



CHORUS sings the national anthem of the Republic of (South) Vietnam at Wednesday's "Black April" event at Sid Goldstein Freedom Park in the Westminster Civic Center (Orange County Tribune photo by Jim Tortolano)

How Viet refugees found a new home in Orange County

'Black April' honors past and resiliency

By **Jae C. Hong** and **Tran Nguyen**
Associated Press

WESTMINSTER (AP) — When the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese forces 50 years ago this week, it prompted a mass exodus of some 2 million people — hundreds of thousands fleeing perilously on small boats across open water to escape the communist regime.

Many ultimately settled in Southern California's Orange County in an area now known as "Little Saigon," not far from Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, where the first refugees were airlifted upon reaching the U.S.

The diaspora now also has significant populations in Virginia, Texas and Washington state, as well as in countries including France and Australia. Still, the community in Southern California comprises the largest and most well-established Vietnamese population anywhere outside Vietnam.

Memories of Wednesday's anniversary of the fall of Saigon — the South

Vietnamese city renamed Ho Chi Minh City by the communists — has conjured up mixed feelings from grief and resentment to honor and pride in the diaspora here.

For those who lived through the war, the 50th anniversary marks a time of mourning as they remember what they lost — their homeland, their past lives, even their identity.

Five decades later, the pain is still raw. One man still can't bring himself to say much about the family he had to leave behind. Others were barely toddlers when they arrived in a foreign land.

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■ HUNTINGTON BEACH CITY COUNCIL

3 Members Seek Inquiry into Donations

Struggle over city library is continuing

City council members have many roles. They serve as representatives of the public, they adopt budgets and pass laws in the form of ordinances and regulations and sometimes cut ribbons for grand openings.

At Tuesday's meeting of the Huntington Beach City Council, three members of the council — Mayor Pat Burns and Councilmembers Chad Williams

and Butch Twining — will talk about their roles as investigators.

In a letter to the whole council, they stated that "we have conducted an informal independent investigation of the financial dealings of the Friends of the Huntington Beach Public Library," alleging that the group had made "suspected campaign finance and charitable law violations."

The three are claiming that the organization — a non-profit group — gave money to a political action committee, which subsequently passed it on

Continued on page 2

Expansion of fast-food eatery slows down

You may have to wait a while to enjoy a bigger In-N-Out eatery in Garden Grove.

At Thursday's meeting of the Garden Grove Planning Commission, a proposal to expand the footprint of the popular hamburger eatery was scheduled for a public hearing.

However the applicant/owner asked for a con-

tinuance on its application for a site plan and lot line adjustment to construct a 778-square foot free-standing outdoor dining patio at the location.

The project would include the reconfiguration of the existing drive-thru lane and parking area.

To accommodate that would require the demolition of the existing vacant Mae's Cafe building.



HUNTINGTON BEACH CENTRAL LIBRARY is located on a hill in Central Park East (Shutterstock).

Huntington Beach council agenda touches on libraries

Continued from page 1

to another PAC – “Our Library Matters, Vote Yes on A & B.”

Arguing that those actions might violate IRS law and the California Political Reform Act, the three are asking the city attorney’s office to file a complaint with the California Fair Political Practices Commission and/or the federal Internal Revenue Service.

The request occurs against the backdrop of a common special election on two ballot measures on alleged censorship of books

in the city’s libraries and privatization of the system.

Also on the agenda is a proposal for an amendment to the city’s group home ordinance to prevent the owners or operators of group homes from applying or re-applying for a group home permit for five years after they were found to be unlawfully operating.

The council will meet on May 6 in the lower level theater in the Central Library. The closed session will be at 4 p.m. with the regular meeting at 6 p.m.

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HISTORIC MAIN STREET • GARDEN GROVE

News & Views

The Wild West returns to us on sidewalks, roads

Have a bit of a daredevil spirit, do you? In the mood to bring out your inner chance-taker?

Step out onto a sidewalk. This is Bicycle Safety Month, and not a minute too soon. The altogether laudable trend toward healthful exercise of the two-wheel variety has taken on an uglier tone, and you'd better look all four ways now when walking, driving or just standing here around today's bicycles.



Retorts Jim Tortolano

Electric bikes started being aimed at the senior- and almost senior citizens who wanted to get exercise without taking his or her body beyond slightly out-of-shape endurance.

What with the aging nature of the baby boom generation and advances in other electric vehicles (we had three Chevy Volts) there was also a boom in e-bikes.

The most popular kind are – in sense – hybrid because you can pedal in the traditional way, or employ a throttle to zoom ahead or a combination of the two.

Back in those good old days, e-bikes wouldn't go faster than 20 miles an hour, and most of us would find ourselves passed by joggers and off-the-leash canines.

But now we have the next generation of such, which straddle the world of e-bikes and e-motorcycles, can reach 40 mph and then, look ovid!

Mostly ridden by – this is my biased opinion – entitled and reckless youth – these vehicles often blast down narrow sidewalks and/or careen diagonally

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BICYCLE SAFETY is being emphasized this month of May, both for the rider and the automobile motorist (Shutterstock).

Bicycle safety is a big concern for more than just the two-wheelers

May is National Bicycle Safety Month, and the Westminster Police Department is encouraging everyone to get active and safely take bike rides while at the same time reminding drivers to be on the lookout for more people biking and walking.

"Everyone deserves to reach their destination safely," Deputy Chief Ron Weber said. "Unfortunately, there has been an increase in bicycle fatalities and injuries over the last few years.

Bicyclists do not have the same protections as people in a vehicle, so if you see a bicyclist, slow down."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, there were 1,105 people killed while riding a bike in 2022, and an estimated 46,195 bicyclists were injured. In 2021, 976 bicyclists were killed (a 1.9% increase from 2020) and an estimated 41,615 bicyclists were injured (a 7% increase from 2020).

To help keep people safe while biking or walking, the Westminster Police Department will conduct traffic safety operations throughout the month focused on driver behaviors that put bi-

Continued on page 10

Stanton street repair projects in the spotlight at meeting

Do Stanton's plans for capital improvement projects conform with the city's general plan?

At the Wednesday, May 7 meeting of the Stanton Planning Commission, the panel will take up that issue and review the projects planned. They include:

- Annual citywide street resur-

facing;

- Annual citywide alley resurfacing;

- Annual sidewalk repair;

- Annual sewer replacement;

- City Hall/Community Center keycard access project;

Continued on page 8

'Berry Ball set May 22 at the CMC

The City of Garden Grove's H. Louis Lake Senior Center will host the 48th Annual Strawberry Ball on Thursday, May 22, from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

It's a celebration honoring the 2025 Strawberry Ball King and Queen. The event will be held at the Garden Grove Community Meeting Center, located at 11300 Stanford Ave.

Local seniors are invited to attend. Tickets are \$20 per person and include event entry, dinner, dessert, non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages, a photo booth, live music, and dancing.

Recognizing the spirit of volunteerism, 2025 Strawberry Ball King Joe Hammer and Strawberry Ball Queen Sue Catlin will be honored for their devoted service to the community.

Joe Hammer has served the community through his work with the Garden Grove Rotary Club, Garden Grove Chamber of Commerce, and Healthy Aging Center Acacia.

Sue Catlin has dedicated years of service through her involvement with the Strawberry Festival Board, the Garden Grove

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NewsUpdate

Wall Street Recovers Its Losses

Wipes out the losses began with tariff fears

Fueled in part by a good report on employment, Wall Street ended its week on Friday with its ninth consecutive day of gains, wiping out the losses that began when President Donald Trump began announcing a series of tariffs on imported goods.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose by 1.4 percent and the S&P 500 climbed by 1.5. The tech-heavy

Nasdaq composite was up by 1.5 percent, according to the Associated Press.

The Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that 117,000 jobs were added in



WALL STREET rallied back from some concern about tariffs (Shutterstock).

April, not as good as March with 185,000, but still better than analysts had expected.

These statistics don’t reflect the impact that the tariffs may have had on the job market, as some

of the tariffs planned for April were delayed by up to three months.

Great Thoughts

“Never let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game.”

– Babe Ruth, baseball player

“Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”

– Thomas Edison, inventor

Measles cases are rising; biggest outbreak in Texas

The childhood disease of measles, officially deemed “eliminated” in 2000, is making a comeback.

United Press International reports that measles cases hit 939 in 29 states, as revealed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The previous high over the last 25 years was 1,273 in 2019 and 285 in 2024.

Texas had the biggest outbreak with 663 cases. Three deaths from the disease were reported;

two in Texas and one in New Mexico.

According to the CDC, 96 percent of those diagnosed with measles were unvaccinated or had “unknown” vaccinated status.

Of those, 13 percent were hospitalized and most were 18 and under.

Measles is considered one of the most contagious infectious diseases and is spread by coughing or sneezing.

Should DOGE have access to Social Security records?

The U.S. Supreme Court was asked Friday to allow some staff members of the Department of Government Efficiency – helmed by Elon Musk – access to “sensitive” data held by the Social Security Administration.

That request came in response to a federal district court ruling from Maryland which ruled that DOGE could only see records that were “redacted or anonymized.”

Then the U.S. Court of Appeals

for the Fourth Circuit turned down the Trump Administration’s request to pause that ruling pending appeal.

The district court judge had originally ruled that DOGE had “no need” for access to the data and cited privacy laws.

The Supreme Court has ordered the parties challenging the administration’s request — two unions and a retiree association — to respond by May 12.

Weather: It’s more of the 60s

Temperatures in the mid- to high 60s and lots of clouds are the forecast for our West Orange County cities for the coming week.

Saturday is expected to have a daytime high of 75 with an overnight low of 55 with cloudy skies. Those clouds will persist right through Tuesday as the temperatures creeps up to 69 (57).

Arts & Living

'Thunderbolts' Are Marvel-ous

No Avengers available? Who you gonna call?

By Jake Coyle
AP Film Writer

As they so often do in Marvel Land, worlds collide in "Thunderbolts."

But in this refreshingly earth-bound iteration of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, the collision isn't a matter of interplanetary strife. "Thunderbolts" has been touted as the unlikely meeting of two of the dominant forces in 21st century American movies: Marvel and A24.

This isn't a co-production, but much of the creative team and many of the stars have ties to the indie studio. "Thunderbolts" is directed by Jake Schreier, who has directed many episodes of the A24 series "Beef," and was written by Joanna Calo (also a "Beef" veteran) and Eric Pearson (a Marvel veteran). The connections go further: cinematographer Andrew Droz Palermo ("A Ghost Story," "The Green Knight"), editor Harry Yoon ("Minari") and a score by the band Son Lux ("Everything Everywhere All At Once").

Some trailers for "Thunderbolts" have highlighted these connections, perhaps in hopes of a little A24 auteur cool rubbing off on Hollywood's superhero factory. It's also a sign of how rough things have gotten for Marvel that, after a string of misfires, it's leaning on the studio behind "Swiss Army Man" for its latest would-be blockbuster.

Does that make "Thunderbolts" a hipper superhero movie? Can you expect "Babygirl"-like scenes of Black Widow drinking a glass of milk? The answer, of course, is that "Thunderbolts" has no more indie cred than



FLORENCE PUGH stars in "Thunderbolts," the new Marvel superhero film (Walt Disney)

Movie Review

"Avatar." What it is, though, is the best Marvel movie in years.

"Thunderbolts," about a group of MCU rejects who band together after CIA director Valentina Allegra de Fontaine (Julia Louis-Dreyfus) tries to erase them and their covert program, is both a return to form for Marvel and something a little different. While there's plenty of franchise building going on, "Thunderbolts" — the title of which bears an asterisk — is pleasantly stand-alone, and its spurts of spectacle more deftly proceed out of a tenderly told story.

If there's an influence on "Thunderbolts," it's less A24 than James Gunn. It borrows a little of the misfit irreverence of "Guardians of the Galaxy" and "The Suicide Squad." But Schreier's film is leaner and less antic than those movies, and it serves as an IMAX-sized platform for the increasingly obvious movie-star talents of Florence Pugh.

In the opening moments of "Thunderbolts," Pugh's Yelena Belova, a veteran of the Soviet assassin Black Widow program,

melancholily stands atop a skyscraper. "There's something wrong with me," she says. "An emptiness." She drops, a parachute opens, and her narration continues. "Or maybe I'm just bored."

It's a telling opening for a film that wrestles sometimes earnestly, sometimes a little glibly, with malaise and depression. Yelena is searching for meaning in her life, dragged down by guilt and shame from her past, a pain that even her relentlessly chipper father Alexei, the self-proclaimed Red Guardian (David Harbour, magnificent), can't quell. When Yelena, on a mission, brutalizes a hallway full of armed guards — a shot that, as I critic, am contractually obligated to note is styled after the famous one from Park Chan-wook's "Oldboy" — Schreier films it from overhead in a shadowy ballet.

"Thunderbolts." When Yelena is dispatched on what she says will be her last job, she's surprised to encounter others like her — include the disgraced John Walker (Wyatt Russell) and the fight-mimicking Taskmaster (Olga Kurylenko) — sent to the same location. After some initial tussling, they realize they — like the protagonists of "Toy

Good: ★★★

Story 3" — are standing inside of an incinerator. Adding to the confusion of their predicament is a guy with no apparent powers who simply introduces himself as "Bob" (Lewis Pullman, bringing a sensitivity rarely found in these movies).

They aren't quite a bizarre Avengers, but they — including Sebastian Stan's Bucky Barnes, who joins later — are all the products of dubious government programs that instill less patriotism than their more plainly heroic counterparts. As a group, they're plagued by doubt and uncertainty, and they're more inclined to bicker than give rousing speeches.

And whenever anyone brushes too closely with Bob, they drift back into the darkest chapters of their own pasts that pull them like a deadweight toward suicidal thoughts.

"Thunderbolts," a Walt Disney Co. release, is rated by the Motion Picture Association for strong violence, language, thematic elements, and some suggestive and drug references. Running time: 126 minutes.

TheSportsPages

How good is your CAPO, Mr. MVP?

I'm a regular reader of Rhett Bollinger's baseball column on MLB.com and I feel I often gain insight's into the Old Ball Game.

But, of course, the sport has changed and one of the ... we will call them "improvements" ... is the proliferation of statistics and acronyms.

Once a fan could get by knowing what RBIs, ERAs and HR's stood for, and even how to calculate a "slugging percentage," which sounds a bit like trying to quantify a barroom brawl.

But now you hard-core horsehide fan-atics need to know terms like DRE (defensive runs saved) and OAA (Outs Above Average).

I get it. They're trying to isolate things that may contribute to a player's worth that doesn't show up in a box score. But if you really want to learn the subtle aspects of a player's worth, you have to dig deeper. It appears.

Wanting to make my contribution to metrifying everything in hardball, here are my suggestions...

BEPS: Brought Enough Pumpkin Seeds For The Whole Team.

CAPO: Careful About Not Piling On (during a celebration at home plate).

NSSQ: Doesn't Say Anything Stupid to Sportswriters Asking Stupid Questions.

PACR: Pays Attention When Manager is Going on a Clubhouse Rant.

PEBT: Pretends to Enjoy Being Traded in August to Some Team Going Nowhere.

OMAH: Open-minded about

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Sports Retorts

Jim Tortolano

It's Daddy-Oh(tani)!

Paternity may be putting Sho back on track

By Mike DiGiovanna
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Shohei Ohtani's "Dad Strength" is finally beginning to kick in as the Los Angeles Dodgers' slugger hit his first home run since the birth of his daughter to jump-start a 15-2 victory over the Miami Marlins on Tuesday night.

"It was a good home run to get back on the board for this game," Ohtani said through an interpreter. "I haven't hit one since being a father, so it's a really nice one to be able to do that."

Whether it's myth or statistically proven fact, Dodgers manager Dave Roberts is a firm believer in "Dad Strength," the theory that some players gain physical strength and stamina upon entering fatherhood.

MLB.com's research department even found that among the more than 200 instances of hitters returning to action from the paternity list from 2011-



SHOHEI OHTANI has broken out of a slump since the birth of his daughter (AP photo).

2024, 28 hit a home run in their first game back.

"Now that he's a father," Roberts said last week, "we might see some 120-mph exit velocities off the bat."

Ohtani, the 2024 National

League most valuable player, hit .125 (2 for 16) with no RBIs and six strikeouts in his first four games back from paternity leave.

But in his next four games,

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Angels collapse in 9th; Dodgers edge Braves

A four-home run barrage — two of them by the same batter — in the ninth inning resulted in a heartbreaking 9-1 defeat of the Los Angeles Angels by the Detroit Tigers on Friday.

It was the team's seventh straight defeat,

Zach Neto's first inning home run gave the Halos a 1-0 lead that held up to the top of the seventh, when Trey Sweeney tied the game with his own homer.

The roof fell in in the top of the ninth when Riley Greene homered, followed by Colt Keith,

Javier Baez and then Greene again.

The Angels are 12-19 and in fifth and last place in the American League West.

The Los Angeles Dodgers (22-10, first in the NL West) had more luck holding on to a slim lead, defeating the Braves 2-1 in Atlanta.

Will Smith drove in the first Dodger run with a sacrifice fly in the fourth and Mookie Betts hit the game-winning homer in the sixth.

Do-or-die for the Clippers tonight

Having avoided disaster with a win at home against the Denver Nuggets on Thursday, the Los Angeles Clippers will try to their luck (tonight) in the Mile High City in the decisive game of the NBA West First Round series.

The teams are tied with three wins each and the winning team will advance to Western Conference semifinals against the Oklahoma Thunder, who swept the Memphis Grizzlies in four games.

GGUSD schools grab spring league titles

High school athletic teams from the Garden Grove Unified School District have racked up an impressive spring season with several varsity league titles.

The Garden Grove Argonaut baseball team captured the Orange Coast League pennant, for the school's 12th hardball title since 2017. The red-and-white is 17-7 overall and 9-1 in league.

The Bolsa Grande Matador baseball team is the champion of the Orange League. That's the first league title since 1984. The Mats are 14-6 and 9-2 in league at our deadline.

The Rancho Alamitos Vaquero softball team is the champion of the Orange League and that's a ninth title overall and first since 2012.

The Garden Grove Argonaut girls' track and field team won the Orange Coast League crown, their 13th league title overall and first since 2013.

The Rancho Alamitos boys' track and field team has won



BOLSA GRANDE HIGH SCHOOL's baseball team won the Orange League championship. It was the school's first league title in baseball since 1984 (GGUSD photo)..

the Grove League title. For the Vaqs, it was their 11th overall league championship and third in five seasons.

The Vaquero softball team took top honors in the Orange League. For the green-and-gold it's a ninth league crown and the first since 2012.

At Los Amigos, both the boys and girls' swim teams won Orange Grove League championships, and La Quinta did the same in the Coast League.

Mariners in close race

The Pacifica softball team is in a close race for the Crestview League title.

When El Modena defeated the Mariners 4-0 on Thursday, that dropped the M's into a first place tie with with Vanguards.

But then, on Friday Elmo lost 8-0 to Cypress.

The league title won't be decided then until Pacifica (now 7-4 in league) plays Cypress (6-5) on Tuesday.

Prep Sport Spotlight

West County Scores

Thursday baseball

Cypress 7, Ocean View 1

Thursday softball

Hunt, Beach 12, Newport Har. 2

Hunt, Beach 12, Newport Har. 1

El Modena 4, Pacifica 0

Los Alamitos 6, Marina 4

Friday softball

Santiago 15, Los Amigos 0

Santa Ana Valley 13, La Quinta 3

Orange 6, Loara 4

Rancho Ala. 20, Bolsa 6

Westminster 10, Tustin 2

Kennedy 11, Garden Grove 1

Friday baseball

Newport Har. 10, Marina 4

Hunt, Beach 14, Edison 3

Saddleback 9, Magnolia

Orange 8, Savanna 5

Rancho Ala. 10, Western 2

Garden Grove 13, Westminster 1

Pacifica 7, Yorba Linda 0



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Westminster cracks down on bicycle safety

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cyclists and pedestrians at risk, such as speeding, making illegal turns, failure to yield right of way, and stop sign/red light running.

The Westminster Police Department suggests the following safety tips for bicyclists and drivers:

Drivers

- Slow down and follow the

speed limit. Be careful traveling through intersections.

- Look carefully for bicyclists and pedestrians before making a turn or opening a car door near streets or bike paths.
- Be patient when traveling behind a bicyclist and give them space when passing. California law requires drivers to change a lane, when possible, to pass bicyclists and always pass with at least 3 feet of space.
- Never drive distracted or impaired.

Bike Riders

- Use lights at night.
- Although not required for riders 18 and older, always wear a properly secured helmet.

Helmets significantly reduce the chance of a head injury in the event of a crash.

- Bicyclists must travel in the same direction of traffic and have the same requirements as any slow-moving vehicle.
- Yield to pedestrians, just as a driver would. Pedestrians have

the right-of-way within marked or unmarked crosswalks at intersections.

Funding for this program is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Sports Retorts: New stats

Continued from page 6

Having to Wear some sort of ridiculous headgear when returning to the dugout.

GTWU: On Good Terms With Umpires, who have the power to strike back. Get it? The Umpire Strikes Back?

Retorts: Wild West of Bicycling

Continued from page 3

across city streets, leaving it to the Grace of The Almighty whether there's a tragedy.

Aside from the blithe disregard for broken bones of some nimrods, the cities carry some blame for the problem.

Outside of snooty planned communities such as Irvine, most bike lanes are a joke. The most recent bike course addition in Garden Grove, for instance, travels along Gilbert Street north to past Orangewood and approaches Anaheim.

Part of it is wide enough and relatively safe, but from Trask Avenue to Chapman Avenue it's a narrow and twisty not-so-thrilling ride where – in many places – you are only inches from passing cars ...

a thin white stripe of paint the sole barrier keeping you from eternity.

Now, I recognize this is a not an easily-solved dilemma. Many roads in Orange County trace their history back to our rural days and were never widened enough or straightened enough to make them truly bike-friendly.

Moving our communities to actual active transportation would – frankly – require more and better walking and biking paths (expensive!) and that may still be many years in the future.

But for now, let's get Jaiden with his black hoodie and broccoli hairstyle off his spoked-rocket until he can learn to share the road (and sidewalk) with folks who don't nurture a death wish.

Stanton street repair projects

Continued from page 6

- Community/senior center improvements;
- Western Avenue storm channel grates.

After review, the commission will consider adopting a reso-

lution that the capital improvements are consistent with the general plan.

The commission will meet at 6:30 p.m. in the City Hall, 7800 Katella Ave.

Strawberry Ball

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Emblem Club #279, and the Garden Grove Chamber of Commerce Women's Division.

Advance reservations are required. Tickets must be purchased in person by Thursday, May 15, 2025, at 11300 Stanford Ave., Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.



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Garden Grove Rotary

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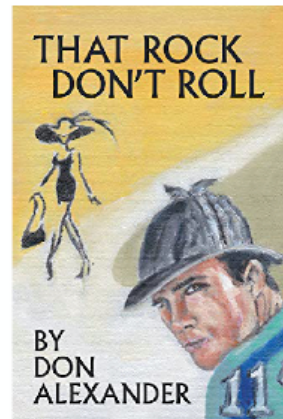
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Garden Grove Strawberry Festival



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Ride Wristbands

Unlimited

All-Day Rides

\$40 Fri.

\$45 Sat.-Mon.

Shohei Ohtani's now got that 'dad-strength

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Ohtani was batting .467 (7 for 15) with one homer, three doubles, a triple and two RBIs, and the home run he hit Tuesday night on Sandy Alcantara's first pitch of the game left his bat at 114 mph and traveled 394 feet.

"That was a big tone-setter," Roberts said of Ohtani's 14th career leadoff homer. "I think we feed off of Shohei, certainly at the top of the order. For him to make it a 1-1 game after the first pitch their starter throws certainly gets some life into our offense,

and we just took it from there. When he's going, you can see our offense sort of follows suit."

Ohtani's homer sparked a three-run first-inning rally, and the Dodgers went on to rack up 18 hits, including four by Teoscar Hernández, who drove in four runs to become the major league leader with 31 RBIs, and three, including a home run, by Andy Pages.

The game was such a blowout, the Dodgers scoring three in the third, four in the sixth and three in the eighth, that both teams

finished with position players on the mound — outfielder Javier Sanoja for the Marlins and utility man Kiké Hernández for the Dodgers.

Ohtani, meanwhile, is still trying to adjust to fatherhood since the birth of his daughter on April 19, especially the disruption of his sleep schedule. Ohtani likes to get at least 10 hours of sleep a night and take lengthy naps before games.

"A little change in the routine in terms of, for example today I went to the hospital and came

straight to the field," Ohtani said, later telling Japanese writers that it is customary for some Japanese women to spend a week or two in the hospital after giving birth.

"Just being here at home is nice to be able to spend time, but on the road, it's going to be a little bit of a challenge since I won't be here. ... But I'm just grateful for the safe delivery. I'm glad that even though I couldn't sleep as much as I wanted to, it's a good kind of not-getting-enough-sleep situation."

How Viet refugees found a home in Orange County

Continued from page 1

The day Saigon fell — April 30, 1975 — is referred to by the older generation as "Black April" or "National Day of Resentment."

But for their children and grandchildren, many with scant knowledge of the war, the anniversary is a time to honor the resiliency of an immigrant community and to celebrate the accomplishments of a population that started as refugees and now has become an influential part of California and U.S. society.

"I don't really think about it in a negative light," said Linda Nguyen, a local business leader whose parents were refugees.

"For my generation, it's about honoring what happened, but also celebrating our future and our current successes."

Little Saigon in Orange County has evolved from a commercial district contained within a few city blocks in Westminster in the late 1980s to a sprawling region spanning several cities, including parts of Garden Grove and Fountain Valley. It's also now considered the cultural capital for the Vietnamese diaspora around the world.

"We were looking for a freedom to prosper," said Trí Trần, a University of California, Irvine professor who left Vietnam by sea on a boat in 1986.

Today, thousands of restaurants, shops and offices bear Vietnamese names.

Little Saigon is not only home to Asian Garden Mall, the larg-



VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL in Westminster (Tribune photo).

est Vietnamese shopping mall in the U.S., but it also hosts the world's largest international Vietnamese film festival.

The population has become a powerful voting bloc in Orange County, elevating some of the first Vietnamese-Americans to elected office. For the first time last year, Orange County elected a Vietnamese-American to Congress. Derek Tran, a Democrat whose parents were refugees, triumphed in a district historically favorable to Republicans. "We're very much a young community in this country," Tran said. "We're finding our place, but we're also figuring out how to consolidate our voice and our culture and our history."

'Black April' Marking the anniversary that ultimately led to the war's end, many Little Saigon businesses and storefronts are adorned with South Vietnam flags. Even the

Asian Garden Mall has a prominent 1975 sign, bearing both the U.S. and the South Vietnam flags.

Hung Vũ, a member of the South Vietnamese military who arrived in 1975, plans to reunite with old friends and share stories at a community event Wednesday about how daily life was reshaped by life in the U.S.

"This is no festive occasion," said Vũ, who owns a uniform store that specializes in recreating the South Vietnamese military's uniforms, ribbons and medals. "It's a day of mourning." He recalled feeling overwhelmed in a new country where he couldn't speak the language and didn't understand social norms. He didn't even know how to get around or make a living.

"The knowledge gap was tremendous," Vũ said in Vietnamese. "But we were hungry, so we went out and found a way to feed

ourselves."

Many, including former members of wealthy South Vietnamese families, were forced to take on low-paid jobs in their new country, such as cleaning houses and working at nail salons, to survive. Some worked multiple jobs while going to school to send money back to relatives in Vietnam.

They included teenagers who arrived in the U.S. alone, said Tram Le, who studied the experience of the first generation of Vietnamese Americans after the war.

"They lost their childhood," she said. "Their whole lives, they're just sacrificing."

Those born and raised in the U.S. often were shielded by their parents from learning about the horrors of the war and the divisions in their homeland that erupted into civil conflict between North and South Vietnam.

The younger generations no longer carry the fervor of anti-communist sentiment that was once a big part of life in Little Saigon, where a portrait of the late North Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh in 1999 prompted a 53-day protest.

"The political theme that was once significant to our parents did not carry on to us," Linda Nguyen said. "To us, Vietnam is Vietnam."

The focus for the younger generations is on today and what lies ahead.