

The Tribune

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■ GARDEN GROVE
CITY COUNCIL

Smoking ban in parks gets tabled

By Jim Tortolano
Orange County Tribune

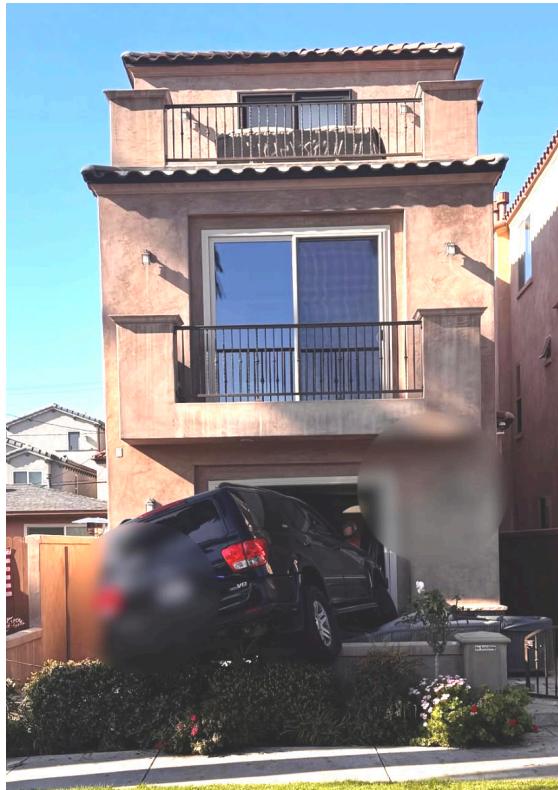
After a long and involved discussion and argument, the Garden Grove City Council shifted course Tuesday night on a proposed smoking ban in city parks and voted to table the matter for six months.

The vote was 4-2, with Mayor Stephanie Klopfenstein, Mayor Pro Tem George Brietigam and councilmembers Cindy Ngoc Tran and Joe DoVinh in favor and councilmembers Yesenia Muneton and Ariana Arretegui opposed. Councilmember Philip Nguyen was absent.

In September of 2025, the council voted 5-0 with Brietigam absent and DoVinh abstaining to direct the city attorney to bring back a proposed ordinance to ban the smoking of tobacco and other

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YOU CAN'T PARK HERE!



A sport utility vehicle ended up garaged in the wrong place in Huntington Beach. This one in Surf City's downtown area on Saturday crashed over a wall and went through a large glass door. According to the Huntington Beach Fire Department, one adult was transported to a local hospital by paramedics for evaluation. No other person was in the home at the time. Urban Search Rescue team members assessed the structure and coordinated with the building department to determine if any more stabilization is needed (HBFD photo).

In The Tribune

Stafford and
McVay on what
might have been
vs. Seahawks

SEE SPORTS
PAGES 6-7



Raise to \$346,433 for Lisa Kim

Garden Grove City Manager Lisa Kim will be getting a raise said to be 7.5 percent, bringing her annual salary to \$346,433.

The city council approved the increase in her compensation at Tuesday night's meeting by a 6-0 vote, with Councilmem-

Suspect in Fatal Drive-by Is Held in Jail

Extradited from Vietnam

Last July in Stanton, what prosecutors called "a brazen broad daylight" drive-by shooting in Stanton took the life of a 15-year-old boy.

Now one of the persons accused in the homicide is back in Orange County after being extradited from Vietnam to where he fled following the incident.

Quoc-Bao Viet Le, 21, is being held in Orange County Jail to face charges of murder and conspiracy to commit murder according to the Orange County District Attorney's office.

He was charged in July with co-defendants Danny Huynh, 24, Troy Quang Lu, 21 and Ali Ibrahim Al-souqi, 21, who is a fugitive believed to be in Jordan.

Le faces a maximum



QUOC-BAO VIET LE

sentence of 50 years to life imprisonment if convicted on all counts, in the murder of Samuel Vidal, 15, and the wounding of Vidal's 13-year-old friend.

On July 5, 2025 a group

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■ GARDEN GROVE
CITY COUNCIL

ber Philip Nguyen absent. She will also get a lump sum of 80 hours of vacation beginning in March 2026 and every March thereafter.

All the council members voiced their praise for

Kim, who's served more than two years in the post, after Scott Stiles left to take a city manager position in Palm Springs.

The raise was justified by "Ms. Kim's sustained performance and executive leadership," accord-

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Ban on smoking in GG parks is tabled

Continued from page 1

products – including “vaping” from city parks and adjacent parking lots.

“The residents of Garden Grove deserve parks with clean air,” Muneton said at the time. But

two supporters – Klopfenstein and Tran – switched sides on Tuesday.

“I’m not really against this,” said Brietigam, but suggested that the ordinance might not be needed because smoking near children’s play areas is already banned by state law and provisions about littering tobacco products were already covered by anti-littering ordinances.

DoVinh was the loudest voice in opposition, suggesting that such a ban might lead to lawsuits from the American Civil Liberties Union and widespread public pushback.

He said he wanted to see the council make revisions – perhaps two or three times – in the proposed ordinance, which he ridiculed for its legal language.



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Pay raise

Continued from page 1

ing to a staff report. Council members said that Kim was being recruited by other cities and the raise would help keep her in town.

A speaker from the Orange County Employees Association, which represents two bargaining units, complained that giving Kim a pay raise greater than those given to other workers was unfair.

Suspect held

Continued from page 1

met at the Garden Grove home of Alsouqi to plan a shooting targeting rival gang members.

They drove in a black sedan to the 11000 block of Court Way in Stanton where the shooting started. Vidal was struck five times by gunfire and died at the scene. The 13-year-old boy was hit in the chest but survived.

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Jim Tortolano
Editor and Publisher
Marilyn Lewis Tortolano
General Manager

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E-mail : orangecountytribune@gmail.com.

www.orangecountytribune.com.
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News & Views

Bigger can be better, but only to a certain point

Divided We Fall Dept.:

I saw an opinion piece in an area newspaper (yes, they still exist) about the alleged waste of taxpayers cash in having all these “little” cities and school districts in Orange County. About 25 years ago (I don’t

look it, do I?) there was talk about the notion of consolidating such agencies, and even some speculation about how that might be done.

For example, at that time, Stanton was struggling and it was suggested that the smart thing to do would be to disincorporate and divide it into two pieces, with the northern half – with, say Cerritos Avenue as the dividing line – going to Anaheim, and the southern half going to Garden Grove.

Villa Park, just a pocket-sized community full of houses I could never afford to buy, would be absorbed by Orange. Midway City (not actually a city, but an unincorporated county “island”) would become part of Westminster and on and on.

Consolidation has its merits, but also its drawbacks. Bigger cities can do more – usually – but their staff (and costs) tend to expand the bigger they get. It is also not unheard of that some smaller parts of a bigger city get less love than the more affluent and influential parts. Ask anyone who lives in the Wilmington district of Los Angeles how much attention City Hall lavishes on them.

A city manager whom I respect once told me that in



Retorts

Jim Tortolano



EVIDENCE from the arrest of three men for allegedly stealing a computer from the Garden Grove Costco store using fake/homemade receipts (GGPD photo).

Police, store employees turn a heist into a bust

Fighting crime isn’t just for police officers.

According to the Garden Grove Police Department, three adult suspects were arrested Monday for allegedly stealing a computer from the Costco store at Main Street and Garden Grove Boulevard, using fake/homemade receipts.

Costco employees recognized the fraud, say police, and quickly contacted the GGPD with the description and license plate number of the suspect vehicle.

Officers spotted the vehicle, made a traffic stop and effected the arrest of the three men.

Further investigation of the incident, according to police, indicates the same group may have used similar tactics at other Costco’s and other retail stores in the area based on evidence found during the arrest.

History Minute

Hey, which street am I on now?

Across Orange County, over time cities have often not agreed on what their streets should be named. You can be driving along on Smith Street and find – suddenly – you are on Jones Avenue.

Some examples:

- Garden Grove Boulevard east of the Santa Ana River becomes Memory Lane;
- Goldenwest Street north of Garden Grove Boulevard becomes Knott Street;
- Westminster Avenue in Garden Grove becomes Westminster Boulevard when you enter Westminster.
- Anaheim Boulevard, when you leave Anaheim, becomes Haster Street when you enter Garden Grove.
- And for you local history buffs, what is now Euclid Street in Garden Grove was called The Anaheim Road, and then The Euclid and finally Euclid Street and what is now Garden Grove Boulevard was once referred to as Ocean Boulevard.

Continued on page 8

Suspect is arrested for homicide in Fullerton

A 27-year-old Fullerton man has been arrested for the murder of another man on Saturday in Fullerton.

According to the FPD, the incident began on Saturday at about 8:52 p.m. when police received a 9-1-1 call reporting that a man had been stabbed and “possibly” run over by a motor vehicle in the area of South Euclid Street and West Baker Avenue.

Responding officers found a male victim in the roadway suffering from what appeared to be multiple stab wounds. Medical aid was rendered by the Fullerton Fire Department, but the man was pronounced dead at the scene.

A description of the suspect was broadcast to neighboring law enforcement agencies. The Buena Park Police Department responded to a hit-and-run accident and detained a suspect.

After an investigation it was determined that the man detained by BPPD was the suspect being sought in the incident in Fullerton.

Francisco Soriano was arrested and booked into the FPD jail for murder. The identity of the victim has not been released.

Anyone with information about this incident is urged to contact Fullerton Police Detective Luis Ramirez at (714) 738-5334 or via e-mail at luis.a.ramirez@fullertontpd.org.

Have a heart

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NewsUpdate

Inquiry Is Promised Into Shooting

Trump vows an 'honorable' investigation

A “very honorable and honest investigation was promised” by President Donald Trump on Tuesday in reference to the killing of Alex Pretti in Minneapolis by federal agents.

The New York Times is reporting that he also suggested that he “might de-escalate” the aggressive operation in Minnesota.

A man attacked Representative Ilhan Omar during a town meeting on the immigration enforcement crisis, spraying her with a “strong-smelling liquid.” He was hustled away by security and arrested.

In a related story, a preliminary review by U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s internal staff



IMMIGRATION enforcement has proven to be controversial (Shutterstock).

concluded that Alex Pretti, who was shot by two federal officers after resisting arrest, was not

brandishing a weapon, as claimed earlier by the Department of Homeland Security, saying that

Pretti “wanted to do maximum damage and massacre law enforcement.”

Minn. Gov. Tim Walz met with Border Czar Homan

In the wake of two fatal shootings of protestors by federal immigration enforcement agents, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz met with Tom Homan, in charge of President Donald Trump’s campaign to combat illegal immigration.

According to United Press International, the two agreed to continue their talks. They talked about mutual goals such as “impartial”

investigations of the shootings. Trump said that Homan “has not been involved in that area but knows and likes many of the people there. Tom is tough but fair and will report directly to me.”

Walz said he had had a “productive call” with Trump and said the president “agreed to look into reducing the number of federal agents in Minnesota.”

Great Thoughts

“You usually have to wait for that which is worth waiting for.”
– Craig Bruce

“Patience is not the ability to wait, but the ability to keep a good attitude while waiting.”
– Joyce Meyer

“Waiting is the hardest part but it is in that space that dreams begin to form.”
– Sophia Green.

Weather: It's summer in January

Or so it seems. Our West Orange County cities are warming up and it's time to bring out the shorts and T-shirts. On Wednesday, the daytime high should be 74 with an overnight low of 49 with cloudy skies. Thursday should warm to 82 (52) with lots of sun. Friday is expected to reach 83 (54) with more sun. Saturday should cool a bit to 79 (52) with mostly sunny skies.

Democrats will push effort to impeach Kristi Noem, the homeland security secretary

An effort to impeach Kristi Noem, the controversial secretary of homeland security is developing in Congress. According to the Associated Press, the three top Democrats in the House of Representatives – including Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York – issued a statement on Tuesday calling for “dramatic changes” in the DHS.

“Kristi Noem should be fired immediately, or we will commence impeachment proceedings in the House of Representatives,” they wrote. “We can do this the easy way or the hard way.” Under the Constitution, in a removal of a high official, the House makes the accusation of misconduct and the Senate serves as jury. Although Republicans control both houses at present, the midterm elections could give Democrats an opportunity to retake the House and potentially impeach Noem.

Arts & Living

'99-Year Old Man': Tribute to Genius

Retrospective on life, work of Mel Brooks

By Jake Coyle
AP Film Writer

It's not often we get to pay tribute, in full, to our giants while they're still with us. But in "Mel Brooks: The 99 Year Old Man?" Judd Apatow dutifully and affectionately celebrates the laugh-filled life of a comedy legend who's still here to tell the story — and the jokes — himself.

"The 99 Year Old Man," which debuts Thursday in two parts on HBO and HBO Max, is a big-hearted tribute to Brooks, an indefatigable comic force who did more than most anyone to lighten the mood of the 20th century. At 99 (he'll turn 100 in June), Brooks remains a remarkably great raconteur.

One of the cleverest tricks by directors Apatow and Michael Bonfiglio is playing some of Brooks' stories — like a memorable lunch with Cary Grant — across not just his sit-down interviews with them, but over multiple talk show appearances. He's been telling some of these jokes for decades. It doesn't matter. They're still good.

"The 99 Year Old Man" takes the whole life in: the formative childhood in Brooklyn; the Sid Caesar-aided entry to "Your Show of Shows"; the lifelong friendship with Carl Reiner; the 2000 Year Old Man sketches;

"The Producers"; the marriage to Anne Bancroft; "Blazing Saddles," and beyond.

But if there's an ongoing question in "The 99 Year Old Man," it's posed early by Apatow, who appears on-screen as Brooks' interviewer. Do people really know who he is? "No," Brooks answers straightforwardly.

That might sound like an odd answer for someone who has so unabashedly lived nearly a



"THE 99-YEAR-OLD MAN" follows the life and work of Mel Brooks (HBO Max release).

Movie Review

century in the public eye. Yet Brooks has been such a non-stop performer that it can sometimes be difficult to see where the schtick ends and the self begins. One person describes Brooks, as a newborn, thinking the delivery doctor smacking him on the rear was applause. In an earlier clip, an interviewer laments Brooks' apparent lack of introspection.

He replies that he's merely "a coalescence of vapor." When Brooks gave his Oscar speech, for the screenplay to "The Producers," he said he would speak from the heart: "Ba-bum, ba-bum."

So is what's inside Brooks just jokes? I'd say — and I think this is what makes "The 99 Year Old Man" not just an exhaustive documentary but a moving and even stirring one — it's more the opposite. Brooks' comedy, from the 2000 Year Old Man to "History of the World, Part I," has always derived from something deeper, more personal and intrinsically Jewish than its slapstick qualities sometimes have

suggested.

"Comedy is a sensational and sometimes spectacular political weapon," Brooks says in the film.

There are countless big names who come in to speak to Brooks' boldness as a comedian, among them Dave Chappelle, Jerry Seinfeld, Sarah Silverman, Adam Sandler and Conan O'Brien. But I'm tempted to think Brooks' legacy is in how, for him, life and comedy are one: pulse and punchline together.

You can see that in Brooks' decades of marriage with Bancroft, who describes, every time her husband came home as

Good ★★★

like a party. And you can see it in Brooks' undying friendship with Reiner. After the deaths of their wives, the two friends would nightly meet to eat deli sandwiches and watch old movies. Reiner once recalled they'd watch films "with lines like 'Secure the perimeter!'"

Bancroft died in 2005 and Reiner in 2020. Any life that stretches as long as Brooks' takes on an elegiac quality. Appearing in the documentary, before their deaths, are both Rob Reiner and

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Take a Chance

"Once," the cross-cultural musical that won eight Tony Awards on Broadway, is on stage at the Chance Theater in Santa Ana through March 1. It's based on the movie and is directed and choreographed by James Michael McHale.

TheSportsPages

Rams don't have to hang their heads

Close Call Dept. After the Rams' heart-bending loss to the Seahawks on Sunday, there follows are all of the what-ifs and coulda-beens.

- The dropped passes and punt.
- Decision to "go for it" from the 4-yard line instead of take the sure-thing field goal;
- The questionable time management that allowed the Seahawks to score a crucial TD just before halftime.

And on and on. The focus of news coverage is that, once again, "the Rams don't seem to be able to win the big game."

Or, as a wise man once said, "After a battle, the press comes riding over the hill and shoots all the survivors."

In any athletic contest – just like when you drive to work, or ask a girl (or boy) out a date, there are innumerable variables that influence or determine the outcome.

Although it's worth billions and breaks the hearts of millions, pro football – is, after all – just a game. We love it, in part, because it provides escape from the rigors and pressures of everyday life.

Maybe your team won or maybe your team lost, but you (probably) gathered with friends and family, you ate and drank all kinds of non-healthy drink and snacks, you forgot about all the crises in the world. It was entertaining. You had a nice time.

I wanted the Rams to win, but the collision of two good teams are bound to find the outcome is balanced finally on a knife's edge.

Or, as Brooklyn Dodgers' fans used to say, "Wait 'till next year."



Sports Retorts

Jim Tortolano

Close, But They Fell Short

Stafford and McVay mourn missed chances

By Andrew Destin
AP Sports Writer

SEATTLE (AP) — Sean McVay had zero interest in discussing whether Matthew Stafford, his soon-to-be 38-year-old quarterback, will be back for the Los Angeles Rams next year.

McVay had a bit more to say about how his team came up short against the Seattle Seahawks yet again on Sunday, losing 31-27 in the NFC championship game.

The Rams lost twice in a two-month span at Seattle, falling 38-37 in December when the Seahawks converted two 2-point conversions in regulation and a third in overtime.

This loss denied the Rams a chance of winning the franchise's third Super Bowl and the second and five years for McVay and Stafford.

"I'm never really short on words, and I am right now," McVay said. "It's tough, but this is sports, and you got to be able to deal with it."

Aside from one questionable decision — the Rams going for it on fourth-and-4 at the Seattle 6 with 4:59 remaining while trailing by four — McVay had his team humming as usual.



MATTHEW STAFFORD, like the Rams, played well but their opponents played a bit better (Rams photo).

The Rams totaled 479 yards of offense to 396 for the Seahawks. Stafford, an MVP finalist, completed 22 of 35 passes for 374 yards and three touchdowns.

Before that critical fourth-down play, McVay raced down the sideline, looking like he might call timeout. But he didn't, and Devon Witherspoon broke up Stafford pass in the end zone.

"I thought about it, and didn't decide to do it," McVay said. "Obviously it didn't work out for us. But I thought our guys played well. There were a lot of things

that we got a lot of what we wanted today. Felt really good about the way that our guys executed, specifically on the offensive side. And you know, that was a situation where we just kind of came up short."

In the third quarter, the Rams had their latest of several special-teams miscues this season when Xavier Smith muffed a punt and Seattle recovered.

On the next play, Sam Darnold connected with Jake Bobo for a 17-yard touchdown and a 24-13

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Clippers and Kings post road victories

NHL and NBA

Look out for the Clippers. On Tuesday night in Salt Lake City, the Los Angeles Clippers ran over the host Utah Jazz 115-103 to win their third consecutive game and their ninth in 10 contests.

After a 6-21 start that seemed certain to exile the Clips from the NBA playoffs, the team has come close to post-season contention with a 22-24 record, which places them in 10th place in the Western Conference and

fourth place in the Pacific Division.

The team was led by Kawhi Leonard, who scored 21 points and grabbed seven rebounds. James Harden had 16 points and handed out 10 assists.

Utah jumped out to a 29-18 first quarter lead but the visitors responded by outscoring the hosts

by 71-25 in the second and third quarters.

Next up for LAC is a game on Friday visiting the Denver Nuggets (31-16).

Kings Rule in Detroit: In the Motor City on Tuesday night the Los Angeles Kings ran over the Red Wings 3-1 for their third consecutive victory.

Samuel Helenius scored twice for Los Angeles and Andrei Kuzmenko tallied another.

Rams played well, but not well enough

Continued from page 6

lead.

Smith also juggled a punt earlier in the game.

"That one, it was costly," McVay said. "I love him. He's done a great job. ... But that was a tough one."

The Rams countered each time Seattle took a double-digit lead. The NFL's top-scoring offense put together consecutive touchdown drives after Smith's gaffe. Stafford found Davante Adams for a 2-yard touchdown and then connected with Puka Nacua for a 34-yard score.

"It was a battle," Stafford said. "The whole game wasn't like we were all just waiting for one play here or there. There's a million plays in a football game that can turn the tide, and we had our opportunity and didn't make it."

Had Stafford completed that

CAVALIERS ARE THE CHAMPIONS



The Santiago High School Cavaliers took first place honors in the CIF-SS coed traditional Division 4 cheer competition on Saturday at Azusa Pacific University. The Cavs were the runner-ups last year (GGUSD photo).

fourth-down pass, it could have been the sixth game-winning drive of his playoff career, and third this postseason.

Stafford guided Los Angeles past the Carolina Panthers in the wild-card round with a late TD pass to Colby Parkinson, and

then set up Harrison Mevis for a game-winning field goal against the Chicago Bears in the divisional round.

For much of Sunday, he got the better of the NFL's top-ranked scoring defense. But the Seahawks made a few more plays

at the end.

"Great football team we just played," Stafford said. "Feel like it's a great effort, really good football game, obviously we didn't come out on top. Tough pill to swallow at the moment."



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Dodgers add Kyle Tucker to All-Star lineup

By Beth Harris
AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — With multiple offers in free agency, Kyle Tucker was ultimately swayed by the Los Angeles Dodgers' championship pedigree.

"It's a big decision, so you still got to weigh out everything," he said, "but this team and this city and the fanbase kind of makes it a little bit easier to make some decisions. That is just ultimately what we wanted to do is come here and be part of that and try to win another World Series."

Tucker signed a \$240 million,

four-year contract, choosing the two-time defending World Series champion Dodgers over the New York Mets and World Series runner-up Toronto Blue Jays. He can opt out after years two and three.

"Obviously, we started lower," joked Andrew Friedman, the Dodgers' president of baseball operations. "It doesn't mean that it has to be two, three, four

KYLE'S STATS

FOR 2025 WITH CUBS

Wins Above Replacement: 4.6
Batting Avg. .266 HR: 22
RBIs: 73 Stolen bases: 25

years here. It could be longer than that. For him to choose us when he had other longer term and other shorter term, I think speaks to the growth and progress that we've made on creating a destination spot."

Tucker gets a \$64 million signing bonus, of which \$54 million is payable on Feb. 15 and \$10 million on Feb. 1, 2027. He gets a \$1 million salary this year and \$55 million in 2027, and he has \$60 million player options for 2028 and 2029.

In each season from 2027-29, \$10 million is deferred. The deferred money from all years is payable in 10 equal installments each Dec. 1 from 2036-45.

He also gets a hotel suite on road trips.

Tucker's \$60 million average annual value is the second-highest in baseball history, without factoring in deferred money,

behind Shohei Ohtani's \$70 million in his 10-year deal with the Dodgers that runs through 2033. With the addition of Tucker's \$30 million in deferred money, Los Angeles owes \$1.0945 billion in deferred compensation to 10 players from 2028-47.

"There was really nobody that moved our World Series odds for 2026 more than Kyle Tucker," general manager Brandon Gomes said.

Tucker's signing reignited talk of management proposing a salary cap in collective bargaining after the Dodgers added yet another star to one of the sport's highest payrolls.

"We don't pay much attention to that because we operate within the rules and we do everything we can to put ourselves in the best position, both short term and long term, and we're not thinking about more macro things outside of that," Friedman said. "It is about how can we win as many games and put ourselves in the best position

to win a championship in 2026 without really compromising ourselves out into the future and



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

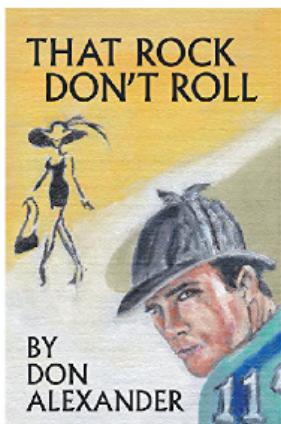
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— The Orange County Tribune

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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.

Jim's Retorts: Slim down cities

Continued from page 3

his opinion, the maximum population size for a governable city is about 250,000 and no more.

By that measure, Anaheim (349k), Santa Ana (332k) and Irvine (306k) need to shed some weight. In the public interest I recommend that all of Anaheim south of Ball Road, for example, becomes part of Garden Grove.

That means we'd have to take on the Disneyland Resort, Angel Stadium and the Honda Center, but if the resulting tax revenue comes our way, I'll bet we'd be willing to take one for the team.

Review: '99-Year-Old' man is fine tribute to Mel Brooks

Continued from page 5

David Lynch (whom Brooks, a believer, got to direct "The Elephant Man").

But the losses that add up in Brooks' life never outstrip the laughter. You're left wondering if Brooks is one of the funniest people to ever live, or one of the wisest.

"Comedy is lively. Comedy is joy," he says. "And that's what keeps us going. We have to look forward to little happinesses, little joys."

"Mel Brooks: The 99 Year Old Man!" an HBO Max release, begins streaming Thursday. Running time: 216 minutes (playing in two parts).