

IT WAS A REAL SCREAM



The “Winter in the Grove” event in the Village Green in downtown Garden Grove was a howling success. And that’s snow joke (Tribune photo).

3-day Flower Street OK’d

By Jim Tortolano
Orange County Tribune

■ GARDEN GROVE CITY COUNCIL

The fourth annual Flower Street event will be back to Garden Grove’s historic Main Street in February but on a slightly

different schedule and a slightly different location.

On a 7-0 vote, the city council on Tuesday approved a request from the

Vietnamese Sport Association of Southern California for temporary street closures in the downtown area for the event from Friday, Feb. 13 through Sunday, Feb. 15.

This year’s event will cover the area from Acacia Parkway to Stanford Avenue.

In year’s past the event was held Saturday and Sunday on Main between Garden Grove Boulevard and Acacia Parkway and impacted businesses on one block of shops, offices and restaurants.

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Gary Taylor is new pro tem

A busy Stanton City Council on Tuesday night elected a new mayor pro tem, agreed to participate in Westminster’s Tet Parade, banned the sale of kratom and took other actions.

Councilmember Gary Taylor was chosen as mayor pro tem (vice mayor) for 2026.

■ WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL

Mendez Way The Next New Street Sign?

Proposal follows the Charlie Kirk Way plan

Will Westminster be taking action to make another street name change to honor a prominent person?

On Wednesday, the city council will consider a proposal from Councilmember Amy Phan West to replace the street name signage at the intersection of Main Street and Goldenwest Street at the entrance to Westminster High School in homage to civil rights pioneer Sylvia Mendez.

The name change would be to “Sylvia Mendez Way.”

That proposal comes on the heels of a decision by

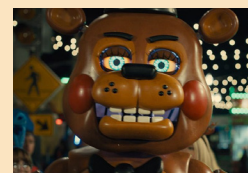
the council to “re designate” the All American Way in the Civic Center area of the city to “Charlie Kirk Way” in honor of the controversial conservative activist Charlie Kirk who was fatally shot on Sept. 10, 2025.

Mendez was 8-years-old when her parents successfully sued on her behalf of her right to attend the “white” school in Westminster in 1946.

At that time, several public schools in Orange County – and many others in California – segregated pupils of Mexican heri-

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In The Tribune



**‘Freddys 2’ may
be twice as bad**

ARTS & LIVING PAGE 3



**Stafford looks
like the M-V-P**

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'Sylvia Mendez Way' proposed

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tage into a "Mexican" campus. A case was brought in federal court and Mendez v. Westminster prevailed there and in higher courts. After the final appeal,

Gov. Earl Warren moved to desegregate all public schools and public spaces in the state.

That case was used as a precedent in the 1954 Supreme Court landmark case of Brown vs. Board of Education which banned segregation in all public schools in the U.S., a ruling which is considered a key turning point in the civil rights movement.

The council will meet in closed

session at 4 p.m. and in open session at 6 p.m. at 8200 Westminster Blvd.

Flower Street

Continued from page 1

For 2026, the event – a traditional Vietnamese cultural event featuring colorful displays of flowers – will be held on Friday to Sunday one block north of the 2025 pageant.

Also on Tuesday night, the council elected George Brietigam (District 1) as mayor pro tem (vice mayor) for 2026.

Stanton council

Continued from page 1

The council voted 5-0 to take part in the Tet Parade in Westminster scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 21.

On a 5-0 vote the council gave its second and final approval to a ban on the sale of kratom – a herbal substance that has a stimulant and opioid effect – and kratom products within city limits.

Additionally, the council did not pass approval of a letter of support for Action Alliance for purchasing an apartment building in Stanton for 16 to 28 homeless men and women "living a drug- and alcohol-free lifestyle for minimum of one year."

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News & Views

The weird and wonderful days of Christmas

Forget the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas." The run-up to the greatest of holidays is already underway. The stores, their parking lots, and all the roads to the parking lots are filling up like Chevys in an oil crisis.

For me, these days are more fun than The Day itself. The thrill of anticipation is a mix of nervousness and relief.

You could never know what "underwhelming" gifts one would get. I think of the Eighties as The Decade of Sweaters, personally.

What I did (and still do) enjoy the most are the traditions. You know what I mean.

- the fruitcake so dense you could strap it to your chest as a bullet-proof vest;

- the last second rush to the CVS or Walgreen's to buy a) a ton of AA and AAA batteries for the various electronic devices you bought or expect to receive; or b) a last-second gift for a relative you didn't expect who just phoned to say "I'm on my way."

- that "gift face" that your spouse or girl/boyfriend puts on when you purchased a present that's the wrong size, color, brand name or the same one as last year;

- forgetting to put name tags on the presents.

- the dog who insisted on investigating the stuff under the tree in his own playful, destructive kind of way.

See what you have to look forward to!



Retorts
Jim Tortolano

HB unites to find lost child

A community-wide effort in Huntington Beach to find a child reported missing Saturday concluded happily with locating the youngster safe and sound.

Before being found, Jackson Hoffman, 6, was last seen before midnight in his apartment complex in the 7500 block of Edinger Avenue.

Through social media and the efforts to the HBPD, as well as the LAPD, Westminster Police Department, Fountain Valley Police Department, Costa Mesa Police Department and the Huntington Beach Fire Department, the youth was found about 10:30 a.m. on Sunday.

HB POLICE OFFICERS give out apple juice and Pringles (HBPD photo).



PCH crash takes motorist's life in HB

Another fatal accident has taken place on Pacific Coast Highway in Huntington Beach.

According to Jessica Cuchilla, public information officer for HBPD, the incident took place around 2:15 a.m. on Monday on PCH south of Warner Avenue. The collision was between a black Ford Expedition sport utility vehicle and a white Audi Q5 sedan.

Arriving police officers found the driver of the Expedition, a 44-year-old man from Sunnyvale. He was taken to a local hospital with minor injuries.

The driver of the Audi, a 29-year-old Huntington Beach man, had suffered major injuries. Paramedics were called to the scene, but he was pronounced dead at the scene. The driver of the Ford cooperated

with investigators and impairment does not appear to be a factor.

Based on the preliminary investigation, the Expedition was traveling northbound on PCH when the Q5 struck the Ford from behind, south of Warner Avenue.

Anyone who may have seen the collision is asked to contact HBPD Traffic Investigator C. Houlston at (714) 536-5670.

History Minute

The tragedy of Samantha Runnion

Perhaps the most tragically famous resident of Stanton was 6-year-old Samantha Runnion. On July 15, 2002, she was playing a board game in her front yard with a friend when approached by a man who asked for help in finding a lost dog. He grabbed Samantha, forced her into his car and drove away.

A search across wide areas of Southern California ended when her body was found in Cleveland National Forest. Several days later Alejandro Avila of Lake Elsinore was arrested. He was found guilty and sentenced to death. He is



still on death row at San Quentin State Prison. Her mother, Erin Runnion founded "The Joyful Child Foundation" to prevent crimes against children.

OCFA chief to head new U.S. fire service

Bill Fennessy, chief of the Orange County Fire Authority, is leaving the OCFA to take a new job as the director of the newly-established federal United States Wildlife Fire Service.

His appointment is effective Jan. 12, 2026.

The OCFA provides fire and paramedic service for Garden Grove, Stanton and Westminster, as well as several dozen other cities and unincorporated areas in Orange County.

Fennessy has been leader of the OCFA since 2016.

NewsUpdate

Ukraine Won't Yield Land to Russia

*Zelenskyy says
'that's what we
are fighting for'*

Ukraine won't yield on its resolve to to give up territory in order to sign a peace agreement with Russia.

During a visit to Rome, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Tuesday said, "We, clearly, don't want to give up anything. That's what we're fighting for," according to the Associated Press.

In an interview with Politico, President Donald Trump said that Ukraine should yield because Russia has "the upper hand" and that Zelenskyy's



UKRAINE won't give up land to Russia, says Zelenskyy (Shutterstock).

government must "play ball." Pope Leo XIV met with Zelenskyy outside of Rome

earlier in the day reiterating the need for "continued dialogue" and that "current

diplomatic initiatives bring about a just and lasting peace."

Aussie kids lose access to major social media sites under new national law

A new national law going into effect on Wednesday in Australia will block access to under-16 youth from 10 internationally popular social media sites.

According to United Press International, those sites are Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, Reddit, YouTube, Twitch, Kick, Snapchat and Threads.

Certain other sites might be added if they add "significantly more users" or are seemed social media rather than peer-to-peer communications sites.

Fines of up to \$32 million could be assessed against companies that don't ensure that users are of legal age.

Cooling trend on the way

The warmer days we've seen in our West Orange County cities will be turning toward cooler ones. The forecast for Wednesday is for a daytime high of 81 with an overnight low of 50 degrees under sunny skies. Thursday will cool to 77 (50) with partly cloudy skies. Friday will be chillier at 72 (51) with mostly sunny skies. Saturday will see a high of 72 with a low of 50. Skies will be mostly cloudy.

Trump's popularity ticks up a bit; 'cost of living' is still the biggest issue to voters

The popularity of President Donald Trump rose slightly in a Reuters/Ipsos Poll released Tuesday.

His approval rating rose to 41 percent from 38 percent in November. His disapproval rate is at 57 percent.

A key drag on his approval is the "cost of living," but his support on that from the public rose from 26 percent to 31 percent. The poll interviewed 4,434 adults nationwide with a margin of error of 2 percentage points in either direction.

Great Thoughts

"The risk of a wrong decision is preferable to the terror of indecision." – Maimonides.

"Indecision is the key to flexibility." – Kathy Reichs.

"When you have to make a choice and don't make it, that is in itself a choice." – William James.

Arts&Living

'Freddy's 2' May Be Twice As Bad

A sequel with more crazy animatronics

By Mark Kennedy
AP Entertainment Writer

How do you top "Five Nights at Freddy's," the video game movie adaptation about murderous anthropomorphic robots? If it's a battle for insipid nonsense, the answer is blindingly clear: "Five Nights at Freddy's 2."

The sequel builds on the unscary, un-funny bones of the 2023 original by expanding the Freddy's Cinematic Universe with an even more head-scratching outing. "I don't know what happened. I feel sick," says one poor actor. We feel you, sister.

"Five Nights at Freddy's 2" assumes you've watched the first so sit through that dreck before attempting to digest the latest, which hysterically keeps unpacking game lore all the way through, even during the closing credits. It even arrogantly sets the table for "Five Nights at Freddy's 3" without earning the second.

Back is returning director Emma Tammi — this time using a script from the game's developer, Scott Cawthon — and the cast from the first: Former security guard Mike (Josh Hutcherson, emoting poorly), police officer Vanessa (Elizabeth Lail, uncertain what movie is being made) and Mike's 11-year-old sister, Abby (Piper Rubio, always game).

Abby wants nothing better than to reunite with her Chuck E. Cheese-like animatronic pals — Freddy Fazbear, Bonnie, Chica and Foxy. Her nasty science teacher (Wayne Knight, not going to have a good movie) hates her and she's weird, mostly because she pines for the companionship of four possessed robots. Therapy for everyone!

The sequel does get kudos for



"FIVE NIGHTS AT FREDDY'S 2" is pretty awful (Universal Pictures).

Film Review

introducing a truly scary creature amid the decidedly non-frightening, bow-tie wearing, big-eyed animatronics — The Marionette, a truly unsettling (slightly Jigsaw-like) dude with a mask that has rosy red cheeks and a body with elongated arms. But the filmmakers fumble by losing him in the machinery. It's not even clear by the end who is bad and who is good. (Well, it's clear the movie isn't good.)

Trauma runs through "Five Nights at Freddy's 2" and it's mainly the repercussions from the first movie. Vanessa hasn't properly dealt with the fact that her father set this whole murderous situation going, Mike is trying to move past the horror of having seen people murdered by pizza parlor entertainment figures and Abby is a mess, leaving a note for her brother that reads: "Gone to fix my friends." (Why not "Gone to fix this movie"?)

The filmmakers really haven't decided for a second time whether Freddy, Bonnie, Chica and Foxy are deeply evil or actually friendly, which leads to existential confusion. They lay-

er on movie cliches like thick pepperoni slices: old-fashioned delicate music boxes, flickering flashlights, eyeglasses cracked and refrigerator door closing jumpscars. At one point, Megan Fox provides the voice for Chica. Will you notice? Of course not.

As sequels must do these days, we've got an extra portion of these nasty Care Bears — they come in waves — and there's a weird moment when Vanessa travels back in time to the mind palace of her evil father, which just seems like an excuse to re-hire Matthew Lillard. The animatronics this time both lumber like creaky dinosaurs but also unbelievably pounce unseen like

Zero Stars

leopards and apparently can outrun a midsize sedan.

It's an incoherent mess, something that, back in the day, would be straight to DVD. "Five Nights at Freddy's 2" has an after-school special vibe with no real horror and no real awareness that it should. "What kind of kid would want to come here?" asks Mike. Indeed.

"Five Nights at Freddy's 2," a Universal Pictures release that hits theaters Friday, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for violent content, terror and some language.

Cookies with 'The Grinch'

The annual "Holiday Cookie Crawl" will be held on Sunday, Dec. 14 at Pacific City, 21010 Coast Highway, Huntington Beach from 4-6:30 p.m. Various retailers and restaurants at the center will have a free "Cookies Here" sign in their windows. After the "crawl," there's a free showing of "The Grinch" movie after sunset. Complimentary hot cocoa. Bring your own chair and blankets.



TheSportsPages

It was a time for magic on the diamond

Professional football fans in Orange County this season have two very successful teams nearby to cheer.

But did you know the OC had its own pro team ... for a while.

The Orange County Ramblers, AKA the Orange County Rhinos, played variously in the California

Football League and the Continental Football League, using Santa Ana Bowl/Stadium as a home field.



Sports Retorts
Jim Tortolano

The Continental League, like other leagues like the United Football League, was somewhat inspired by the American Football League, which would eventually merge with the NFL quite profitably.

The Ramblers — later the Rhinos — joined the league in 1967 and won the Pacific Division title with a 10-2 record, losing the CFL title to the Orlando Panthers 38-14.

In 1968, the Ramblers won the Pacific title with an 11-1 record, but lost the league crown again, falling to Orlando 30-23.

That was it for the original CFL in 1969, but the name is revived for the 2026 season as a summer league with 10 teams, three of them in Texas.

Orange County pro football was revived in 1974-1975 with the short-lived Southern California Sun playing in Anaheim Stadium in the World Football League, but that's another story for another time.

And who could forget the Los Angeles Rams' move to an uglified Anaheim Stadium from 1980-1994? I certainly don't want to remember it.

Matt Stafford: M-V-P?

He looks like it after win over the Cardinals

By David Brandt
AP Sports Writer

GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP) — Matthew Stafford dominated on the field before being serenaded with “M-V-P!” chants off of it, soaking in some locker room praise from teammates after another stellar performance that led his Los Angeles Rams to a 45-17 win over the Arizona Cardinals on Sunday. The 37-year-old quarterback has rarely looked better in his 17-year NFL career.

It's a big reason why the Rams look like one of the best teams in the league.

“That's our guy — No. 9,” receiver Puka Nacua said. “Without him, we wouldn't be operating the way we do. It's always fun when we get to show him some praise.”

Stafford threw for 281 yards and three touchdowns, Nacua and Blake Corum both scored twice and the Rams (10-3) scored 35 unanswered points to bounce back from last week's turnover-filled loss to Carolina. Los Angeles won for the seventh time in eight games to stay tied with Seattle atop the NFC West, one game ahead of San Francisco.

“It's fun — they're great teammates,” Stafford said of the



MATT STAFFORD passed for 281 yards and three TDs against the Arizona Cardinals (Rams photo).

“M-V-P!” chants. “Only reason anyone is saying something like that about me is because of those guys. I'm appreciative — I love going to work with them.”

The reeling Cardinals (3-10) have lost five straight and 10 of 11.

Los Angeles fell into an early 7-0 hole but rallied for a 24-10 lead by halftime, scoring just before the break on a beautiful 28-yard throw over the middle from Stafford to Nacua, who had six catches for 136 yards in the first half. The Rams also scored on a

pair of 2-yard runs — one each by Kyren Williams and Corum.

Los Angeles piled up 306 yards in the first half and finished with 530. Stafford completed 22 of 31 passes, including a few in tight windows that only a handful of QBs in the league would even think of trying to make.

“I thought Matthew was outstanding,” Rams coach Sean McVay said. “He was great — thought he saw the field really well. He threw the ball with accuracy and anticipation.”

Continued on page 7

Ducks rally late, win in a shootout

By Hugo Baker
Orange County Tribune

The Anaheim Ducks continue to be one of the hottest teams on the ice of the National Hockey League as they won their third straight game Tuesday night, defeating the Pittsburgh Penguins, 4-3 in overtime.

With the win, the Ducks at 19-10-1 and retained first place in the NHL Pacific Division, stay-

ing two points ahead of the Vegas Golden Knights.

Trailing 3-2 in the waning moments of the third period, the Ducks' Beckett Sennecke beat the buzzer with one-tenth of a second to send the game at PPG Arena toward a shootout.

Leo Carlsson scored in the first round of the shootout and Anaheim goalkeeper Ville Husso

made three saves on Penguin attempts. He made 44 saves for Anaheim on the night.

In regular time, the Ducks got goals from Jackson LeCombe, Troy Terry and Sennecke. Assists came from Sennecke and Cutter Gauthier.

Next up for the Ducks will be road games against the New York Islanders on Thursday and the New Jersey Devils on Saturday.

■ NBA&NHL

And Puka Nacua was no slouch vs. Cardinals

Continued from page 6

McVay had a rough week, missing some preparation time on Friday and Saturday because of an illness. You could never tell by the way the Rams played on Sunday.

Los Angeles capped its offensive onslaught with two straight touchdowns on the first plays of drives. Nate Landman intercepted Jacoby Brissett's pass late in the third and the Rams scored on the next play when Stafford hit Nacua for a 31-yard touchdown and a 38-10 lead.

On LA's next possession, Corum eluded the Cardinals' flat-footed defense for a 48-yard TD run to

make it 45-10.

Nacua had 167 yards receiving and Corum had 128 yards rushing.

"Give credit to LA," Cardinals coach Jonathan Gannon said. "They were better than us in every facet of the game — coaching, playing, offense, defense, special teams. That was very humbling. At one point, it's 10-10, and then you look up and you're down a lot of points quick."

The injury-depleted Cardinals took a 7-0 lead less than three minutes into the game after a crisp, five-play, 67-yard drive

that ended with Brissett's 19-yard touchdown pass to Michael Wilson.

Wilson caught 11 passes for 142 yards and two touchdowns. Brissett — starting his eighth straight game in place of injured starter Kyler Murray — completed 25 of 44 passes for 271 yards, two TDs and an interception.

Trey McBride had five catches for 58 yards. It was his 15th straight game with at least five catches, tying the league record for a tight end set by Travis Kelce. Arizona suffered another lopsided loss at the hands of a division ri-

■ **CHARGERS** defeated Eagles 22-13 on Monday. Complete coverage in Saturday's e-paper.

val. The Cardinals were thumped by the Seahawks 44-22 in Week 10 and lost to the 49ers 41-22 in Week 11.

The Rams have won 15 of their past 18 against the Cardinals. The second quarter and didn't return. ... LT Paris Johnson Jr. (knee) left in the third and didn't return. ... S Jalen Thompson (hamstring) left in the fourth and didn't return.



HE'S STILL KING JAMES

LeBron is back, and he's loving it

By Dan Gelton
AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — LeBron James doesn't silence the crowd when he hits the road, he raises fans to their feet in exhilaration and gets them roaring in appreciation — as he did down

the stretch in Philadelphia — for the clutch shots that could be the last they see in person as retirement speculation swirls.

The 76ers, well, they could have done without James throwing his game back to his prime.

In his first game since his NBA record double-digit scoring

streak ended, James not only hit that mark in the first half, but he also scored 10 straight points in the fourth quarter in the decisive stretch that sent the Lakers to a 112-108 victory over the Sixers on Sunday night.

Continued from page 7



GARDEN GROVE'S BEST KEPT SECRET

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Le Bron is still 'King James' for the Lakers

Continued from page 5

James scored 29 points on 12-of-17 shooting in a vintage performance that belied the fact the aging All-Star has battled injuries that curtailed his summer workouts and cost him the start of the season. He sat out Friday against Boston with sciatica, which kept him sidelined for the first 14 games this season, and left foot joint arthritis.

The brief time off after James' double-digit streak ended Thursday at Toronto helped him work through his injuries and get him healthy — healthier, at least — in time to face Joel Embiid, Tyrese Maxey and the Sixers. "I'm still not 100% but I felt a lot better tonight than I did coming out of the Toronto game," James said.

James' 10 point-run in the fourth went like this: a long 2, a 3-pointer, another 3 that snapped a tie with 1:12 left and a 20-foot fadeaway that made it 110-105 and put the game away. "It never gets old," James said. "That's the one thing you won't be able to get back when you're done playing. That arena. That

excitement of going out, the boos, the cheers, whatever the case. So do it in a win, it's even more important. That's what I hope, I'll come up clutch in a win. That's even more exciting."

James could use some excitement in a season that Lakers have so far successfully navigated without much of his presence. James, who will turn 41 on Dec. 30, played 36 minutes in the Lakers' 123-120 win over Toronto on Thursday night. The game saw the end of James' streak of 1,297 double-digit scoring games when the NBA's career points leader finished with eight points.

By his own description, he's not in rhythm yet, after missing the entire preseason and all but seven games of the regular season with an injury.

"I've never not started a basketball season in my life since I started when I was 9 years old," James said. "When the season started, I was ready to go. It was definitely challenging to me mentally just sitting on the bench. Not being able to practice with the guys, not being able to get the reps in with the guys. Definitely challenging. I

understand it's a process and I've always fell in love with the process more than anything." James wasn't the only returning star for the Lakers.

Luka Doncic was back after he missed the last two games as he traveled to his hometown of Ljubljana, Slovenia where fiancée Anamaria Goltes gave birth to their daughter, Oliva.

"Obviously, two girls, they're going to make my life hell, for sure," Doncic said with a laugh. "All jokes aside, it's the best thing in the world."

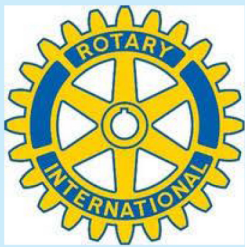
Doncic ripped off a triple-double in his first game as a father or two with 31 points, 15 rebounds and 11 assists.

"I want to play the game for them," Doncic said. "When they grow up, they can see what their father did, basketball-wise."

Lakers coach JJ Redick has two children with his wife, Chelsea, said before the game he hoped

Doncic would have enough energy to play after the long trip.

"We do know there was some travel involved to a different continent," Redick said. "We're hoping he's himself today."



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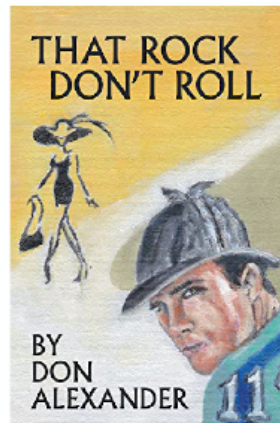
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- The Orange County Tribune

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