

■ 2025 IN REVIEW

Politics And Arrests And Hoops Titles

First of four parts of our new history

Politics and political efforts leading up to the 2026 off-year elections dominated the news in our West Orange County cities for 2025.

But the rising tide of deaths in traffic accidents also made headlines in Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, Stanton and Westminster.

Here are the top news stories (by month) in The Tribune's coverage

area. This is Part One. We'll resume with Part Two in our next issue.

January: Westminster City Councilmember Amy Phan West was accused of attempted bribery in connection with a dispute over parking ...

February: Republican Tony Strickland, Huntington Beach councilmember, won the 35th State Senate District seat ... The Huntington Beach City Council approved the placement of a plaque in the Central Library featuring the crostic of "MAGA" ... Also at Surf City council meeting a speaker



SANTIAGO won the schools' first boys CIF-SS basketball championship (Tribune photo).

COLORFUL, CONTROVERSIAL



The proposed "Symphony of Flowers" planned for Central Park East in Huntington Beach in 2026 and approved by the city council was controversial and led to an environmental lawsuit filed by Protect HB (Cavalia photo).

— former NFL punter Chris Kluge — was arrested after making a speech and then rushing the city council dias ... Former Huntington Beach City Attorney Michael Gates left town to take a post in the federal Department of Justice

March: A lawsuit was filed to stop the proposed "Symphony of Flowers" light show to be held in the Central Park East in Huntington Beach ... Andrew Gruel was appointed to the Huntington Beach City Council to fill a vacancy created by Tony Strick-

land's election to the state Senate ... A Westminster man was arrested for manslaughter after a fatal hit-and-run accident in Westminster ... Acting City Manager Travis Hopkins was hired as permanent CM with a four-year contract for Huntington Beach ... The Santiago High School Cavaliers defeated the Ramona Rams 64-49 for the 4AA CIF-SS boys' basketball title, the first CIF-SS boys' hoops crown in school history ... *Next issue (Jan. 7): Will revisit April to June 2025.*

*Happy
New Year
2026*

New Year 2026

Did you have a good 2025? Do you have great dreams for 2026? This will be our last e-newspaper for the year. We'll be skipping our usual Saturday edition and resume publishing with our Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2026 e-paper. Our website will continue bringing you the news meanwhile.

Please, don't rain on our (Rose) Parade

By Ed White
Associated Press

For the first time in 20 years, rain could be an intruder at the Rose Parade in Southern California, a venerable New Year's

Day event that attracts thousands of spectators and is watched by millions more on TV.

Storms caused Christmas week flooding, mudslides and other miseries across the region. Now comes a 90% chance of rain Thursday in Pasadena, according to the National Weather Service.

"We try not to say that word around here," joked Candy Carlson, a spokesperson for the Pasadena Tournament of Roses, the organization behind the 137th Rose Parade, which precedes

the Rose Bowl College Football Playoff game.

On New Year's Eve in New York City, forecasters are predicting temperatures in the low 30s, which is not unusual, when the ball drops in Times Square. Light rain is possible in Las Vegas, where several casinos will be shooting fireworks from rooftops.

During Nashville's Big Bash, a New Year's Eve event at a park, temperatures will be in the low 30s when an illuminated music note drops at midnight in the Tennessee city. New Orleans will be in the 40s for a free concert and fireworks along the Mississippi River.

At the Rose Parade, it has rained only 10 times in the parade's history — and not since 2006, Carlson said.

Rare wet weather is unlikely to keep floats, marching bands, entertainers and others from participating. Carlson said people riding on floats will have rain gear if necessary, and tow trucks will be standing by in case of mechanical problems.

Spectators will need to prepare, too. Umbrellas are not allowed in parade seating areas that require tickets, though the ban doesn't cover people who simply line up along the route.

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News & Views

2025: year of un-conservative conservatives

It's a cliche to say, "Wow, did that year go fast!" But 2025 had so much news – and not all of it good – that events really did seem to pile up quickly.

A few thoughts on the most significant (and, in some cases, alarming) news.

The political divisions that have become so acute in our nation are exemplified in the extreme political tilt on the Huntington Beach City

Council. It's not simply that all seven are Republicans ... it's that they all identify themselves as acolytes of a president – "they call themselves 'The MAGAnificent Seven'" – who is remarkably outside the kind of conduct and attitude of any other president in our history.

There are those who consider that a positive. But this is not a "conservative" bunch. Let's see how much of Surf City's good reputation has been conserved when this is all over.

In Westminster, the city council majority invited some snickers by trying to imitate Huntington Beach in proving its "conservative" bona fides by renaming its All American Way as "Charlie Kirk Way."

Further, in the absence of any visible demand from the general public, the council majority moved to dump the management of the Rose Center Theater by the end of the year and then reversed course when the general public appeared to think (and vocalize) that some folks up on the council dais hadn't given the idea quite enough thought.



Retorts

Jim Tortolano

THE WILD WINDY WEST



The calamitous weather predicted to lash our West Orange County cities didn't quite prove out to be more than just one day of wind and rain, but it resulted in the beating-up of some of the trees and shrubbery. This fair-sized limb landed on the pavement on Main Street north of Acacia Parkway in Garden Grove (Orange County Tribune photo).

History Minute

It was peppers, poultry and then eggs

Garden Grove is well-known for being the home of the Strawberry Festival, held each Memorial Day weekend and is sometimes called "The Big Strawberry." But the tasty berry is only the final claim to agricultural fame for the community. Before that, it was known as "the chili pepper capital of the world," followed by "poultry capital" and then "egg capital."



News Briefs

New principal appointed at Harbour View

Jennifer de Lachica has been appointed the new principal of Harbour View Elementary School in Huntington Beach. She has been at the school since 2009 and been honored as OVSD Teacher of the Year and site administrative assistant.

"My commitment to ensuring that every child feels safe, valued and inspired to reach their future potential remains at the heart of my work," she said.

Harbour View is part of the Ocean View School District, which serves students in grades K-8 in northern Huntington Beach and parts of Westminster and Fountain Valley.



JENNIFER DE LACHICA
New Harbour View principal.

Fun time at Faylane

A "breakfast with Santa" event was recently held at Faylane Elementary School in Garden Grove. Families, students, staff and – of course – Saint Nick – gathered for a morning celebration with breakfast treats, festive crafts and "special moments with Santa himself."

Faylane is part of the Garden Grove Unified School District, which serves grades K-12 for most of Garden Grove and parts of Anaheim, Cypress, Fountain Valley, Orange, Santa Ana, Stanton and Westminster.

NewsUpdate

Some Humanitarian Aid Suspended

Israel wants more details on the aid workers

More than two dozen humanitarian organizations have been suspended from operating in the Gaza Strip for allegedly not complying with new registration rules.

According to the Associated Press, among those relief organizations were Doctors Without Borders and CARE. Israel claims the new regulations are intended to prevent Hamas and other militant organizations from infiltrating the groups.

But the aid organizations reply that the new rules will slow the flow of help of desperately



THE WAR between Hamas and Israel has created a big humanitarian crisis (File photo).

needed assistance. The new rules require all

its workers be registered and organizations and their funding provide details about their and operations.

U.S. Coast Guard ship is still chasing an oil tanker

An oiler tanker being pursued by force of the U.S. Coast Guard is continuing to speed toward a Venezuelan port.

The tanker, which is claiming Russian status, is reportedly an example of American efforts to put pressure on Venezuela, which the U.S. claims is using

such ships to transport illegal drugs as part of the international narcotics trade.

According to The New York Times, the crew of the ship running from American naval forces in the Atlantic Ocean, have painted a Russian flag on the side of the ship.

Great Thoughts

“Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every new year find you a better man.”

— Benjamin Franklin

“I hope you realize that every day is a fresh start for you. That every sunrise is a new chapter in your life waiting to be written.”

— Juansen Dizon

“I want to make a New year’s prayer, not a resolution. I’m praying for courage.”

— Susan Sontag

A soggy New Year’s Day?

The new year will likely call for umbrellas, boots and ponchos. The forecast for West Orange County cities is for rain, thunderstorms and clouds. The prediction for Wednesday is for rain with a daytime high of 65 and an overnight low of 56. Thunderstorms could be moving in on New Year’s Day (Thursday) with temps of 64 (56). The weather should moderate on Friday to clouds and a high of 66 (low of 57). Rain will likely resume on Saturday and turn after that to four days of showers.

Claims of drone attacks are swapped by Russia, Ukraine

Ukraine and Russia have exchanged drone attacks this week, with each side blaming the other in an effort to derail an American-brokered cease-fire deal.

United Press International is reporting that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has denied his nation’s role in a claimed drone attack on the state residence of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Zelensky claimed the claimed attack provided an excuse for a Russian attack on Ukraine’s capital of Kyiv.

“It’s obvious that yesterday we had a meeting with President Trump, and it’s clear that when there is no scandal for the Russians, when there is progress, it is a failure for them. They do not want to end this war and are only capable of doing so under pressure. So they are looking for a pretext,” said Zelensky.

Arts & Living

Chalamet 1st in 'Marty Supreme'

Another star vehicle for Timothée

By Jocelyn Noveck
AP National Writer

"Everybody wants to rule the world," goes the Tears for Fears song we hear at a key point in "Marty Supreme," Josh Safdie's nerve-busting adrenaline jolt of a movie starring a never-better Timothée Chalamet.

But here's the thing: everybody may want to rule the world, but not everybody truly believes they CAN. This, one could argue, is what separates the true strivers from the rest of us.

And Marty — played by Chalamet in a delicious synergy of actor, role and whatever fairy dust makes a performance feel both preordained and magically fresh — is a striver. With every fiber of his restless, wiry body. They should add him to the dictionary definition.

Needless to say, Marty is a New Yorker.

Also needless to say, Chalamet is a New Yorker.

And so is Safdie, a writer-director Chalamet has called "the street poet of New York." So, where else could this story be set?

It's 1952, on Manhattan's Lower East Side. Marty Mauser is a salesman in his uncle's shoe store, escaping to the storeroom for a hot tryst with his (married) girlfriend. Suddenly we're seeing footage of sperm traveling — talk about strivers! — up to an egg. Which morphs, of course, into a pingpong ball.

This witty opening sequence won't be the only thing recalling "Uncut Gems," co-directed by Safdie with his brother Benny before the two split for solo projects. That film, which feels much like the precursor to "Marty Supreme," began as a trip through the shiny innards of a rare opal,



TIMOTHEE CHALAMET stars in "Marty Supreme" (A24 release).

Movie Review

only to wind up inside Adam Sandler's colon, mid-colonoscopy.

Sandler's Howard Ratner was a New York striver, too, but sadder, and more troubled. Marty is young, determined, brash — with an eye always to the future. He's a great salesman: "I could sell shoes to an amputee," he boasts, crassly. But what he's plotting to unveil to the world has nothing to do with shoes. It's about table tennis.

How likely is it that this Jewish kid from the Lower East Side can become the very face of a sport in America, soon to be "staring at you from the cover of a Wheaties box?"

To Marty, perfectly likely. Still, he knows nobody in the U.S. cares about table tennis. He's so determined to prove everyone wrong, starting at the British Open in London, that when there's a snag obtaining cash for his trip, he brandishes a gun at a colleague to get it.

Shaking off that sorta-armed robbery thing, Marty arrives in London, where he fast-talks his

way into a suite at the Ritz. Here, he spies fellow guest Kay Stone (Gwyneth Paltrow, in a wise, stylish return to the screen), a former movie star married to an insufferable tycoon ("Shark Tank" personality Kevin O'Leary, one of many nonactors here.)

Kay's skeptical, but Marty finds a way to woo her. Really, all he has to say is: "Come watch me." Once she sees him play, she's sneaking into his room in a lace corselet.

This would be a good time to stop and consider Chalamet's subtly transformed appearance. He is stick-thin — duh, he never stops moving. His mustache is skimpy. His skin is acne-scarred — just enough to erase any movie-star sheen. Most strikingly, his eyes,

Great ★★★★

behind the round spectacles, are beady — and smaller. Definitely not those movie-star eyes.

But then, nearly all the faces in "Marty Supreme" are extraordinary. In a movie with more than 100 characters, we have known actors (Fran Drescher, Abel Ferrara); nonacting personalities (O'Leary, and an excellent Tyler Okonma (*Tyler, The Creator*) as Marty's friend Wally); and exciting newcomers like Odessa A'Zion as Marty's feisty girlfriend Rachel.

There are also a slew of nonactors in small parts, plus cameos

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Tribute to Taylor

Never saw musical megastar Taylor Swift in person? She won't be coming to our Orange County anytime soon (as far as we know), but there will be a "Taylor Swift Tribute Night" on Saturday in the Garden Amp in Garden Grove's Village Green park at 5:30 p.m. Tickets are \$17.83.



The Sports Pages

Who's greatest? May be there are more than one

LeBron James, certainly one of great greatest basketball players in history, remarked recently that Shohei Ohtani's 2025 season with the Dodgers may be the greatest athletic feat ever.

He's certain have enough insight to make some pretty creditable suggestions, and I have a few nominations of my own.

My first pick would be Wilt "The Stilt" Chamberlain, whose pro career included the Harlem Globetrotters, Philadelphia



Sports Retorts

Jim Tortolano

(later San Francisco/Golden State) Warriors, Philadelphia Warriors and Los Angeles Lakers.

He won two NBA championships (76ers and Lakers). When with the Lakers he led the team to 33 consecutive wins and many other accolades and accomplishments, including being the first (and only) player ever to score 100 points in a game, and the first (and only) player ever to average 50 points a game in a season.

Perhaps just as important was the impact on how the basketball rule book was altered and how the game is played on all levels.

Due to his mastery (and 7-1 height) basketball lanes were widened, "offensive goal-tending" was banned, as was – believe it not – inbound passes over backboard. Additionally, free throw shooting now require that both feet remain at the line, since Wilt could "dunk" from there.

Next up is Nadia Comaneci, the Romanian gymnast who won seven Olympic gold medals, earning seven perfect (10.0) scores, starting in 1976 at the

Continued on page 8

Falcons Rise Above Rams

Stafford starred but threw three interceptions

By Bill Trocchi
AP Sports Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — Matthew Stafford reached a career milestone, though his three interceptions hurt the Rams' chances of winning a game and perhaps his own of winning the NFL's MVP.

Stafford set a career high in touchdown passes in a season with 42 when he hit Puka Nukua for an 11-yard score with 2:46 to play, but the Falcons answered with a 51-yard field goal with 21 seconds left and upset the Rams 27-24 on Monday night.

Stafford was 22 for 38 for 269 yards with two touchdowns and a season-high three interceptions, one of which was returned for a touchdown. It was the quarterback's first three-interception game since Week 1 of the 2022 season.

"He's a total stud," Rams coach Sean McVay said. "We wouldn't be in a lot of the great situations we're in without him. But tonight was, it was a night that he's capable of playing better."

Stafford helped rally the Rams from a 24-3 second-half deficit to tie the score at 24 on his scoring toss to Nukua. His first touchdown was a 27-yard pass to Ter-



MATT STAFFORD passed for two TDs, but threw three interceptions in Rams' loss to the Atlanta Falcons (Rams photo).

rence Ferguson in the third quarter that pulled the Rams within 24-17.

Stafford was also sacked three times, which matched a season high, but didn't feel like the Falcons' pressure was overwhelming.

"Every week is a new challenge," Stafford said. "Just because you play good one week doesn't mean you're going to play good the next, and vice versa. So just got to go out there and continue to trust what we've done all year, and then we got to just show up and make the plays on game day."

Stafford's previous high for

touchdowns in a season was 41, which he accomplished twice. He had 41 in 2011 with the Lions and in 2021 with the Rams.

Stafford was the betting favorite to win the first MVP award of his 17-year career ahead of Patriots second-year quarterback Drake Maye. On Sunday,

Maye had a near-perfect afternoon against the Jets, presumably closing the gap on Stafford. Maye was 19 for 21 for 256 yards and five touchdowns in New York as the Patriots rolled to a 42-10 win. He played the

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Chargers hurt in loss to Texans

By Beth Harris
AP Sports Writer

INGLEWOOD (AP) — The Houston Texans are riding a wave of momentum as the playoffs near. They're still alive in the race for the AFC South, a division they've won multiple times, and bolstered by the NFL's best defense, they're taking aim at earning their first berth in the AFC Championship

■ PRO FOOTBALL

Game.

C.J. Stroud threw for two long touchdowns on Houston's first two drives of the game, and the Texans went on to beat the Los Angeles Chargers 20-16 on Saturday to clinch a third consecutive playoff berth for the first time in franchise history.

"It's what you fight for during the season, for an opportunity

■ CHARGERS will visit the Denver Broncos on Channel 2 on Sunday at 1:25 p.m.

to be in the playoffs and go win it all," Houston coach DeMeco Ryans said. "We earned that. It wasn't given to us. Our guys went out and earned it."

The Texans (11-5) won their eighth in a row, their longest

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Bolts and Dicker underperformed in loss

Continued from page 6

such streak since winning nine straight in 2018.

"To do something like that in this league is not easy," rookie wide receiver Jaylin Noel said. "Any time you can stack wins like this is special and we just want to keep it going."

The coaches are pushing us to get better and everybody in the locker room is pushing to get better."

The Chargers (11-5) had their four-game winning streak snapped and handed the AFC West title to idle Denver.

They beat the first-place Broncos in Week 3, but blew a chance to set up a winner-take-all showdown in Denver in Week 18.

"That's what hurts the most," linebacker Daiyan Henley said. "We just didn't do it. We didn't have enough, but we'll take the loss now and make sure it doesn't happen again."

The Chargers got knocked out of the playoffs in a wild-card loss to Houston last season.

Stroud's two explosive TDs stunned the Chargers and gave Houston a 14-0 lead. On his first pass of the game, he hit rookie Jayden Higgins for a 75-yard score against busted coverage. Stroud wasn't pressured when he threw a 43-yard TD to Noel, who wasn't covered.

"The big plays to start the game was really great execution starting with the O-line," Ryans said. "It starts with great protection, and the guys did a great job there. They were two plays that helped us be in position to win."

The Chargers had allowed just one TD pass of 40 or more yards in their last 15 games.

"You're not going to beat nobody in this league spotting them 14 (points)," safety Derwin James Jr. said.

Stroud completed his first six throws of the game. He finished 16 of 28 for 244 yards and two interceptions.

Houston's defense forced third-down sacks of Justin Herbert on the Chargers' first two possessions.

They were three-and-out on three of their first four possessions, quieting the SoFi Stadium crowd.

The Chargers were just 2 of 5 in the red zone.

"Just have to execute," Herbert said. "We've got to be able to convert on those third downs down there and have to score points."

"We got our opportunities, but it's on us to be able to execute those plays we put in."

Playing his third game with a broken left (non-throwing) hand, Herbert was 21 for 32 for 236 yards, with one touchdown and one interception. He was sacked five times.

James intercepted Stroud in the second quarter, but the Chargers only managed a 27-yard field goal by Cameron Dicker on the turnover to trail 14-3.

Another interception of Stroud failed to produce any points despite both miscues coming in Houston territory.

Herbert was intercepted by Azeez Al-Shaair at the Houston

1-yard line. The ball, intended for Oronde Gadsden, popped off his hands and Al-Shaair came down with it for his second interception of the season. Gadsden held his face in his hands on the bench.

Dicker missed a field goal from under 40 yards for the first time in his career just before half-time, leaving the Chargers trailing 14-3.

He later was wide left to miss his first point after attempt of the season on the Chargers' final drive after Omarion Hampton's 5-yard TD run made it 20-16.

"Unforced errors on penalties, special teams, just everybody," James said. "We got to clean it up."

Ka'imi Fairbairn had field goals of 41 and 44 yards for Houston. The Chargers closed to 17-10 after a wild drive in which Herbert was sacked twice and threw two incompletions before finding Gadsden in the back of the end zone for a 1-yard TD in the third.



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Movie review: ‘Marty Supreme’ really is

Continued from page 5

from the likes of David Mamet and even high wire artist Philippe Petit. The dizzying array makes one curious how it all came together — is casting director Jennifer Venditti taking interns? Production notes tell us that for one hustling scene at a bowling alley, young men were recruited from a sports trading-card convention.

Elsewhere on the creative team, composer Daniel Lopatin succeeds in channelling both Mar-

and cowriter Ronald Bronstein, loosely based on real-life table tennis hustler Marty Reisman, beats with its own, never-stopping pulse. The same breakneck aesthetic applies to camera work

Jim T. Retorts

Continued from page 3

surrounding the other would be amusing if it weren't so discouraging.

Drama that is art for the sake of commenting thoughtfully on the human condition is interesting. “Drama” for the sake of getting your profile raised and campaign chest filled is likely to be more along the lines of a farce.



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by Darius Khondji.

Back now to London, where Marty makes the finals against Japanese player Koto Endo (Koto Kawaguchi, like his character a deaf table tennis champion). “I’ll be dropping a third atom bomb on them,” he brags — not his only questionable World War II quip. But Endo, with his unorthodox paddle and grip, prevails.

After a stint as a side act with the Harlem Globetrotters, including pingpong games with a seal — you’ll have to take our word for this, folks, we’re running low on space — Marty returns home, determined to make the imminent world championships in Tokyo.

But he’s in trouble — remember he took cash at gunpoint? Worse, he has no money.

So Marty’s on the run. And he’ll

do anything, however messy or dangerous, to get to Japan. Even if he has to totally debase himself (mark our words), or endanger friends — or abandon loyal and brave Rachel.

Is there something else for Marty, besides his obsessive goal? If so, he doesn’t know it yet. But the lyrics of another song used in the film are instructive here: “Everybody’s got to learn sometime.”

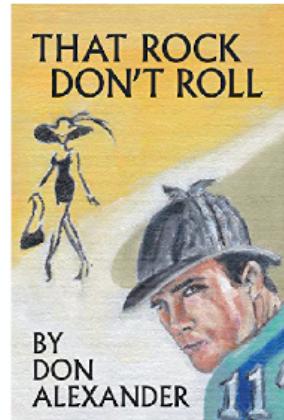
So can a single-minded striver ultimately learn something new about his own life?

We’ll have to see. As Marty might say: “Come watch me.”

“Marty Supreme,” an A24 release, has been rated R by the Motion Picture Association “for language throughout, sexual content, some violent content/bloody images and nudity.”

Some serious fun

Murder, corruption, sex, humor; sports and lottery



That Rock Don't Roll

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— The Orange County Tribune

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Don Alexander has been a sports columnist, a sports broadcaster, talk show host and a college instructor. This is his first novel.

Falcons outlast the Rams

Continued from page 6

first six possessions of the game and led the Patriots to six touchowns.

Stafford is averaging 278 passing yards per game to Maye’s 262.7, has 42 passing TDs to Maye’s 30 and the quarterbacks are even with eight interceptions apiece. Maye’s big day against the Jets pulled him virtually even with Stafford in passer rating prior to the Falcons game.

Maye also has 409 rushing yards and four rushing touchdowns while Stafford has -2 rushing yards and no rushing touchdowns

on the season. Maye’s completion percentage, which leads the NFL, is 71.7 to Stafford’s 65.2 (18th).

The Patriots clinched the AFC East on Sunday and enter Week 18 with a 13-3 record, while Stafford’s Rams are 11-5 and will enter the playoffs as a wild card.

The Patriots will close the regular season at home against the Dolphins and still have a shot at the No. 1 seed in the AFC, so Maye figures to play.

Los Angeles will host the Arizona Cardinals and McVay said Monday his starters will play.

Sports Retorts

Continued from page 6

age of 14.

She dominated in an era of Cold War rivalries, in which politics influenced judges to sometimes change scores to alter the awarding of Olympic medals.

Nadia defected to the United States in 1989 and married American Olympic medalist Bart Conner. And to add to her resume, Nadia and Bart were the grand marshals of the 1993 Garden Grove Strawberry Festival Parade.

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