

15 Years to Life Sentence for Rape, Kidnap

Case is finally closed from 2021 attack

A man convicted of kidnapping and sexually assaulting a woman in Huntington Beach in 2021 was sentenced to 15-years-to-life in prison on Friday.

According to the Orange County District Attorney's office, Florentino Contreras Bacilio, 52, of Long Beach has been convicted of kidnapping to commit sexual assault and two counts of attempted sexual assault by force.

The other man charged with the attack – Angel Lopezvaristo, 34, also of Long Beach – pled guilty on Nov. 22, 2024 to kidnapping to commit rape,

two other sexual assault charges and eight sentencing enhancements. He was sentenced to 30 years-to-life in prison.

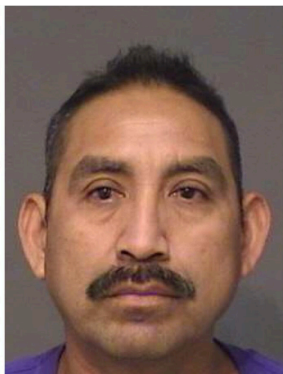
Bacilio was convicted of kidnapping to commit sexual assault and two counts of attempted sexual assault by force on Feb. 23, 2026.

According to Huntington Beach police, The incident leading to the convictions took place on June 6, 2021 shortly after midnight.

The woman was in the downtown area when two men forcibly kidnapped and sexually assaulted her. She resisted and was eventually released in the area of Pacific Coast Highway and Warner Avenue in Huntington Beach.

The HBPD's Major Crimes Unit was able to

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FLORENTINO BACILIO, Angel Lopezvaristo (HBPD).

CIVIL RIGHTS AND BEEHIVE HAIR-DO'S



IT'S BACK TO 1962 with the production of "Hairspray" now on stage at the Gem Theater on Main Street in downtown Garden Grove. Segregation, rock and roll, romance and hair products are mixed in for a play that our critic calls "electrifying." See review, photo on page 5.

STANTON CITY COUNCIL

Challenges of homeless are yet persisting

By Jim Tortolano
Orange County Tribune

The challenges of coping with a persistent problem of homelessness in the community were underlined in a report presented to the Stanton City Council on Tuesday. According to homeless outreach coordinators, 87.5 percent of the unhoused contacted by them in February declined of-

Continued on page 2



SUGAR, the surfing dog.

Cowabunga, Sugar!

Huntington Beach really is "Surf City."

At Tuesday's meeting of the Huntington Beach City Council, the closing item is a proposal to declare each Dec. 5 as "Sugar the Surfing Dog Day."

As indicated by Mayor Casey McKeon, Sugar is a

HUNT. BEACH CITY COUNCIL

five-time world dog surfing champion, a five-time Huntington Beach Surf City Dog Champion and a Surfers' Hall of Fame inductee.

Continued on page 2

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The★Tribune

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The★Tribune **Covering Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, Stanton and Westminster**

Correction

In a recent article about the potential renaming of Rosita Elementary School to Palomino it was reported that the request for a change was from family members. According to the Garden Grove Unified School District, it came from a member of the community.

Honors for Sugar the Surfing Dog goes to council

Continued from page 1

In an otherwise routine meeting the city council will also consider declaring each Feb. 22 as "US Hockey Day," as both the men's and women's United States ice hockey teams won gold medals at the 2026 Milan Winter Olympics. The council will meet at 4 p.m. in closed session and at 6 p.m. in a study session and regular session in its chambers at 2000 Main St. (at Yorktown Ave.)

Homelessness

Continued from page 1

fers of shelter; that's 108 out of 123. Two of the 123 were referred to interim housing, five received emergency motel assistance and five requests for shelter were "not attained." That statistic is similar to numbers from December 2025, in which 87 percent of the 96 people encountered declined offers of assistance. The "hot spots" for homeless for February were listed as Western Street and Katella Avenue, Western and Cerritos Avenue, and Mercantile Avenue.

Sentencing

Continued from page 1

identify the suspects and they were taken into custody. "We are proud of the outstanding work members of the Major Crimes Unit did in pursuit of justice for the victim," said Capt. Kevin Johnson.

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News & Views

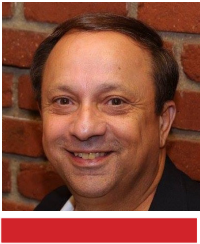
What's the matter with grown-ups these days?

Remember that fun song from "Bye Bye Birdie" when a relatively clueless dad sings "What's the matter with kids today?" The key line that follows is "Why can't they be like we were, perfect in every way?"

The truth, as evidenced by recent news events, is that it may

not be the youngsters which are the problem as much as it is the parent, i.e., "the old folks."

In The Tribune there's an article about the illegal operation of



Retorts
Jim Tortolano

an electric motorcycle by two underage boys with the apparent consent and assistance of their father. It took three incidents – and shallow promises from dad to take steps to corral the nimrods – before Huntington Beach and the Orange County District Attorney stepped in and charged him with child endangerment.

This is not just a matter of young scamps "being boys."

It's a matter of irresponsible parents encouraging unlawful and potentially fatal behavior in their children whom they have an obligation to keep safe.

We've all seen the antics of riders not just on illegal e-motorcycles but also legal e-bikes and motorized scooters. I have seen some nimrods (not strangely, always boys) ride against traffic, blow through red lights and careen diagonally across three lanes, etc.

Many of them don't wear helmets, and some do but don't buckle them, making them worthless. Their misbehavior not only puts their own health at risk, but others as well. On sidewalks and in commercial areas risky maneuvers especially

Continued on page 8



E-MOTORCYCLES are not legal for riding on public roadways. They contribute to injuries and accidents, say Huntington Beach police (HBPD photo).

Father is charged with child endangerment over an e-motorcycle

The father of two boys involved in several incidents of illegal operation of an off-highway electric motorcycle on city streets in Huntington Beach has been charged by the Orange County District Attorney with child endangerment and contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

More time for apt. complex before panel

A request for a one-year time extension for the construction of a three-story apartment complex goes before the Garden Grove Planning Commission when it meets next Thursday.

The applicant has site plan approval for the project, which would have 27 units, including three affordable housing units (three for "very low income" households).

Location of the project is on a 0.83-acre site at 9691 Bixby Ave. The commission meets at 7 p.m.

According to the HBPD, the three incidents took place between September and November 2025 and involved the same Talaria Sting MX-4 e-motorcycle, which are not legal to operate on public roadways.

In the first incident, the vehicle was impounded, but released when it was registered as an off-highway vehicle.

The second incident saw the e-motorcycle impounded for 30 days for unlawful roadway operation, but was released early on the father's promise to make sure the behavior by his sons would stop, and his intention to sell the vehicle.

A third incident of the same e-motorcycle being operated on city streets led to a third impoundment that is continuing.

"Let this serve as a clear warning," reads the statement by HBPD on social media.

"Off-highway e-motorcycles are not legal e-bikes and do not belong on public streets. Allowing minors to operate these vehicles on roadways is illegal, dangerous and puts lives at risk."

More patrols in HB over the 'Middle East'

The Huntington Beach Police Department will be stepping up patrols in selected locations in the city in response to "ongoing tensions in the Middle East."

In a statement posted Wednesday on social media, the HBPD announced it is "closely monitoring the situation and maintaining a heightened awareness to ensure the continued safety of our community."

Additional patrols will be conducted near places of worship, cultural centers and other community gathering places, according to HBPD.

The public is advised to "remain attentive and report any suspicious activity or potential hate-related incidents to law enforcement."

Emergency incidents should be reported to 911. Other reports should be to (714) 960-8811.

Who's got that curb appeal in G. Grove?

Got an opinion on which are the prettiest front yards in town?

The City of Garden Grove has a program called Garden Grove Gems, a home beautification effort that recognizes residents for their home's outstanding curb appeal.

Residents can nominate their homes online from Wednesday, April 1 through Friday, April 24 at www.ggcity.org/gems. From all the nominations received four will be selected at random to receive \$100 Home Depot gift cards. Gift card winners will be announced the week of Monday, April 27.

Online voting will take place from Monday, May 4 through Monday, May 18.

Winning homes will receive citywide recognition with home-

Continued on page 8

NewsUpdate

Marines On The Way to Mideast

2,500 troops and assault ship have been dispatched

American forces have attacked 16 Iranian mine-laying ships near the Strait of Hormuz, resisting an apparent effort to choke off the flow of oil to the world.

According to The New York Times, the U.S. Central Command said the incident came near a major oil route. Nine of the ships are reported to have been struck.

This is the latest development in the war between the U.S and Israel, and Iran. So far the conflict has killed more than 1,800 people and raised gasoline prices at the pump.

The United Nations is reporting that the war, which has spread across the Middle East, is



THE USS TRIPOLI amphibious assault ship (U.S. Navy photo).

creating a humanitarian crisis by displacing nearly 700,000 people in Lebanon. An unknown

number of persons have been given evacuation orders in Israel. Seven American military service

men and women have been killed and 140 wounded, eight of them severely.

Oil prices reach 4-year high, due to U.S-Iran conflict

The price of oil on world markets is now at over \$103 per barrel – a 4-year-high – according to The New York Times. That’s a rise of over 40 percent since the beginning of the military conflict between the U.S. and Iran.

Blockage of the Hormuz Straight – a key sea route to export oil from Iran – is considered to be a key cause of the price

spike, along with general anxiety about the impact of the war on the availability of petroleum as long as warfare continues.

Efforts by various nations to relieve pressure on the market by some nations have not been able to arrest the increase. However, sanctions against Russian oil already at sea have been lifted.

Weather: Warm days ahead

After an interlude of relative cool, the West Orange County area is headed back to the 90s. Saturday is forecast to have a daytime high of 79 with an overnight low of 53 with morning clouds and afternoon sun. Sunday will warm to 81 (55) with partly cloudy skies and Monday will climb to 87 (47) and again partly cloudy. On Tuesday the thermometer will peak to 90 (59) and mostly sunny skies.

Judge ‘quashes’ subpoenas of Fed Reserve Chair Powell

Subpoenas of Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell by the Department of Justice have been rejected by a federal judge. United Press International reports that Judge James Boasberg “quashed” the subpoenas, chastising the DOJ. “The government has produced essentially zero evidence of a crime; indeed, its justifications are so thin and unsubstantiated that the Court can only conclude that they are pretextual.” That’s a term meaning “dubious or spurious.”

Powell has been under pressure to either lower interest rates or resign, something that Boasberg cited in his remarks. The accusations against him center on the cost of renovations of the Federal Reserve’s Washington offices.

Great Thoughts

“Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future.”

– Paule Boese

“Forgiveness is the sweetest revenge.”

– Issac Friedman

“The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.”

– Mohandas Gandhi

Arts & Living

Electrifying 'Hairspray' At Gem

Peter Crisifulli steals show as Edna Turnblad

By Thom deMartino
Orange County Tribune

There's something in the air.

Maybe fluorocarbons.

The renowned Gem Theater in Garden Grove is currently staging their new production of "Hairspray": directed by Damian Lorton, it's the story of Tracy Turnblad (Evie Becerra), a teenager in 1962 Baltimore, and the cultural change she helps come to fruition.

She and her best friend Penny Pingleton (Reese Chavez) spend their afternoons watching their favorite teen music and dance program, the Corny Collins show, hosted by none other than the animated and energetic Corny Collins (Dalton Johnson).

But Tracy has dreams to be a dancer on the popular teen show: and she may just get her chance, as Corny announces that the show will be holding auditions soon.

Her mother Edna (a brilliant Peter Crisifulli) is skeptical and dismissive; being "big-boned" runs in the family, and she wants to save her daughter from disappointment and potential ridicule. But while her mother plays the voice of reason, her father Wilbur (Tim Klega), who has followed his own dreams of becoming the owner of a joke and gag shop, is supportive of her from the start.

But it's not going to be easy for the teen — because even though the show bills them as "the nicest kids in town", some are downright catty to the plus-sized protagonist when she auditions, particularly fan-favorite Amber Von Tussle (Ess Arensdorf), daughter to the show's producer Velma Von Tussle (Nickie Gentry).

Further complicating things



PETER CRISIFULLI is Edna Turnblad in "Hairspray" at the Gem Theatre on Main Street in Garden Grove (OMP photo)

Stage Review

is Tracy's crush on teen heartthrob Link Larkin (the always top-tier Hayden Mangum), who also happens to be Amber's boyfriend.

This being 1962, however, the show is segregated: the only time kids of color appear on the program is once a month on "Negro Day"... and Velma wants to keep it that way. She's not subtle about her feelings about integration, saying things like "none of that Detroit sound today" and "they have their day, we have ours. What's the problem?"

But Tracy is a true believer

about integration, and when she finds herself in detention (again) with a number of black students, she meets the charming Seaweed J. Stubbs (Kyle Hill), brother to the energetic Little Inez (Lauryn Taylor-Piazza) and son to the local R&B radio DJ and record store owner Motormouth Maybelle (a marvelous Debbi Ebert), who hosts Corny Collins show during "Negro Day".

The kids are determined to integrate the show, protesting publicly and making enough noise (to the chagrin of Velma) for the cops to get involved and arrest most of the protesters... in particular, the ones of color.

The divide is quite clear: one

Great ★ ★ ★ ★

side clamoring for change and equality, while the other is determined to maintain the status quo and segregation. Time will tell whether Tracy's resistance will be a catalyst for change... or is her dream of integration just that, a dream?

"Hairspray" is delightfully devious in how it engages the audience with the story of Tracy trying to follow her dream — then pivots to civil rights, the fight for equality, and the attempts of those in authority struggling to hold on to power and relevance.

Evie Becerra is magnetic, with an addictive eagerness and effervescence, taking over the stage with each of her musical and dance numbers (such as the excellent "Good Morning Baltimore" or the splendid "Mama I'm A Big Girl Now" as she shares the stage with Chavez's Penny and Arensdorf's Amber.) Crisifulli's Edna is hilarious (this reporter did not have Edna's character "dropping it low" on their bingo card), and Klega's warm and loving dad Wilbur rounds out the charming family.

There's many new faces in this production: with more than 32 actors in the show, there's some great new additions and diversity to the theater troupe, such as Taylor-Piazza's Inez, Arensdorf's Amber, Precious Montgomery and Natalie Sargent's Motormouth Kids, and many more.

Jon Michell shines in multiple rolls, including Harriman F. Spritzer (president of Ultra Clutch Hairspray, the Corny Collins Show sponsor), the school principal and Mr. Pinky (the flamboyant owner of Mr. Pinky's Hefty Hideaway, a clothing boutique for big girls.)

A striking new addition to the Gem is Debbi Ebert herself; a longtime friend to the theater and One More Productions, this may be the first time she's had a role

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TheSportsPages

Who's got the tougher job? Dave or Kurt?

Dear Dave (Roberts) and Kurt (Suzuki),

How was your off-season? Did you get some fishing in?

I write to offer some consolation about the inevitable trials of the upcoming MLB season. I mean, for anyone who is serious about sports, losing is tough.

And in Major League Baseball, even the best teams, the champs and World Series winners lose around 60 times. And each loss –

no matter how it's sandwiched between winning streaks – has to sting a little from self-reproach (“What should I have done differently?”) to criticism from the news media and fans (“here's what he should have done differently”).

It's occurred to me, that despite the different outcomes for the Dodgers and Angels in 2025, the both of you have a tough challenge in 2026.

It may seem as if you, Dave, have a crystal stair this year with yet another World Series trophy on the shelf and some tasty off-season free agent acquisitions.

But, frankly, in the big leagues, you'll hear “what have you done for me lately?” a lot more than “you can't win them all.”

And Kurt, you're inheriting a team that was one of the worst in baseball, and which has been in the basement of the American League West for so long the players squint when they come out into the sunshine.

On the other hand, if you, Kurt, with your relatively empty cupboard of proven big-league talent, should pull off a



Sports Retorts

Jim Tortolano

Continued on page 8

Conclusively, He's Out

Key Series play not as close as it might look

By Ben Walker
Associated Press

It was the most debated play of the year in Major League Baseball, perhaps the most dissected and discussed sequence in World Series history.

Should Isiah Kiner-Falefa have taken a bigger lead? Why did the third base coach draw a line in the dirt right there? What if IKF sprinted to the plate instead of sliding?

“I'll think about it until the day I leave this earth,” Toronto Blue Jays manager John Schneider lamented.

Crazily close to dethroning the champion Dodgers in a pulsating Game 7. A couple mere inches, a cleat mark just short of winning the crown, right?

In fact, no.

Not that it'll lessen the sting for the Blue Jays and their fans, but the intense drama over Los Angeles catcher Will Smith lifting his spike off the plate and then resetting on second baseman Miguel Rojas' throw home was moot: IKF was already out.

“After reviewing all relevant angles, the replay official definitively determined the catcher's foot was touching the plate when



TORONTO BLUE Jays' Isiah Kiner-Falefa, left, is forced out at home plate by Los Angeles Dodgers catcher Will Smith during the ninth inning in Game 7 of baseball's World Series in Toronto on Nov. 1, 2025. (Frank Gunn/The Canadian Press via AP, File)

the ball contacted the interior of his mitt,” read the official report by MLB, which recently provided it to The Associated Press.

A final piece of the puzzle, a last look at a play that still fascinates the sports world. Smith's foot was on the plate when he caught the ball, and that's when Kiner-Falefa was forced out.

So how close did Toronto really come to winning there in the bot-

tom of the ninth inning? Make it more like 3 feet.

“I never felt my foot come off,” Smith said this month at a World Baseball Classic practice session. “I didn't really realize it (was close) until I saw the replay, so I wasn't trying to go back and touch it.”

The three-time All-Star said he hadn't seen the MLB report from

Continued on page 8

Clips win 4th straight; Kings win, 3-2

Look out for the Los Angeles Clippers.

Like the sleek sailing ship they are named after, they are gliding along, winning their fourth game in a row on Friday night.

This was a close one, though, as they edged the Chicago Bulls 119-118 in Inglewood.

With the win, the Clips are 34-32 and in eighth place in the NBA Western Conference and third place in the Pacific Division.

NHL and NBA

Kawhi Leonard scored 28 points, grabbed four rebounds and gave out three assists. Benedict Mathurium added 26 points along with six rebounds. Brook Lopez was a force on defense, blocking five shots and snatching seven caroms in addition to scoring 11 points.

Next up for the Clippers are

more home games, playing the Sacramento Kings on Saturday, followed by the San Antonio Spurs on Monday.

Kings Sink Islanders: After building a 3-0 first period lead, the Los Angeles Kings held on to defeat the New York Islanders 3-2 on Friday night on the road. Three players – Adrian Kempe, Anze Kopitar and Trevor Moore – scored for LA.

■ Prep Sports Spotlight

Santiago unbeaten in softball play so far; Mariners 2nd in OC

Santiago's softball team was the area's only unbeaten squad from schools serving our West Orange County cities as of mid-week.

The Cavaliers are 4-0 and therefore are on top of our list based on win-loss record as recorded by maxpreps.com. Also in our top five are Los Amigos (7-1), Rancho Alamitos (6-1), Edison (8-2) and Marina (8-3).

The next five are Pacifica (8-4), Orange (3-2), Bolsa Grande (5-3), Magnolia (2-2) and Western (2-3-1).

With the most room to improve are Ocean View (5-9), Huntington Beach (2-4), Garden Grove (1-4) and La Quinta (0-6).

Most teams have not yet started league play.

This counting of win-loss records is not intended as a ranking and doesn't take into account strength of schedule. Pacifica, for example, is ranked number two in Orange County and 22nd in California. Marina is 95th in the state and Edison 114th, all according to Maxpreps.com.



NATALIE PACHECO at bat for Pacifica on Thursday against Garden Grove. M's won 8-0 to improve to 8-4. Grove is 1-4. The junior second baseman is hitting .467 and her average is third on the team. The Mariners will open Crestview League action on Thursday, March 19 against Canyon High of Anaheim. The Comanches are 9-2 (GGUSD photo).



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Stage Review: Electrifying 'Hairspray' at Gem

Continued from page 6

in one of their shows, and she is an absolute marvel. Amazing presence and character, and her musical number "I Know Where I've Been" is an incredible, moving performance.

Also of note is the wonderful choreography, courtesy of Ryan Perry Marks and Kady Lawson: there are some great dance numbers, not the least of which is the rollicking "You Can't Stop the Beat", rounding out the show.

An outstanding show about both civil rights and a young girl's dream of dancing without boundaries, "Hairspray" at the Gem is a special something for all ages: touching, engaging, yet absolutely hysterical.

It's still playing for a few more weeks, and they've even added a Saturday matinee along with their Sunday matinee, so be sure to check it out.

"Hairspray": Evie Becerra, Pe-

ter Crisifulli and Nickie Gentry star in this tale of a curvy girl's dream to join her favorite 1960's dance program, regardless of stereotypes.

Playing through March 29 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. Appropriate for all ages.

Finally, he wuz out in key Series play

Continued from page 6

the replay center.

"I just cared that he was out," Smith said.

MLB Statcast doesn't have an exact measurement -- the tracking data put IKF's center of mass about 5 feet from the plate, his left leg was extended farther.

"I've seen that video 3,000 times and 1,500 of them it looks like Will is off the plate. You know what I mean?" Schneider said at the winter meetings in December, a month after that 5-4 loss in 11 innings. "And the other half it looks like he's on. So, that's how close it was."

Kiner-Falefa signed with the Boston Red Sox last month. At his introductory news conference, his near-miss in Toronto remained a fresh topic. He was criticized all offseason for a conservative 7.8-foot lead off third base. He said he would have been more aggressive if not for a mandate from the Blue Jays to stay close to the bag.

"Didn't realize that it was actually going to be that close of a play," he said. "If I was a step further, yeah, I would have been safe. But I wasn't."

Turns out he needed a few more feet, not inches.

Rojas' solo home run with one out in the top of the ninth tied it at 4. The Blue Jays loaded the bases with one out in the bottom half, with Kiner-Falefa on third base as a pinch-runner for Bo Bichette.

As Daulton Varsho batted against Dodgers ace Yoshinobu Yamamoto, third base coach Carlos Febles used his cleats to draw a line in the basepath, showing Kiner-Falefa how far to take his lead. It seemed significantly shorter than usual, and many fans blamed that for costing Toronto the title. The Blue Jays said they were worried about Smith trying a pickoff throw at third.

Varsho hit a grounder that caused a drawn-in Rojas to take a brief

stumble backward, but he recovered to make an accurate throw home. After Smith caught the ball, his back right foot briefly came off the plate before retouching. Kiner-Falefa slid home, focused on preventing Smith from making a double-play relay to first.

Plate umpire Jordan Baker signaled out, and the Blue Jays challenged the ruling. Replay umpire Dan Iassogna, a veteran crew chief who has worked three World Series on the field, confirmed the call.

TV replays clearly showed Smith's foot re-tapped the plate

with Kiner-Falefa's foot only a few inches away.

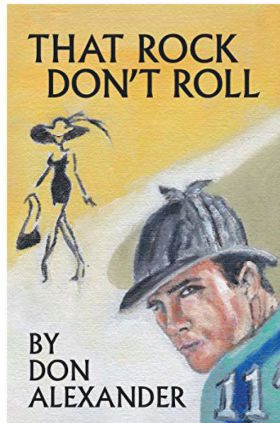
Many fans assumed that's where the out occurred — but the official report confirms IKF was already erased.

Smith hit a home run in the 11th and the Dodgers held on for their second straight championship. He said he's replayed the moment at the plate in his mind several times, and gives more credit to Rojas.

"I think it was more of an impressive play by Miggy in that situation. Tough hop," he said. "All I had to do was catch the ball and get my foot down."

Some serious fun

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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.

Sports Retorts: Good luck!

Continued from page 6

miracle, like flirting with .500, you can expect to be ridden around Anaheim on the shoulders of delirious fans.

And if not, well, one season as a big league manager is better than none.

'Garden Grove Gems' sought

Continued from page 3

owners invited to an awards reception hosted by the Garden Grove City Council. The home that receives the highest number of votes, along with a runner up, will be determined for each district. All winners will be announced during the week of Tuesday, May 26, through the City's website, social media platforms, and local media.

For more information and program guidelines, visit www.ggcity.org/gems or call (714) 741-5200.

Retorts: Delinquent dads

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endanger the disabled and elderly.

Much of this is due to folks who either don't care about respect for the law or the welfare of other people, and pass that on to their offspring. I remember the street in our old neighborhood where gleefully drunk dads were firing off illegal fireworks into the sky right in front of their kids, teaching them an awful lesson in being irresponsible.

And when some of those e-bike kids end up in the trauma ward or morgue — or send someone else there — there's nobody else to blame but dad and mom. They'll cry, but it'll be too late for that.