

# Four Held in Robbery and Hit/Run Crash

## Suspects were found quickly after incident

Four young men were arrested Wednesday night in Huntington Beach for allegedly luring a pedestrian toward them, robbing their victim and striking that person with their motor vehicle as they fled the scene, inflicting minor injuries.

A follow-up investigation resulted in all four suspects being found at a nearby home and arrested. The HBPD adult arrest log shows:

- Chase Anthony Dietz, 22, a resident of Hunting-

ton Beach; charged with first degree robbery and conspiracy to commit a crime.

- Christian Kol Grooters, 23, of Huntington Beach; charged with first degree robbery and conspiracy to commit a crime.

- Lucas Andrew Benyameen, 19, of Huntington Beach, charged with first degree robbery, conspiracy to commit a crime and hit-and-run resulting in death or injury.

- Anthony Xavier Benyameen, 21, of Huntington Beach, was charged with first degree robbery and conspiracy to commit a crime.

All the charges are felonies, according to the HBPD.

## IT'S A TOPSY-TURVY WORLD



A traffic collision on Thursday around 12:30 p.m. sent one of the vehicles upside-down and settled on its roof in the area of Garfield Avenue and Randi Lane in Huntington Beach. According to the Huntington Beach Fire Department two patients were evaluated and transported to area hospitals. No extrication from the vehicle was required (HBFD photo).

## Surfing dog, hockey champs honored

Two new days of honor have been added to the City of Huntington Beach's civic calendar.

On Tuesday night, the council approved on a 7-0 vote a declaration of each Dec. 5 as "Sugar the Surfing Dog Day," recognizing

**■ HUNT. BEACH CITY COUNCIL**

the accomplishments of a local canine who has won numerous surfboard riding titles.

The declaration was submitted by Mayor Casey

McKeon.

Also on Tuesday night, the council approved on a 7-0 vote a resolution declaring each Feb. 22 as "USA Hockey Day."

Both the American men's and women's ice hockey

Continued on page 2

### In The Tribune

**Fantastically funny 'Ladies' at WCP**



ARTS & LIVING PAGE 5

**'Mother Bruin' is there for UCLA**



SEE SPORTS PAGE 6

## Tennis, anyone? Fixes at Central Park

Tennis anyone?

Anyone who plays tennis at Stanton Central Park will probably appreciate the action on the agenda of the Stanton City Council to accept a grant to resurface the tennis courts there

**■ STANTON CITY COUNCIL**

at 10660 Western Ave. The United States Tennis Association has offered a \$20,000 grant for the courts as part of the Stan-

ton Central Park Tennis Courts Renovation Project.

Also on the agenda for Tuesday's meeting is:

- continuance of the proc-

Continued on page 2

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**Jlm Tortolano**  
Editor and Publisher  
**Marilyn Lewis Tortolano**  
General Manager

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E-mail : orangecountytribune@gmail.com.  
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# Huntington

Continued from page 1

teams won the gold at the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan, Italy.

In the closed session, the council considered several pieces of litigation, including one on the city's voter ID law – State of California vs. City of Huntington Beach – and another –Southwest Voter Education Project vs. City of Huntington Beach – over whether Surf City should abandon its present "at-large" system of electing members of the city council and instead elect them by district.

The next meeting of the council is set for Tuesday, April 7.

# Stanton council

Continued from page 1

lamation of the existence of a local emergency caused by homelessness crisis, renewing a proclamation first voted on Nov. 26, 2024;

- consideration of an amendment to an ordinance related to social host liability for illegal fireworks and administrative citations.

The proposed amendment would include a gradual fine increase based on the amount of dangerous fireworks at issue and clarifies that a fine is based on each discharge of a firework, among other modifications.

The council will meet in closed session at 6 p.m., with the regular session at 6:30 p.m. in City Hall, 7800 Katella Ave.

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# News & Views

## The new Red threat in our Little Saigons

In the years after the American Civil War (no, I am no that old!), the most successful political strategy was “waving the bloody shirt.”

Democrats, who dominated in the Southern states, were blamed by Republicans for the war which lasted 1861-65. Regardless of

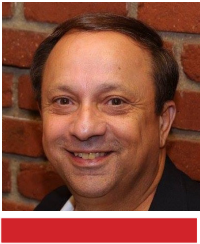
other issues, blaming the Democrats for secession was the magic message, and the GOP won every presidential election from 1860 to 1908, with

the exception of two victories by Grover Cleveland (1884 and 1892).

We have our own “bloody shirt” here in West Orange County, and that’s communism. In recent days State Sen. Tony Strickland (R-Huntington Beach) and Rep. Derek Tran (D-Garden Grove) have sounded the alarm about the need to “combat Chinese communist influence,” which is apparently a more present threat to Americans than high prices, multiple wars and bitter domestic political divisions.

It wasn’t so long ago that the Westminster City Council sought to ban anyone from the Socialist (Communist) Republic of Vietnam from setting foot within city limits.

It’s useful to point out that China is America’s biggest trading power, and that Vietnam is the leading vacation destination for many Orange Countians. And even more ironically, China and Vietnam are historically bitter enemies and Vietnam is considered an ally to America against Chinese influence.



### Retorts

Jim Tortolano

## HB man held for ‘hate’ graffiti

### He’s arrested for anti-Semitic tagging in Westminster

Westminster police have arrested a man for allegedly spray-painting graffiti – some of it anti-Semitic – on city walls and property.

According to Commander Michael Harvey, Julio Cesar Lazo, 25, a Huntington Beach resident was arrested and booked into Orange County Jail on charges of committing a hate crime, felony vandalism and possession of a switchblade knife.

Officers responded to the area of Magnolia Street south of Bolsa Avenue following a report of vandalism around 11 p.m. on Friday night.

Police were initially unable to locate a suspect, but when an officer later returned to the area he saw a man – later identified as Lazo – fitting the description provided to them “actively marking a wall, power box, and



**SPRAY-PAINT VANDALISM** was on Magnolia Street south of Bolsa Avenue in Westminster (WPD photo).

a fire hydrant.”

When detained by police, Lazo was in possession of graffiti materials and a switchblade knife, according to Harvey.

Officers located several instances of graffiti, including “hate-motivated language and symbols,” including swastikas and anti-Semitic phrases such as “Jews are scum.”

## Fire in 2-story house in Westminster kills one person, burns another

A fire at a two-story home in Westminster claimed a life on Tuesday night.

According to the Orange County Fire Authority, the blaze was reported at around 7:20 p.m. in the 6200 block of Apache Road, southwest of Garden Grove Boulevard and Edwards Street.

Arriving crews saw heavy flames from the house and witnesses said a person was trapped inside. Firefighters were unable to find the person, who was found dead inside the building after the fire was extinguished.

The person’s identity was not revealed pending notification of the next of kin.

An elderly woman who was outside the home upon the arrival of firefighters was transported to a nearby hospital for treatment of smoke inhalation and burns.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

“The Westminster Police Department takes hate crimes and hate-related incidents very seriously, said WPD Chief Darin Lenyi. “Acts that target individuals or groups based on race, religion, ethnicity, or any other protected characteristic have no place in our community and will be thoroughly investigated. I want to thank the citizen who reported this incident and I encourage community members to promptly report incidents of hate as they play an important role in helping us address these acts and protect our community.”

### History Minute

#### Just how many Santa Ana’s?

Santa Ana, founded around 1869, is one of Orange County’s oldest communities.

But the present-day Santa Ana isn’t even the oldest Santa Ana.

An earlier settlement, was established around 1810 near the Santa Ana River in which is now the city of Orange.

When the present Santa Ana was founded decades later, the original became “Old Santa Ana” and is now Olive.

# NewsUpdate

## More Warships, Marines to Mideast

### *Pentagon wants \$200 billion more to fight Iran*

Three more warships and about 2,500 more Marines are bound for the Middle East, the Associated Press is reporting.

That would bring the number of U.S. troops in the region to nearly 50,000. To support those warriors and pay for the expanding nature of the war with Iran, the Department of Defense is requesting an additional \$200 billion.

In other related news, Iran fired missiles and drones at locations in Israel and at sites in neighboring Gulf Arab states where oil and natural gas is being pumped or power facilities are operating.



**MARINES** dismounting from an armored vehicle in Djibouti (Defense Dept/Wikipedia).

Also, Benjamin Netanyahu, the prime minister of Israel, said on Friday that his country will stop making attacks on the

Iranian gas field, at the request of President Donald Trump. Such attacks are believed to contribute to the rising cost of energy across the world, including gasoline prices for American consumers.

## New York Times wins case on access to Defense Dept.

The Pentagon's restrictions on news outlets that violate First Amendment rights of the freedom of the press were rejected by a federal judge on Friday.

The New York Times reported that Judge Paul Friedman of the U.S. District Court of the District of Columbia ordered the press passes of seven journalist for The Times returned. They had given up their passes

instead of going along with a Defense Department policy which would have given the Pentagon the power to demand the return of credentials if they engage in activity that the government believes "threatens national security."

Those who gave their access were replaced mostly by pro-Trump commentators or "influencers" rather than traditional press and broadcast journalists.

### Great Thoughts

"Greed is the bottomless pit which exhausts the person in an endless effort to satisfy the need without ever reaching satisfaction."

– Erich Fromm

"It is greed to do all the talking but not want to listen at all."

– Democritus

"The curse of the romantic is a greed for dreams, an intensity of expectation that, in the end, diminishes the reality."

– Marya Mannes.

## Weather: Cooler, but not cool

Record March heat waves have broiled a big part of the Western United States, but our West Orange County cities are beginning to get some relief. The forecast for Saturday is for a daytime high of 83 with an overnight low of 59. There will be morning clouds followed by sunny afternoons. Sunday will be similar but cooler, at 80 (58). However, Monday should warm to 83 (58) and mostly sunny, while Tuesday is forecast to hit 84 (59) with partly cloudy skies.

## Senate grapples wth DHS and federal voter ID bill

The U.S. Senate will spend the weekend grappling with significant and controversial legislation including voting rights and funding for the Department of Homeland Security.

According to United Press International, the struggle in the Senate over these issues may delay its two-week recess, set for 10 days away. The biggest battle may be over the SAVE Act, which would require the voters to provide approved identification to cast ballots in federal elections, mandate proof of citizenship to register to vote and dramatically cut vote-by-mail access.

Passage of the bill will require 60 votes; Republicans hold 53 seats. Also at issue is funding for the Department of Homeland Security. Lack of money for DHS – which includes the Transportation Security Agency – has snarled some airports and could lead to some closures.

# Arts & Living

## Fantastically Funny 'Ladies' at WCP

Something very laugh-worthy is at the WCP

By Thom deMartino  
Orange County Tribune

Lord, what fools these mortals be.

Westminster Community Playhouse is at it again, with their newest production: the fantastic farce "Leading Ladies." Written by Ken Ludwig and directed by Gregory Cohen, it's the story of a pair of struggling actors – Shakespearean, by trade – in 1952 York, Pennsylvania and their get-rich-quick scheme that doesn't play out quite the way they'd planned.

Meg (Mandy Abigail Krause) is niece to her elderly (and wealthy) Aunt Florence (Yvonne Robertson), and set to become heiress when she passes – but at the moment, she is more concerned with making it to a production of "Scenes From Shakespeare" playing at the local Moose Lodge.

Unfortunately her curmudgeonly beau, the Rev. Duncan Woolsey (Chris Brennan), has lent his car to a neighbor... convenient timing, as he's no fan of actors or their trade.

The following day, English thespians Leo Clark (Bobby D. Lux) and Jack Gable (Adriano Brown) are commiserating over the lack of enthusiasm the previous night's show inspired... as well as their lack of cash.

But upon reading in the local paper about the well-off Florence looking for her missing relatives Max & Steve – having shipped off to England years before – the actor convinces his cohort that they can pose as the two young men, to gain a rich payday when the elderly woman finally shuffles off the mortal coil.

Or can they?

Into their train car skates the effervescent Audrey (Sara Ker-



BOBBY D. LUX and Adriano Brown as Leon and Jack in "Leading Ladies" (WCP photo).

### Stage Review

snowski), a local girl who's happy to fill the pair in on Florence's story, and her search for her \*nieces\*, Maxine & Stephanie – that is to say, Max & Steve. Unfazed by this revelation (and accustomed to playing the opposite sex in some of Shakespeare's work), Leo convinces Jack the pair can play their roles in drag to hoodwink the old woman.

Upon arrival, the pair of "nieces" are met by Meg and Duncan... the latter being more than a little suspicious of the sudden appearances of the disguised Leo and Jack, as their claim to the inheritance may threaten his hopes to sway Meg to eventually turn hers over to his "foundation".

Further complicating matters is Doc Myers (Greg Stokes) the local physician (who's no fan of Duncan), and his son Butch (Andrew Yonce), who is himself crushing hard on Audrey... only now, Leo and Jack are finding themselves smitten by Meg

and Audrey – but how can that ever work out? And yet, when Leo discovers that Meg knows and admires his work as an actor, he begins to hatch a risky new plan... one that may throw their moneymaking scheme into chaos.

This is a fantastic farce the Westminster Community Playhouse is staging, with lots of laughs and outstanding comedic physicality by the actors (such as by Brennan's Duncan as he flails around in frustration, venting about actors, or Brown's Jack in drag, struggling to stay upright as he strides unsteadily in heels.)

There's splendid timing and quick changes, marvelous chemistry between Krause's Meg (called "Margaret" by her would-be cousins) and Lux's Leo, as well as between Jack and Kersnowski's Audrey.

There's excellent interplay between the multiple characters, with sharp dialogue and snappy delivery, and the actors' energy really shows how devoted they are to this comedy.

### Great ★★★★★

Lux has some great bits throughout, and really shines in this role, while Brown is an outstanding new addition to the Westminster Community Playhouse roster (as are several other new faces in this show.)

It's a marvelous and fun production, a treat for both veteran theatergoers and new patrons of WCP. Playing through March 29, "Leading Ladies" is an immense amount of fun for all, and one to catch while you can.

*"Leading Ladies": Mandy Abigail Krause, Bobby D. Lux and Adriano Brown star in this comedy of love and deception. Playing through March 29 at the Westminster Community Playhouse, 7272 Maple St, Westminster.*

*Ticketing information available online at <http://www.wcpstage.com>, or call (714) 893-8626.*

# TheSportsPages

*Maz; overlooked but Maznificent with his glove*

Sorry I missed it, Bill. I should have taken note of Bill Mazerowski's passing in February, but I guess the long-time Pittsburgh Pirate infielder was used to being overlooked.

Of course, except for that moment

on Oct. 13, 1960 when he hit a bottom-of-the-ninth home run to deep left-center field to give the Pirates a seventh-game World Series over the New York Yankees.

The photo of Maz rounding the bases as fans rushed onto the field (chased by security guards and police) is one of the most iconic images in baseball history.

Back then, the World Series was bigger than the NBA, NHL and Olympic finals. Now, for most fans, it's "Bill Who?"

In addition to that one moment of supreme fame, Maz was sort of famous for being unfamous. A defensive standout, his modest lifetime batting average of .260 made him — as he remains — one of the most underrated players in baseball history.

It's a shame because that overlooks his defensive contributions. He was a Golden Globe winner for eight years. He led the major leagues in putouts five times and assists nine times. For eight years in a row he led the league in double plays.

He was no slouch at the plate, either. He hit 138 home runs in his career and knocked in 853 runs.

But it's tough to stand out on a team with All-Time All-Stars

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## Sports Retorts

Jim Tortolano

# She's the Mother Bruin

Number 2-rated UCLA team has a team mom, now

By Beth Harris  
AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — It's an hour before tipoff and Patti Close takes her usual seat near the UCLA bench. Mother Bruin is in the house, ready to cheer on the team coached by her daughter, Cori Close.

That reassuring presence is felt whenever the players take the floor.

The next game is Saturday, when the overall No. 2 seeded Bruins (31-1) open March Madness against 16th-seeded Cal Baptist (23-10) at Pauley Pavilion.

"She's like the mayor," Cori Close said.

Patti Close's spirited attitude and energy belie her 80 years. She drives herself to games, arriving an hour before tipoff. Once, when Cori Close was an assistant at Florida State, she noticed her mother was late.

"She told me, 'Don't you ever do that again,'" Patti Close recalled.

Cori Close says, "I just need to know she's safe."

At halftime, a steady stream of people stop by her mother's seat to visit.

Post-game finds Patti Close in



**UCLA HEAD COACH** Cori Close, left, embraces her mother, Patti Close, after speaking with the media after an NCAA college basketball game against Rutgers, Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2026, in Los Angeles. (AP Photo/Caroline Brehman)

the interview room "to hear the straight scoop," she said.

Before Patti Close's marriage of 53 years ended with the death of her husband, Don, a few years ago, the couple attended games together. Being directly involved with the team helps fill the void. "That's a gift to me, for our team to be so kind to my mom, to give purpose for my mom," Cori Close said.

UCLA men's coach Mick Cro-

nin keeps his widower father close, too. Hep Cronin spends part of the season in California to follow the team and escape the cold weather back home in Ohio.

### Close ties through basketball

Since Cori Close got the UCLA job in 2011, her mother has accompanied the team to Europe and Africa.

"I never even had a passport,"

Continued on page 7

# Ducks get a Mammoth win in Utah

By Hugo Baker  
Orange County Tribune

With a 4-1 win over the Utah Mammoth on Friday night in Salt Lake City, the Anaheim Ducks padded their lead in the NHL Pacific Division by one more point.

The Ducks are now 38-27-4, good for 80 points. That's three ahead of the second place Edmonton Oilers (34-27-9, 77

## NHL and NBA

points). Anaheim is also in fourth in the NHL Western Conference.

Lukas Dostal was near-perfect in goal for the Ducks with 29 saves on 30 shots.

The teams were tied at 1-1 after one period, but the visiting Orange County team pulled away with one goal in the second and

two more in the third period.

Scoring goals for the Ducks were Cutter Gauthier (his 38th), Mikael Granlund (13), Alex Kilhorn (11) and Ryan Poeling (9). Leading the team in assists on Friday was Kilhorn with two. He's got 15 on the season.

Next up for the Ducks is a game Sunday hosting the Buffalo Sabres (43-20-6), in first place in the Atlantic Division and second in the Eastern Conference.

# UCLA women have a 'Mother Bruin' close by

Continued from page 6

Patti Close said. "It's a dream. I love the kids. I always joke that I fall in love with them and they have the nerve to leave and graduate. How dare they."

Spending time around the team keeps her young and current, too.

"My husband had this expression: you're never too old to be immature," she said.

Cori Close also had her two sisters, an aunt and two cousins at last year's NCAA Tournament, when the Bruins made their first Final Four and lost to eventual national champion UConn in the semifinals.

"Our family has not been together this much in probably over a decade," she said, "and so it's really a privilege that I could use my job to be able to experience that."

## Hangin' at coach's

The players are regular visitors

to Cori Close's upscale house near the Westwood campus. They'll cook and watch movies together.

"Cori always says the team that is connected off the court is going to be more connected on the court," Patti Close said.

She often bunks at her daughter's place on game nights rather than travel 30 minutes to her own five-bedroom house in the San Fernando Valley, where she gardens and walks a mile after dinner.

After games, mother and daughter share what Cori Close calls "afterglow." She'll pour a glass of wine for herself while her mother reviews the box score and rehashes the media session.

"I usually joke that I'm placating her," Cori Close said, "but probably if I'm really honest, it's sort of a safety net for me,

Continued on page 7

## ARGOS AT THE BIG A



**GARDEN GROVE HIGH** Argonaut baseball team played Mayfair High of Lakewood in a non-league game at Angel Stadium. The Argos lost 6-1, then beat Rancho Alamitos 14-1 and are 5-5 overall, and in a three-way tie with Valencia and Westminster for first place in the Orange Coast League. That's Manny Martinez standing proudly on base (GGUSD photo).



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# 'Mother Bruin' is team mom to UCLA women

Continued from page 6

too."

When the time comes, Patti Close could move onto her daughter's property, which has room to accommodate a backyard cottage.

"I'm not ready for Cori to be my boss," Patti Close said. "When you're in your kids' territory, it's her bailiwick."

## Recruiting future Bruins

The coach's house is also the scene of dinners for recruits on official visits and their parents. Patti Close always arrives early and helps set up.

"I do my sales job and tell them that we will take care of their kid," she said, "which is the

main thing I was interested in when Cori was being recruited." Once, a recruit's grandmother attended, and Patti Close made it a point to chat her up.

She reassured the father of Bruins senior guard Kiki Rice that his daughter would be in good hands far from her home in Washington, D.C.

"It's really cool to see the kind of family nature within the program," Kiki Rice said. "Patti is so supportive and always around, and she gets her friends

involved, too."

Rice had shoulder surgery after last year's Final Four. She received a gift basket with a hand-knitted blanket from Patti Close. "It meant a lot to me," Rice said. Patti Close was an interior designer for 35 years and she freely dispenses decorating tips to the team's support staff.

Close's staff are men.

"She wants these young women to see there's still good ones out there," Patti Close said. "All these guys, they're just jewels."

Patti Close gets her grandmother fix from her youngest daughter's children, who live in Colorado.

## Butting heads

Cori Close was a talker from her youngest days and feisty in nature. Her well-read and politically-minded mother has her own opinions, too.

"Basketball-wise, I have to be so confrontational and hold the bar so tightly that in my personal life I'm much more of a harmony person," the coach said.

"I want everybody to feel safe, seen and heard."

Patti Close, according to her daughter, is "a borderline contrarian."

"We definitely butt heads on things," Cori Close said.

One thing they agree on is basketball.

Whether UCLA's season ends with the Bruins hoisting the national championship trophy or losing a game for just the second time, it's going to be hard on Patti Close.

"I pretend that they need me," she said, laughing. "Don't tell them."

## Ridin' solo

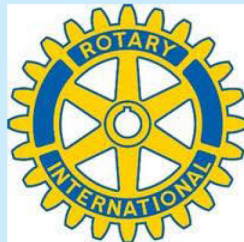
For all the emphasis Cori Close places on creating a tight-knit atmosphere among the team and staff, she doesn't have a family of her own.

"I never thought that I would not be married," the 54-year-old coach said. "It stinks that I feel like it's easier for men to have it all than for women to have it all." Close is comforted by her religious faith and a belief that coaching is a calling more than merely a job.

"If I feel like I have some loneliness in terms of being single when I didn't plan on being single," she said. "At least I really have so much peace about being in my purpose, and that's what keeps me going."

Patti Close said her daughter always knew she wanted to be a coach because it combined the sport she loves with investing in young people's lives.

Three of the five coaches on



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**Garden Grove Rotary**

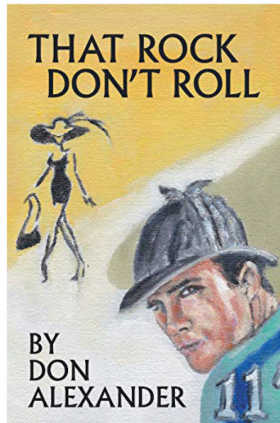
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- The Orange County Tribune

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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.

## Retorts: Waving the red flag

Continued from page 3

The reason behind all of this "red menace" concern may be purely political. The large refugee population from Vietnam is a key voting bloc in Garden Grove and Westminster, and for many voters the main and only issue is expressing opposition to communism, regardless of whether that opposition is real or symbolic.

Interestingly enough, the same motivation doesn't seem to be present within our Korean-American population here. Perhaps that's because of the differing outcomes of the Korean and Vietnamese conflicts.

There's nothing wrong with opposing communism; it's an evil and stupidly developed system. But when that opposition is simply a way to win votes - or avoid losing them - it becomes a cynical ploy. "Waving the red flag" may not do much harm. But as a distraction from our real problems, it's not doing much good, either.

## Remembering Bill Mazerowski

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like Roberto Clemente.

There are lots of athletes not in the spotlight who are crucial to a team's success. The basketball point guard who excels

at hitting the open man; the football center who completes every pass.

May they someday all have their own Oct. 13 as well.