

A DAZZLING NEW 'HOLIDAY GEM'



Tribune theater critic Thomas deMartino calls "The Holiday Gem" a "brilliant and original work." It's now playing through Dec. 21 at the Gem Theatre. Read more in his review on the Arts and Living page 5 (One More Production).

'Charlie Kirk Way' protest on Wednesday

A "peaceful protest" registering opposition to the city council's decisions to redesignate All American Way as Charlie Kirk Way and declare a "Charlie Kirk Day" is planned on Wednesday, Dec. 10 be-

fore the Westminster City Council meeting.

The protest, organized by community activist Terry Rains, will be from 3-6 p.m. at 8200 Westminster Blvd., in front of the

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Mistrial in a fatal shooting

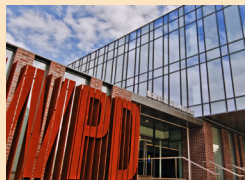
A mistrial has been declared in the trial of a 70-year old Garden Grove man who fatally shot a homeless man in 2023 who had thrown a shoe at him.

According to published reports, the jury on his involuntary manslaughter charge on Wednesday deadlocked 11-1 and was unable to reach a verdict. It was not announced whether a new trial would be ordered.

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In The Trib

Crime down in Westminster



NEWS & VIEWS PAGE 3

Will Chargers need new hand?



SPORTS PAGE PAGE 6

■ WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL

Rose Center Must be Out by Year's End

Decision was 3-1-1 vs. giving an extension

By Jim Tortolano
Orange County Tribune

The Rose Center Theater, a 419-seat facility opened in 2006 to bring fine arts performances to the City of Westminster, will be closing its doors at the end of the year, perhaps to be re-born as a cultural center.

On a 3-1-1 vote on Nov. 12, the city council decided to pass on extending the contract for the management of the facility.

The motion to not extend

the contract was opposed by Vice Mayor Carlos Manzo with Councilmember Amy Phan West abstaining.

In a statement posted on social media, the RSM management stated "The Friends of the Rose has been formally notified that the City of Westminster is moving forward with plans to repurpose the Rose Center into a cultural center ... we have been directed to begin winding down our operations and prepare for departure from the theater that has been our home for more than 20 years."

At that meeting, the council rejected a staff recom-

Continued on page 2

Carlos Manzo announces bid for Westminster mayor

Westminster Vice Mayor Carlos Manzo this week announced his candidacy for mayor of his city in the 2026 election.

In a statement published to social media, Manzo wrote:

"Since my election, I have worked to ensure Westminster is financially

■ ELECTION 2026

stable, safe, and governed with integrity," said Manzo.

"This seat is nonpartisan for a reason—residents deserve a mayor who represents everyone equally, without political division

Continued on page 2

Rose Center era coming to end?

Continued from page 1

mendation for a one-year extension to the Friends of the Rose Center Theater that would have run until June 30, 2026, with an optional three-month extension.

The extension would have included a 5 percent venue fee to be paid monthly to cover the cost of operating the facility. Currently the city pays for expenses of the theater over income, stated to be about \$50,000 annually.

Mayor Chi Charlie Nguyen, who made the motion to not extend the agreement, complained that “for 20 years the City of Westminster has been paying for this,” he said.

Manzo said, “They’re providing a service” and compared the operation of the theater to the city’s park system.

Protest is set

Continued from page 1

Council Chambers in the Civic Center.

During the 6:30 p.m. council meeting, residents are expected to express their opposition to the honoring of Kirk, who is considered by some to be an extreme political figure and allege these honors to be “a hyper-political campaign maneuver.”

Manzo for mayor

Continued from page 1

or personal agendas.”

Manzo has frequently clashed with the council majority, most recently over the controversial decision to name a Civic Center street after headline conservative activist Charlie Kirk.

The current mayor is Chi Charlie Nguyen.

Court mistrial

Continued from page 1

Craig Sumner Elliot, then 68, is alleged to have fired shots that killed Antonio Garcia Avalos after the latter threw a shoe at him.

Elliot was jogging along Kattella Avenue with his two dogs at around 3 p.m. on Sept. 28, 2023 when he encountered the man, and an incident took place over passage on the sidewalk.

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News & Views

Sometimes it's the people who make you sick

As I write this, I'm just "coming down" from a pretty generic winter cold. If you're like me, when you're in that situation, you probably get a lot of unsolicited medical advice, most of which is pretty worthless. The truth is there's no effective cure for the common cold's physical impacts.

But I believe I have collected some worthwhile ways to handle its psychological or emotional effects.



Retorts
Jim Tortolano

First, unless you are dead-dog flat-on-your back sick, clean up the place. Nothing makes you feel worse than waking up groggily from a nap to see piles of unwashed laundry, the floor covered with abandoned footwear and a palisade of still-wet towels hanging over various knobs, poles and handles.

You already feel bad physically and now you feel badder because you see yourself as a undisciplined slob.

If you are receiving visitors, make sure you curate them, by that I mean, screen them. Some visitors, regardless of intentions, can make you feel worse.

Some will criticize your health habits. Some will give you absurd advice — my father seemed to think that all ailments could be cured through the use of wheat germ, apple cider vinegar and lentils.

The worst are the ones who will tell you how lucky you are because you don't have the painful, uncomfortable maladies they have.

On the other hand, they do make you feel better ... when they leave.

3 hurt, 1 killed in 7-car crash

A seven-car traffic collision in Huntington Beach Tuesday afternoon injured three people and took the life of a fourth.

According to Jessica Cuchilla, public affairs officer for the HBPD, the incident took place at around 2:45 p.m. at a collision on Heil Avenue at Goldenwest Street.

Huntington Beach Fire Department treated three people and transported them to local hospitals where they are listed in

stable condition.

The driver of an overturned vehicle believed to have initiated the mass crash, a 37-year-old Huntington Beach man, was pronounced dead at the scene. He was later identified as Ryan Mark Larson.

A preliminary investigation by the HBPD indicated that a gray Tesla Model 3 traveling east-bound on Heil "at a high rate of speed" lost control as it crossed the intersection with Goldenwest

Street. It crashed into several automobiles, rolled over several times and came to rest on the ground east of the pavement.

Debris from the impacts struck other cars in the intersection.

It's not immediately known whether drugs or alcohol were a factor in the incident.

Anyone with information about the incident is requested to call HBPD Traffic Investigator S. Flynn at (714) 536-5666.

Violent and property crime down in Westminster

By Jim Tortolano
Orange County Tribune

Violent crime is down sharply in Westminster over the past year, as is property crime.

In a report to the city council, the Westminster Police Department reported that through the third quarter of 2024 to the third quarter of 2025, violent crime showed a decline from 311 incidents to 254, a drop of 18.33 percent.

Specifically, homicides de-



WESTMINSTER POLICE Department building in the Civic Center (Orange County Tribune photo).

clined from three to two (down 33.33 percent). Declines were

also reported in robbery (down 15.19 percent), aggravated assault (down 24.19 percent), burglary (down 37.28 percent), larceny (down 19.26 percent) and stolen vehicles (down 16.26 percent).

The only categories in which there were increases were rape (14 incidents to 22, up 57.14 percent) and arson (from nine to 18 incidents, a 100 percent increase).

Property crime overall was down from 1913 incidents to 1517 (a decrease of 20.70 percent). Decreases were reported in burglary (37.28 percent), larceny (19.26 percent), and vehicle theft (16.26 percent).

History Minute

Orange County's own 'sundown town'

If you saw the movie "Green Book," you may be familiar with the term "sundown town," a practice in some Deep South cities of banning Blacks from living within city limits. OC once had its own version. Ole Hanson founded San Clemente in 1925, as an exclusive community. Excluded from living in town were "hired help" (especially non-whites) and union members. He lost his fortune in the Great Depression and died of heart attack in 1940.



NewsUpdate

Birthright Citizenship To High Court

What exactly does 14th Amendment mean for citizens?

Are all persons born in the United States then citizens of the U.S., as outlined in the 14th Amendment to the Constitution?

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to consider a case challenging that commonly held belief.

The New York Times is reporting that the court has decided to settle a lawsuit over a Trump Administration executive order claiming that children born of undocumented immigrants and some temporary foreign residents should not be automatically granted citizenship.



THE CONCEPT of "birthright citizenship" will go before the Supreme Court (Shutterstock).

The key issue is whether a foreign immigrant here illegally is under the jurisdiction of his or

her home country or the U.S.

Courts have blocked the order from going into effect, but

now it may be adjudicated by the high court sometime in the spring or summer of 2026.

Good draw for Team USA in the 2026 World Cup

The American men's soccer team got a pretty good draw in the opening round of the 2026 World Cup soccer tournament.

According to United Press International, the men's games will be held in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

The USA men –ranked 14th in the world – will open against 39th-ranked Paraguay in the Group D opener on June 12 at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood.

Other group D teams are Australia (number 26) and the winner from a group with the highest-rated team being Slovakia (rated 45).

Great Thoughts

"What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness." – John Steinbeck

"My old grandmother always used to say, summer friends will melt away like summer snows, but winter friends are friends forever." – George Martin.

"A man says a lot of things in summer he doesn't mean in winter." – Patricia Blood.

Weather: Sunshine lands

West Orange County cities will – according to the forecast, anyway – bask in sunshine for the next few days. Saturday is expected to have a daytime high of 70 with an overnight of low of 49.

Sunday should warm to 73 (50) and Monday and Tuesday both to 79 during the day with lows of 55 and 58.

Each day should be sunny.

Cuts in Social Security office visits are sought for 2026

A reduction of visits to Social Security Administration field offices by 50 percent is planned for 2026, the Associated Press is reporting.

The AP, from an internal SSA office operation plan outlines a proposed goal of reducing foot traffic in its offices of 50 percent for the the fiscal year of 2026, or "no more than 15 million visits by the public."

It's not clear how visits will be

reduced except by shutting offices or reducing office hours.

An estimated 7,000 SSA employees have been laid off in 2025 as the Trump administration has discussed plans to streamline the agency.

A spokesman for the SSA said, "Through technology improvements and modernization, more Americans are choosing to quickly manage their benefits online or over the phone."

Arts&Living

'Holiday Gem' Even Brighter Now

Time to meet the fabulous Frost Sisters

By Thom deMartino
Orange County Tribune

This year's holiday season just got exponentially merrier in Garden Grove.

The newest adaptation of the fan-favorite "Holiday Gem" is currently in full swing at the Gem Theater. Directed by Damien Lorton, the show is a collection of classic Christmas songs, beautiful choreography, and the tale of a pair of magical sisters – and the unravelling of their familial bonds.

As the house lights dim as the show begins, as a gigantic magical snow globe on stage begins to glow with life: flickering black and white images flash across, introducing the audience to the fabulous Frost sisters, and how after years of success their paths diverged as they grew up.

Agatha (Adriana Sanchez) chose love over stardom, eventually becoming even better known under her married name – Mrs. Claus, wife to the seemingly-ubiquitous Santa Claus (Damien Lorton). Her sister Cicely (Nicole Cassesso), on the other hand... has let her feelings of rejection and abandonment by her sister turn her to follow a darker, magical path.

But Cicely is not alone – she's accompanied by her assistant, the plucky, kindly Jonathan (Tad Fujioka) – always upbeat and eager to help, despite her constant belittling of him. But though the sorceress has excelled in her learning, one final ability eludes her – teleportation.

But when the young elf Eli (Niles Gray) suddenly appears to the pair, sent from the North Pole with an invitation to the Claus's anniversary party, Cicely secretly sees it as an opportunity both to



THIS YEAR'S "Holiday Gem" could be the best ever (One More Productions).

Stage Review

sabotage her sister's happiness and steal the Magic Snow Globe of Christmas Fantasyland™ that enables Eli to travel instantaneously.

The trio are whisked away to the North Pole, where Mrs. Claus's performing show elves sing and dance, weaving together a tapestry of favorite Christmas songs. But little do they know that Cicely's devious plans are rapidly unfolding... and if she has her way, Christmas itself will be cancelled!

This is such a popular show with regulars of the Gem Theater that it's staged nearly every other year: but always with little tweaks and adaptations to the formula. This year's version is absolutely the best "Holiday Gem" yet.

Where to begin? The perfect chemistry, rivalry and harmony between Sanchez's & Cassesso's Mrs. Claus and Cicely? (Take note of the performance of their audience favorite from years prior, a frenetic dueling version of "Jingle Bells".) The numerous costume changes for Cicely, each costume becoming grander and more ornate with each new ap-

pearance? This show is rich with toe-tapping musical and dance numbers (as well as the camaraderie between what is truly an extended family of players.)

The sisters' story serves as a marvelous framework for the array of well-loved Christmas songs from years past, beautifully performed by the best of the best of the Gem's "One More Productions" troupe.

Conductor and pianist Nick Bravo and the orchestra sit subtly behind the stage action as they provide the rousing score to the show, while Gem luminaries (and Show Elves) including Erika Baldwin, Peter Crisafulli, Sasha Baker, Kyle Hill, Trevin Stephen-

Great: ★ ★ ★ ★

son, Jack Janowicz, Kady Lawson, Mary Desmond, Matthew Rangel, Courtney Hays and Julia Iacopetti, bring their beautiful harmonies to bear.

From the ensemble's sonorous "Winter Wonderland" and "Christmas Song" (performed by Crisafulli, Hill and Stephenson) to the immensely fun, risqué "Baby It's Cold Outside" and Rangel's rendition of "Dear Mr. Santa", to a beautiful ensemble version of "Carol of the Bells" – there's plenty of familiar holiday favorites for everyone. There's

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'Jingle Jam' on Dec. 12

The annual West Garden Grove "Jingle Jam" comes to Eastgate Park on Friday, Dec. 12 from 5-9 p.m. It will feature Santa, a "train ride," toy drive, raffles, vendors, food trucks and more. Admission is free. The event is sponsored by Team Tackney real estate.



TheSportsPages

It was a time for magic on the diamond

There's still three weeks or so of 2025 remaining, so this might seem a bit early to be proclaiming the high points of the area sports season.

Of course, sports writers have an easy place to start. On the baseball diamond, the hearts and minds and World Series trophy were all captured by Shohei Ohtani and his excellent supporting cast of the Los Angeles Dodgers.

With dash and drama, Sho and His Merry Band won yet another World Series crown in seven finger-crossing games. Ohtani put his personal signature on the whole season in the fourth game of the National League Championship Series when he hit three home runs and pitched a six-inning, 10-strikeout, no runs-allowed performance.

While he did not win the Series MVP — that went to Dodger pitcher Yoshinabu Yamamoto, who pitched two winning complete games — “Sho” was clearly the focus not only of the playoffs but of the sport itself.

The Dodgers, won, though, not strictly on glamour but by a combination of clutch hitting, as exemplified not only by Ohtani but also by Freddie Freeman, Will Smith, Mookie Betts and Miguel Rojas and strong pitching.

On paper, it shouldn't have been the Dodgers. They were out-hit 75 to 53, outscored 34-26 and committed three errors to none by the Jays. It all came down to the timing, and 2025 was the time for a magic Blue Crew season.

The game — and Sho — put baseball back center-stage in American sports for the first time in a long time.



Sports Retorts

Jim Tortolano

Is Herbert Good to Go?

Arm injury casts doubt on starter vs. the Eagles

By Dan Greenspan
Associated Press

EL SEGUNDO (AP) — Los Angeles Chargers quarterback Justin Herbert did not practice Wednesday, two days after undergoing surgery to repair a broken bone in his non-throwing hand.

Coach Jim Harbaugh said the Chargers (8-4) are preparing as though Herbert will start against the Philadelphia Eagles on Monday, though he repeatedly stressed a formal determination on Herbert's status would be made later in the week.

“Not gonna practice, but he hasn't missed a beat,” Harbaugh said. “Already back today in meetings and out on the field for walkthrough.”

Herbert said he had a plate and screws placed in his left hand Monday afternoon. He kept his hand out of sight in the pocket of his sweatshirt during a news conference Wednesday afternoon.

“The doctors were happy with how they performed, so I guess that's always a good thing,” Herbert said. “It's just the next couple days of seeing how the swelling handles and what goes on from there.”



JUSTIN HERBERT injured his left (non-throwing) arm, casting a shadow over a win over Raiders (Chargers photo).

Herbert, who was injured in the first quarter of a 31-14 win over the Las Vegas Raiders on Sunday, is treating this week as if he will play. He has only missed four games because of injury in six seasons with the Chargers, having been sidelined for the last four games in 2023 because of a broken finger on his right hand.

“It's obviously a situation where you'll see how it goes throughout the week, and you'd love as much time as possible,” Herbert said. “I think having an extra day doesn't hurt, so see how it goes

and adjust from there, I guess.”

Backup Trey Lance worked with the starting offense in practice. Harbaugh had previously said Lance, who was drafted third overall by the San Francisco 49ers in 2021, would see additional snaps in case he needed to play in situations where the Chargers might need to operate from under center, such as at the goal line or in short yardage.

“Better to be prepared and not have your opportunity come than have your opportunity come and

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Lakers, Ducks win; Clippers fall

■ NBA&NHL

The up-and-down **Los Angeles Lakers** followed Thursday's 123-120 win over the Toronto Raptors with a 126-105 thumping by the Boston Celtics on Friday night.

After falling behind 39-17 in the first quarter, the visiting Lakers were playing catch-up all night, but never got closer than the final margin.

Austin Reaves led the team with 36 points, three rebounds and

eight assists.

With the loss, the Lake Show is 16-6, good for third in the NBA Western Conference and first in the Pacific Division.

In Memphis on Friday night the **Los Angeles Clippers** led by two points at halftime over the host Grizzlies but ended up with a 107-98 defeat.

Kawhi Leonard scored 24 points

and grabbed eight rebounds for the Clips. James Harden scored 18 points and snagged eight rebounds.

In Orange County, the **Anaheim Ducks** did better, winning 4-3 in overtime over the Washington Capitals on Friday.

Beckett Sennecke and Ross Johnson each had a goal and an assist in the win, which ended the Caps' six-game winning streak on Friday.

Bolsa, HB Off to Unbeaten Starts

Five of 14 teams so far have had winning marks

Prep Sport Spotlight

We reported in our Wednesday column that boys' basketball teams serving our cities of Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, Stanton and Westminster are off to a slow start, with just three of 14 posting winning records so far.

A look at the girls' teams shows them doing a bit better – five of

15 – but not much better.

With more wins than losses are Bolsa Grande (6-0), Garden Grove (4-2), Huntington Beach (3-0), Los Amigos (5-1) and La Quinta (4-3).

Four of those five, by the way, are from the Garden Grove Unified School District.

Those with "break-even" records are Marina (2-2) and

Western (1-1).

Bolsa's unbeaten record puts the Matadors as a favorite in the Orange League, competing with Saddleback (4-4) and perhaps Western (1-1).

Huntington Beach might find its toughest competition in the Sunset League to be Los Alamitos (4-1) or Newport Harbor (6-2).

Los Amigos is the only team in the Grove League with a winning mark; closest would be Santa Ana Valley at 2-2.

Garden Grove will likely face

a daily competition in the Orange Coast League. Three other schools have at least three wins, led by Katella (3-2). Costa Mesa is 3-3 and Ocean View is at 3-4.

Coaches, parents, fans and players: Do you want more publicity and recognition for your favorite high school sports teams?

Send reports of scores (including location), leading players, statistics, photos, feature ideas to us at orangecountytribune@gmail.com.

Herbert's hand is the question mark vs. the Eagles

Continued from page 6

not be prepared," Harbaugh said.

The Chargers played exclusively out of the shotgun and pistol for the final three quarters after Herbert returned to the game with his

hand in a hard cast and wearing a glove for additional protection.

"We'll be preparing the same exact game plan for both quarterbacks," Harbaugh said.

Herbert does expect to be able

to try taking snaps from under center later this week. Herbert also believes he would be able to start even if he cannot practice, while admitting it would not be an ideal situation.

"It's definitely difficult in this league, but if that's the case and Coach (Harbaugh) feels like I'll give the best shot for the team, you know that I trust his decision," Herbert said.

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Stage review: 'The Holiday Gem' at Gem Theater

Continued from page 5

even a sing-along for the audience to join in the show themselves in the second act, and put their own vocal chops to the test.

Whether it's your first time to the show, or you're returning to take in this newest, preeminent iteration of the Gem Theater's "The Holiday Gem", you are in for a captivating Christmas treat — regardless whether you're on Santa's naughty or nice list.

"The Holiday Gem," Nicole Cassesso, Adriana Sanchez and Tad Fujioka are among the myriad players bringing to life this beautiful and original work of the Gem Theater, that show-

casing their talented performers through some of the most beloved Christmas songs.

Now playing through Dec. 21 at The Gem Theater 12852 Main Street, Garden Grove, CA,

92840. Call 714-741-9550 x221 or email boxoffice@onemore-productions.com for ticketing information.

GG Recreation Guide now available

The Winter and Spring 2026 Garden Grove Parks and Recreation Guide is now available for viewing at ggparksandrec.com. The guide provides a multitude of programs, classes, activities, and special events through Thursday, April 30, 2026.

Residents and visitors are encouraged to register for classes

in advance to avoid class cancellations. To view the guide and to register, visit ggparksandrec.com.

Serving as the City's main source for recreational classes, the digital publication features a listing of youth sports and creative arts, adult activities and fitness, special events, and more.

Follow the city's social platforms on Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, and X, formerly known as Twitter, to see announcements on programs, services, events, and job opportunities.

For more information, visit ggparksandrec.com or call (714) 741-5200.



Who helped eradicate the plague of polio?

Garden Grove Rotary

Who sponsors a defibrillator program to save lives when heart attacks strike?

Garden Grove Rotary

Who recognizes 6th grade students for achievement in academics and scholarship?

Garden Grove Rotary

Who sponsors and contributes to training high school students on leadership and citizenship?

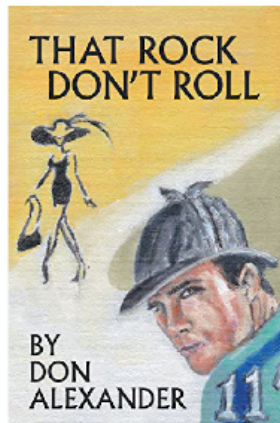
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— The Orange County Tribune

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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.

Street closures for 'Jingle Jam'

Santa Rita Avenue, between Winton Street and St. Mark Street will be closed on Friday, Dec. 12 from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. for the 11th annual Jingle Jam holiday event. There will also be no parking on Vanguard Avenue, between Winton Street and St. Mark Street. Motorists are asked to plan accordingly. The Jingle Jam event will be held at Eastgate Park, 12001 St. Mark Street, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Residents in the area should expect an increase of pedestrian traffic during event hours. Residents have been notified in advance.

The Garden Grove Police Traffic Unit will be on site during closure times to direct traffic and suggest alternate routes.

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