicole Cassesso brings Garland back to life

By Thom deMartino  
Orange County Tribune

She's drinking, again, as she rehearses, the pressure of it all building and becoming too much for her. Her long-suffering friend and pianist talks with her, gently inquiring about her myriad ex-husbands: "Do you miss any of them?" he asks.

A pause.

"I miss being loved" she sighs. It's something both mesmerizing and different, as Garden Grove's renowned Gem Theater and director Damien Lorton present – for a limited engagement – one of the venue's new "Black Box" shows: "End of the Rainbow".

Only playing through Feb. 23, "Rainbow" relates the story of the final tour of Hollywood legend Judy Garland (Nicole Cassesso), as she struggles to pick up the pieces of her life and career for a series of shows in London, England.

Acting as her manager and accompanying her is her newest beau, Mickey Deans (Peter Crisafulli): set to become her husband #5 after only weeks of them knowing each other, he tries (and fails) to contain her larger-than-life personality. The drama starts almost as soon as they enter the hotel room – why is the room so much smaller than she remembers? How dare the hotel manager insist they have to pay in advance – don't they know who she is?

Joining them in the suite is her friend and pianist, Anthony (Trevin Stephenson), there to help her rehearse for her shows, but even he can tell how on edge she is.

It turns out she's been wean-



NICOLE CASSESSO stars in "End of the Rainbow" at the Gem Theater in Garden Grove.

### Stage Review

ing herself off the pills she's been self-medicating with: or, more to the point, that Mickey's been weaning her off to keep her coherent for her shows... particularly after her debacle of a performance in Melbourne. But certainly a little alcohol couldn't hurt, could it?

What follows is a series of highs and lows for the struggling star – frequently in the medicinal sense. Anthony struggles to get her to focus on her practice and performance, as Mickey goes to lengths to hide Judy's pills and booze, growing increasingly exasperated with her behavior and manic episodes.

Trapped in the throes of addiction, trying desperately to hold herself together, her self-control growing increasingly tenuous – can Judy find her strength to finish out her performances? Or is she fated to reach the seemingly inevitable end of a downward spiral?

Don't be surprised if you're unfamiliar with the Black Box shows – they're a new addition to the Gem Theater's season, showcasing a handful of actors for an abbreviated run, in-between the venue's larger, tentpole productions. (And if "Rainbow" is any indicator, offering more mature, complex fare of a darker tone for theatergoers.)

The work by \*all\* the players here is, without a doubt, next-level.

Actors you may have seen in brilliant comedic performances in earlier Gem productions now turn those skills to the dramatic, with jaw-dropping success.

Stephenson's moving Anthony is a gentle soul, a "friend of Dorothy's" as it were, in a time of arguably less acceptance than today (although that may be up for debate): trying his best to be a friend to Judy, while keeping her away from the drink and drugs, and focused on her show; Crisafulli's Mickey could be easily dismissed as her enabler – until you see the conflict in his eyes,

**Great: ★★★★★**

when it comes to providing the pills she's so desperate for.

Despite their acrimony, he seems to truly love her, the best he's capable. And then there's Jon Michell, providing a light-hearted dash of comedy with his multiple roles (including the hotel doorman carrying her up to her room, or the radio personality interviewing her.)

And what of the troubled, complicated Ms. Garland?

This – without question – is Nicole Cassesso's finest performance to date, in an already remarkable career. (and that is saying something.)

Her portrayal of a troubled woman struggling with addiction – laughing, yelling, cursing, smiling, smirking, drinking, pill popping... doing anything, everything to keep that mask in place, to hide her vulnerability and bury her fears ... the desperation and depression, beneath

Continued on page 8

# TheSportsPages

*So easy, even a superman could do it ... maybe*

My junior high librarian used to say, "I have eyes in the back of my head." a phrase which produced many a giggle among junior high boys.

Actually, she did not and neither do sports officials. Before the Philadelphia Eagles dry cleaned the Kansas City Chiefs in the Super Bowl, there was some silly talk across the NFL that the league was deliberately leaning on the officiating crews to give the defending champs an advantage.

That's not only ridiculous on its face but runs contrary to the observations of anyone whose eyesight is not blinded by partisan loyalty.

I think sports officials – umpires, referees, line judges, etc. – do a very good job overall in a very difficult profession.

Even the most sterling folks in the zebra outfits can't see everything that takes place on a football field.

There are 22 big men in more-or-less constant motion and just six "refs." No matter how fleet of foot an official might be, he – or she – can't always be in the right position to see or adjudicate every nuance of the NFL's thick-as-Fatty Arbuckle rule book.

But all of that may change. The NFL – and Major League Baseball as well – is considering adding another level of technology to take the guesswork out of decisions.

Sensors, lasers and artificial intelligence functioning in "real time" may be able to add another layer of certainty for the fans, coaches and players. I suppose that's a good thing, but we'll really be losing a big part of our culture by not being



## Sports Retorts

Jim Tortolano

# Ducks' John Gibson Hits 500

## Anaheim goalie has played 500 games for team

By Joe Reedy  
AP Sports Writer

ANAHEIM (AP) — Other than being soaked from a postgame shower from teammates, it was hard to tell after Anaheim's 2-1 victory over Dallas on Tuesday night that John Gibson had achieved a milestone.

The Ducks' veteran goaltender became the first netminder in franchise history to play 500 games.

It was another milestone in what could be a series of them for Gibson over the next couple of months.

He won his 200th NHL game on Jan. 5 against Tampa Bay. Tuesday's victory also leaves him four wins from tying Jean-Sebastien Giguere for the most in franchise history.

Gibson, though, tried to focus on the present instead of looking back at his career or any milestones still ahead.

"Tonight obviously was a little more special, so it's nice to get the win on top of it," Gibson said. "I was talking to someone earlier, I think it's something that I can be able to look back and reminisce on maybe towards the end of the career in the summer when you're with family and stuff like that."



JOHN GIBSON in goal for the Anaheim Ducks (Wikipedia)

## Taking a break

Both the Los Angeles Kings and Anaheim Ducks are off the ice for a while for the annual NHL All-Star break.

The Kings are will resume play on Saturday, Feb. 22 hosting Utah, while the Ducks are will visit the Boston Bruins, also that day.

Gibson is the 10th American-born netminder to reach 500 games and the third active.

The New York Rangers' Jonathan Quick has appeared in 797 games and Winnipeg's Connor Hellebuyck has played in 547.

Gibson made 26 saves in what was a tight contest throughout. The only one that got past the 31-year old netminder came early in the third period when

Continued on page 8

# Surprise! Rendon out with injury

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) — Los Angeles Angels third baseman Anthony Rendon needs hip surgery and will be out for an extended period, his latest major injury setback since joining the team

General manager Perry Minasian told reporters at the Angels' spring training complex Wednesday that Rendon will miss a significant amount of

playing time for the fifth consecutive season.

Rendon is beginning the sixth season of a \$245 million, seven-year contract that has been disastrous for the Angels, who haven't had a winning season since 2015 or made the playoffs since 2014.

Rendon, who will turn 35 in June, played in just 205 games over the past four seasons, and

he has been on the injured list 12 times since 2021.

He was on the injured list three times in 2024 due to separate issues with his hamstring, lower back and obliques while batting .218 with no homers and 14 RBIs in 57 games.

All told, he has played in only 257 games and missed 451 for the Halos.

# Dodgers look powerful for 2025, too

By David Brandt  
AP Sports Writer

GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP) — Yoshinobu Yamamoto let loose a few fastballs and some nasty breaking balls during a bullpen session while manager Dave Roberts and pitching coach Mark Prior stood a few steps to each side of the pitcher, smiling as the ball popped into the mitt of catcher Will Smith.

The Los Angeles Dodgers were in a pretty good mood as spring training began at Camelback Ranch.

The defending World Series champions went through a light workout on Tuesday and most of their stars were on the field, including NL MVP Shohei Ohtani and Mookie Betts. Left-hander Clayton Kershaw played catch, a sign that the three-time Cy Young Award winner is returning for his 18th season.

“Everyone’s more hungry than ever,” third baseman Max Muncy said.

Muncy said he’s been in Ari-

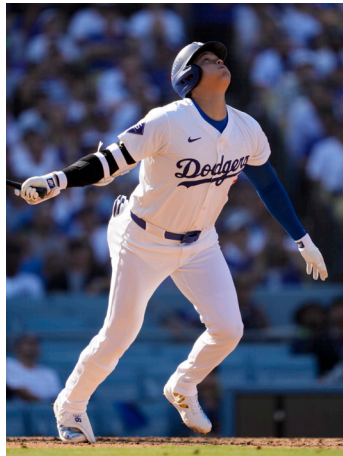
zona for the past 1 1/2 weeks, coming to the Dodgers facility early to get in defensive work with Betts and Miguel Rojas. It’s been a short offseason: The Dodgers hoisted the World Series trophy barely three months ago after beating the New York Yankees in five games.

Betts said the quick turnaround presents challenges, but they’re good problems to have.

“It’s definitely tough, but we didn’t win last year because we were talking about the World Series every day,” Betts said. “We won last year because we talked about the task at hand every day.

“We have an end goal, of course, but you have to take stepping stones to get there. We’ll get there when we get there.”

Los Angeles opens against the Chicago Cubs in Tokyo on March 18-19 and is trying to become the first team to win back-to-back World Series since the New York Yankees won three in a row from 1998-2000. The Dodgers’ owners spent to sign



SHOHEI OHTANI

two-time All-Star Blake Snell, Japanese pitcher Roki Sasaki and relievers Tanner Scott and Kirby Yates.

“Talent will take you to a certain place,” Rojas said. “But then the character will make you win championships. We realized that last year.”

Ohtani didn’t pitch last year following elbow surgery and is recovering from a partially torn la-

brum in his left (non-throwing) shoulder, an injury sustained while sliding into second base during the World Series.

Even without pitching, Ohtani won MVP last season after becoming the first MLB player to hit 50 homers and have 50 stolen bases in the same season. Now he’ll try to return to the mound, where he was 10-5 with a 3.14 ERA in 2023 with the Los Angeles Angels.

Roberts said at the team’s fan fest on Feb. 2 that a May return to the mound is “about right.”

## High School Basketball Results CIF-SS Playoffs

### FRIDAY Boys

- Santiago 47, Flintridge Prep 37
- Diamond Ranch 64, Westminster 48.
- South El Monte 49, Orange 29
- Arroyo 51, Bolsa Grande 39
- Pacifica vs. Tarbut V Torah, late



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# Gibson hit 500 games and 200 wins for Ducks

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Dallas' Colin Blackwell had a one-timer off a pass by Sam Steel to tie it at 1-all.

"He's played so much, he's so calm. When you have a goalie that's got that calmness, it kind of has a domino effect on the team," Ducks coach Greg Cronin said.

Trevor Zegras put Anaheim back ahead three minutes later and Gibson made a couple of

key saves in the final two minutes after the Stars pulled their goaltender for an extra skater.

"I mean, he's amazing. I have been saying that since I got here, he is one of the best athletes and humans that I have been around, and to get to experience that moment with him and after the game was pretty special," Zegras said.

Gibson has spent his entire 12-year NHL career with the Ducks and has been the franchise's top goalie for most of the past decade, including three appearances in the All-Star game.

He struggled though last season, going 13-27-2 with a career-worst .888 save percentage. This season didn't start off great



GIBSON has also played for the United States Olympic team

is 21 points ahead of last year's pace, when it finished with 59.

"He's having a great year. I'm really happy for him and I'm happy for the team. He's got a little bit of that mentorship going on with the young kids here and he's got a really good attitude," Cronin said.

"I think Peter Budaj (who is in his first season as Anaheim's goaltending coach) has done an unbelievable job with him.

The fact that Peter played in the league a long time, he can really drill in to John's game in terms of trying to make him own some things he can be better at. It has created a real good dynamic and I think he has benefited from that relationship."

## 'Rainbow'

Continued from page 5

that manic exterior, are palpable in Ms. Cassesso's work here. It is powerful, moving, heart-crushing – and a thing of great beauty and pathos, as well. This is a transcendent performance.

"End of the Rainbow" is hypnotic in its ability to draw you in, to submerge you within the complicated life of Judy Garland.

Truly a remarkable show, with phenomenal performances by the entire cast; but only two weeks remain in the show's limited run, and this is one that Gem and theater fans in general should not miss.

*"End of the Rainbow;" Nicole Cassesso, Peter Crisafulli and Trevin Stephenson star in this powerful story of the legendary Judy Garland. Now playing through Feb. 23 at The Gem Theater 12852 Main Street, Garden Grove, CA, 92840. Call 714-741-9550 x221 or email [boxoffice@onemoreproductions.com](mailto:boxoffice@onemoreproductions.com) for ticketing information. Some mature language and content.*

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either as Gibson missed the first 12 games after undergoing an emergency appendectomy.

Gibson and Lukas Dostal have split the netminding duties. Gibson though has started 22 of the 41 games since returning and is 9-9-2 with a 2.69 goals-against average and .914 save percentage.

Gibson's veteran presence will be counted on more down the stretch. The Ducks – who have not been to the playoffs since the 2017-18 season – are seven points out of the final wild-card spot but have won five of six, including four straight at home. Anaheim has 52 points, which

## Retorts: It has to be a prank

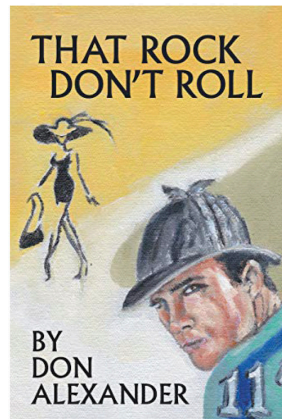
Continued from page 3

once – in my prankish youth – creating a work phone list in which I placed fictional middle initials that spelled out ... well, what can I say? I could make a joke out of anything back then.

Some people will probably take offense at their clever jest. As someone who once stuffed jelly donuts into the desk drawers of a work colleague who was on a diet, I say to them, "What's the matter? Cantcha take a joke?"

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