

## Consumers get punched at gas pump across OC

By Jim Tortolano  
Orange County Tribune

Gasoline prices – spurred by the war in the Mideast – have skyrocketed all over the United States, and our West Orange County cities have been hit hard as well.

According to gasbuddy.com, which monitors prices at retail gasoline outlets across the United States, the cost of a gallon of regular grade fuel – as of Tuesday – ranges from \$4.95 per gallon to as high as \$5.79.

In Garden Grove, the lowest prices were at the Arco station on Euclid Street near Century Boulevard at \$4.95 per gallon, and at the Anthem Oil Station on Garden Grove Blvd.

The highest was a Shell station on Chapman at \$5.19 a gallon.

In Huntington Beach, the highest-priced gasoline was at the two G&M stations on Goldenwest Street and Beach Boulevard at \$5.29.

In Westminster, gas prices were at their peak at \$5.59 a gallon at an Arco station on Westminster Boulevard.

The highest prices in our four West OC cities were in Stanton. Two Chevron stations – one on Beach Boulevard and the other on Magnolia Avenue – were selling regular grade gasoline for \$5.79.

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**JANET NGUYEN**, Orange County Supervisor for the First District, at a Strawberry Festival parade in Garden Grove (File photo).

## Who should get the \$3.7 million recovered from Do's crimes?

By a staff writer

Former Orange County Supervisor Andrew Do is in federal prison serving a five-year sentence for his role in stealing millions of dollars intended for COVID-19 relief in exchange for \$550,000 in bribes.

The Orange County District Attorney's office reported that the U.S. Department of Justice has determined that the County of Orange is

the only named victim in the conspiracy and is entitled to over \$8.8 million in restitution.

Now, the question becomes who will get the money.

Do, a former Garden Grove City Councilmember, represented the First District on the county board of supervisors. So far, according to the county district attorney's office, \$3.7 million – a

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# Ex-CHP Officer Facing Four Murder Counts

Westminster, Hunt. Beach residents died in crash on 605

By David Arthur  
Orange County Tribune

dan Partridge, 23, of Los Angeles.

A one-time California Highway Patrol officer faces the possibility of life in prison after a fatal crash that took the life of four people, including a resident of Huntington Beach and a resident of Westminster.

According to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office, Angelo Rodriguez, 24, faces four counts of murder in the death of Juliana Hamori, 23, of Huntington Beach and Samantha Skocilic, 22, of Westminster as well as Armand Del Campo, 24, of San Pedro and Jor-

Another suspect, Iris Salmeron, 27, drove her vehicle into the one struck by Rodriguez. Both were driving at over 100 miles an hour, according to the DA.

Rodriguez was a CHP officer on July 20, 2025 at about 12:50 a.m. when he was driving in a Patrol vehicle on the southbound San Gabriel River (605) Freeway at over 130 miles an hour "without justification and without turning on his emergency lights or siren."

Moments later his vehicle struck a car carrying four

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### In The Tribune

Searing 'Eight Seconds' at GWC



ARTS & LIVING PAGE 5

Sho shocked by Japan's WBC loss



SEE SPORTS PAGE 6

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## Ex-CHP officer

Continued from page 1

people that had just entered the car pool lane, it is alleged.

The disabled vehicle was then struck by a vehicle driven by Salmeron at a speed of over 100 miles an hour, causing a fiery explosion, says the DA's office. Her blood alcohol was estimated to be over the legal limit. She and a passenger were injured in the crash.

In the course of the investigation, it was determined that Rodriguez waited for three minutes after the initial crash to report the collision without mentioning his involvement.

He allegedly failed to render aid or initiate a traffic break, claims the district attorney's office. He then continued north on the freeway.

Bail for both was set at \$8 million. He will face four counts of murder and she will face four counts of murder plus one felony count each of driving under the influence and causing injury. Both could receive life sentences in state prison.

## Who gets money?

Continued from page 1

combination of seized bank funds and the sale of two real properties – has been returned to the county.

But the First District isn't quite the same as it was when Do was the supervisor there. Janet Nguyen, the current First District Supervisor has contended that the recovered funds should go to that district, which now includes all or part of – among other cities – Garden Grove, Fountain Valley, Huntington Beach and Westminster.

Santa Ana is no longer part of the First District.

Some members of the Board of Supervisors want to consider using the restored funds for “pressing needs.”

“Funds should not be stolen twice from the First District residents who were victims of Andrew Do's greed,” said Nguyen.

Do was elected to the Garden Grove council in 2008 but resigned his office before his term was up in 2011, citing “personal reasons.” He was elected to the county board of supervisors in 2015 and resigned in 2024.

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# News & Views

## Sweeten up politics with Surfing Sugar

Doggone it ... is the Huntington Beach City Council finally on the right track?

Ever since the folks who run Surf City got a majority on the council and staked out the community a place of fealty to Donald Trump's MAGA (Make America Great Again) playbook, the emphasis on getting attention and converting meetings into political rallies has brought widespread pushback from not just liberals but from stalwart conservatives such as The Orange County Register.



### Retorts Jim Tortolano

At a time when Huntington Beach – and many other cities – are wrestling with huge financial challenges, the council has spent its time trying to purge the library of naughty books, drive salutes to various minorities from flag poles and the city calendar, and – place a blatantly political slogan on a plaque in the Central Library.

However, in recent weeks – perhaps reading which way the electoral wins are blowing in 2026 – the one has changed dramatically. Combine that with a nearly-unbroken string of legal defeats on courtroom challenges to state law and perhaps, the “MAGAnificent Seven” is coming around to a sobering reality. Voters, by and large, would like their representatives to tend the home fires first and ideological purity much later.

Or at least have some fun. This week the council honored Sugar, the Surfing Dog. Pretty apolitical. Who doesn't like a cute dog?

Or find an issue that brings people together.

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## HOW ABOUT SOME NICE PI?



AT WESTMINSTER HIGH recently, there was pie aplenty for the celebration of “National Pi Day” on March 14. That's in honor of the recurring mathematic constant of 3.14159. Some pizza pie eateries offered discounts on their round cheese-and tomato sauced staples (HBUHSD photo).

## GGUSD system rolls up more honors as 2026 ‘distinguished schools’

The Garden Grove Unified School District is celebrating a historic achievement as nine of its secondary schools have been named 2026 California Distinguished Schools, the state's top honor recognizing exceptional student achievement and success in closing opportunity gaps.

This marks the most secondary schools to receive the distinction in a single year in district history and more than any other district in Orange County.

GGUSD schools earning the prestigious recognition are Bell, Irvine, McGarvin, and Ralston intermediate schools and Bolsa Grande, Los Amigos, La Quinta, Pacifica, and Santiago high schools.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond

announced that 408 middle and high schools statewide were selected for the California Distinguished Schools Program, with GGUSD having the third highest number of Distinguished Schools across California.

“Year after year, GGUSD continues to shine as a leader in superior student outcomes, showing what is possible when dedicated educators and staff, hardworking students, and supportive families come together with a shared commitment to excellence,” said Board of Education President Bob Harden.

“Having nine schools recognized as California Distinguished Schools is an incredible accomplishment and a powerful reflection of the outstanding work happening in our class-

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## Lewd suspect is sought by police in GG

Garden Grove police are reaching out to the public to help locate a suspect accused of engaging in lewd conduct in front of teenage girls.

According to the GGPD, these incidents are usually taking place just before or after school hours when girls are walking to or from school.

Additional victims who encountered similar incidents are sought and are asked to contact Detective Baker at (714) 741-5837.

The suspect is described as a white male, about 20 to 25 years old, with brown hair and a slim build. The suspect vehicle is described as a gray or pewter-colored Infiniti sedan similar to the adjacent photo.



NOT THE ACTUAL VEHICLE

### History Minute

#### Bing and Bob and Sam Sparks

The intersection of the streets Hope and Crosby in the “88 Acres” section of Garden Grove was noted in the “Ripley's Believe it or Not” feature that ran nationally in newspapers in the 1960s.

Bob Hope and Bing Crosby were Hollywood figures who made several popular comedy films together. Also noted by Ripley was the fact that Garden Grove's fire chief was Sam Sparks.

# NewsUpdate

## Iran Steps Up Attacks on Neighbors

*Two top leaders in Iran killed by missile strikes*

Israel and Iran continue to exchange blows as the Mideast conflict continues with no signs of stopping or pausing.

According to the Associated Press, Israel killed two of Iran's senior security officials.

Those killed are Ali Larjani, secretary of his country's Supreme National Security Council, and Gen. Gholam Reza Soleimani, head of the all-volunteer unit of the Revolutionary Guard.

In response, Iran launched missiles and drones at Israel and its Gulf Arab nations such as Dubai.

Despite the attacks on its



**STREET SCENE** in Tehran, Iran after missile strike (Wikipedia).

leadership, an Iranian official said his government would

continue to block access to Hormuz, which has choked off shipping through the Strait of the shipping of oil.

## U.S. Senate begins debate on controversial voter bill

The U.S. Senate has begun debate on the controversial proposed SAVE America Act which would require voters to show approved photo identification to vote in presidential elections and proof of citizenship to register to vote.

The New York Times reports that the origins of the bill come from President Donald Trump's insistence – without evidence – that there was widespread voter

fraud in the 2016, 2020 and 2024 presidential elections.

If approved, the bill would limit voting by mail to the infirm, members of the military and Americans residing outside the U.S. Democrats argue that it would disenfranchise millions of voters, especially married women whose birth certificate would show a different name than the name they took of their husbands when wed.

### Great Thoughts

“Life is like a box of crayons, Most people are the eight colors boxes, but what you're really looking for are the 64 color boxes with the sharpeners on the back.”

– John Mayer

“Without black, color has no depth. But you mix black with everything, suddenly there's shadow – no, not just shadow, but fullness.”

– Amy Grant

## Weather: It's July in March

July temperatures have come in Spring to our West Orange County cities. The forecast through the week-end calls for three days of daytime highs in the low 90s to high 80s. Wednesday is expected to have a daytime high of 91 with an overnight low of 59 with sunny skies. Thursday will be nearly identical at 91 (60) and sunny. Friday is expected to be slightly cooler at 89 (59) and sunny. The hot weather should finally break on Saturday at 83 (58) with partly cloudy skies.

## Oil shortage, earthquake slam Cuba, raising woes

The woes hitting Cuba were multiplied on Tuesday when the island nation was hit by a magnitude 5.8 earthquake, mere hours after its electrical grid collapsed.

United Press International is reporting that the loss of electrical power across most of Cuba was caused by shortages of oil, which powers the grid. It was the sixth such “blackout” in almost 18 months.

The result, according to UPI, is that almost 10 million people are feeling the effects which include stoppage of water pumping, telecommunication and internet service.

The quake caused no fatalities or “significant material damage,” according to a state newspaper.

# Arts & Living

## A Searing 'Eight Seconds' at GWC

A deep dive into darker side of the internet

By Thom deMartino  
Orange County Tribune

If you're looking for terror, you don't have to look much further than the glow of your own screen.

A world premiere production has opened for a special limited engagement at Golden West College's Mainstage Theater: playing through Sunday, March 15 is "Eight Seconds". Written by Golden West College's own Tim Muller and directed by Tom Amen, it's a deep dive into the darkest depths of the internet, how even the best of intentions can go wrong, and how when we point fingers... we may be pointing back at ourselves.

After an introduction by a peppy, carnival barker-style song detailing all the internet has to offer ("anything and everything, all of the time!"), the audience is introduced to Ellie Donner (Catherine Dosier). She addresses the viewers directly, breaking the fourth wall as she quotes a 2015 study that since the year 2000, the average attention span has diminished from 12 seconds to 8 seconds – theoretically shorter than that of a goldfish.

Ellie proceeds to explain that her online obsession is trolling people who reside in the darker corners of the internet: but rather than antagonize them, she befriends them as someone else, someone sympathetic, so that they open up about their worst thoughts and biases... and on occasion, reporting them for their vile online behavior. Think of her as an aspiring keyboard warrior or "troll for good", exposing some of the most toxic viewpoints shared on the web.

For instance, there's her online friend Steve (Nick Flum): while he only knows Ellie as "Jeff"



CHRISTOPHER SPENCER is Carl in "Eight Seconds," recently on stage at Golden West College.

### Stage Review

on the net(god forbid he knows she's female), he's constantly raging to her about being undesirable to women, being an "in-cel" (internet speak for "involuntary celebrate)... while never having the self-awareness to ask himself why, or if his own bitter perspective might be contributing to it. They commiserate over "Beckys" (not to be confused with "Karens") and "Stacys" (in Steve's mind, women who flaunt their sexuality to manipulate men.) And yet, beneath the vitriol, there is something unmistakably wounded & broken in the young man.

But, as Ellie tells the audience, he's not nearly the worst of her online interactions: that dubious honor is reserved for Chris (Jack Clark), an attorney who is, for the lack of a better term, a Nazi (though he prefers the "alt-right"

branding.) He only knows her as "oneBritney8814" (Ellie explains to the audience the racist connotations of the numbers), and constantly rails against immigrants, "woke" mentality and the superiority of white culture.

There is no self-doubt here: he is irrefutably confident in his beliefs, even wanting to draft "Britney" into the secret project he's working on.

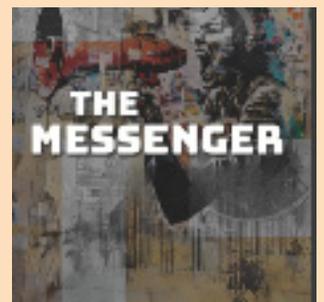
Great ★ ★ ★ ★

After such harrowing interactions, Ellie's relief lies with Carl (Christopher Spencer), a goofy older fellow with fun and eclectic musical tastes... who just so happens to believe the earth is flat, and that the world is run by "reptoids" (or "lizard people")

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### 'The Messenger' cometh

"The Messenger" is a play about the women of three eras – 1969, 1993 and 2020 – struggling to combat prejudice and injustice in Pasadena. It stars Juliet Fischer, Megan Sigler and Rori Flynn. It's on stage at the Chance Theater (5522 E. La Palma in Anaheim) Friday through Sunday, March 27-29.



# TheSportsPages

*'Canadian nice' may have some limitations*

Canadians have long been described as the nicest people in the world, a status perhaps induced by their presence next to the biggest military power in world history.

That habit of treading lightly may be going out of style, at least in the world of sport.

Back in February, the USA defeated Canada in the Milan Winter Olympic final, 2-1 in an extra period.

Instead of graciously accepting the loss, Canadian coach Jon Cooper raised a storm of protest about the outcome.

It seems that in overtime in the NHL, you play a 5-on-5 format (taking two players off the ice) in an effort to speed things up. But in the Olympics, the format is 3-on-3.

Cooper complained that "You take four players off the ice, now hockey's not hockey anymore."

He was promptly branded a "sore loser" in the wake of the Americans winning their first gold medal since 1980.

Well, if Cooper was a "crybaby" after the loss, the Canadian head coach for the World Baseball Classic wailed a lot larger. Right after Teams USA defeated Canada 5-3 in a quarterfinal game, Ernie Whitt went full Bobby Knight.

"F\_\_\_ off, you cheater," he said, pointing at Aaron Judge and accusing him of using an illegal bat. He went on to accuse the umpires of deliberately favoring the Americans in their decisions.

Judge, however, was as cool as the Canadians are supposed to be.

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## Sports Retorts

Jim Tortolano

# Sho Shocked by Loss

WBC won't be a repeat of 2023 win by Japan

By Ronald Blum  
AP Baseball Writer

MIAMI (AP) — Shohei Ohtani walked off the infield after Japan's World Baseball Classic ended, just like three years ago, only the final out could not have been more different.

Ohtani triumphantly tossed his glove and cap in 2023, then stretched his arms wide as teammates mobbed him when he struck out Mike Trout to end a 3-2 win over the U.S. that finished Japan's third WBC title.

On Saturday night, baseball's best player jogged across the very same loanDepot park diamond to Japan's bench after his infield popup sealed an 8-5 quarterfinal loss to Venezuela.

He dejectedly detached his batting gloves, took off his helmet and headed down the dugout steps past shocked teammates who leaned on the railing and stared at the celebrating Venezuelans.

"I was really disappointed," Ohtani said.

Japan, international baseball's preeminent power, had won 11 straight WBC games dating to a 2017 semifinal loss to the U.S. and had reached the semis in



**SHOHEI OHTANI**, smiling here for a team photo, was not smiling after Japan was knocked out of the World Baseball Classic by Venezuela, which advanced to the title game against the United States and won, 3-2 (AP photo).

all five previous WBCs. It is the only nation to win two in a row, in 2006 and 2009. Japan also beat the U.S. in the gold medal game at the last Olympic baseball tournament when the Samurai Warriors hosted in 2021.

After Ronald Acuña Jr.'s stunning leadoff homer in the first off Yoshinobu Yamamoto, Ohtani matched the feat by going deep starting the bottom half against Ranger Suárez.

Shota Morishita, who entered after Seiya Suzuki got hurt in the first inning, put Japan ahead 5-2 with a three-run homer in the third. It appeared a Monday semifinal against upstart Italy was likely to determine who would play the U.S. or the Dominican Republic for the title the following night.

But Chihiro Sumida gave up Maikel Garcia's two-run homer

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## Lakers streaking, Clippers stumble

### NHL and NBA

With the NBA season intensifying and teams pouring on the fuel for playoff position, the Los Angeles Lakers and Los Angeles Clippers might be headed in different directions.

The Lake Show is on a six-game winning streak, and have won nine of their last 10 games, most recently a 100-92 win over Houston. They're third in the Western Conference with a 43-25 record, trailing only Oklaho-

ma City and San Antonio.

The Clips have followed a stirring comeback from a rough start with two losses in a row, the last being 119-115 defeat at the hands of the Spurs.

It was a close loss to a strong team, influenced perhaps by the absence of Clipper star Kawhi Leonard, out with an injury.

LAC is 34-34 and eighth in the Western Conference. The Clippers have won seven of their last 10 games.

Coming up on Wednesday, the Lakers will visit the Houston Rockets then go to Miami on Thursday, then Orlando on Saturday.

The Clippers will be in New Orleans on Wednesday and Thursday, followed by a trip to Dallas on Saturday.

# Ohtani and Japan sad after loss in the WBC

Continued from page 6

in the fifth, sparking the Venezuelans in the first base dugout and fans in the crowd of 34,548 that largely favored the South Americans.

Then Hiromi Itoh allowed Willyer Abreu's three-run drive in the sixth that put La Vinotinto ahead 7-5, and Atsuki Taneichi's wild pickoff throw in the eighth brought in another run.

Ohtani was intentionally walked ahead of Morishita's homer, but didn't come through in his final three plate appearances, striking out in the fourth and seventh innings before making the final out in a 1-2-3 ninth.

Japan had a solid foundation, bringing back about half its 2023 WBC roster.

Ohtani and Yamamoto last year helped the Los Angeles Dodgers become Major League Baseball's first repeat World Series champion in a quarter-century, with

Ohtani earning a fourth MVP award and Yamamoto selected World Series MVP.

But Japan was without Roki Sasaki, the hard-throwing pitcher who remained with the Dodgers at spring training after an injury interrupted rookie season. And Ohtani was only a hitter and not a two-way star, being careful with his pitching arm after returning last year from a second major elbow operation.

Ohtani led Japanese batters with a .462 average, three homers and seven RBIs. But the Warriors finished with a .284 batting average, down from .299 three years ago, and a 3.35 ERA, up from a tournament-best 2.29.

"We didn't have an option for Ohtani to pitch from the middle of the game," Japan manager Hirokazu Ibatata said.

"Of course, I would have wanted him," Ibatata added, "but I didn't have a choice."

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# Stage Review: 'Eight Seconds' at GWC stage

Continued from page 6

tion of Chris.)

But it's made clear that to these individuals, these 'extremists', that their paths are righteous; that they truly believe their myopic worldviews – and that anything which threatens or contradicts their internal narrative, threatens their own identity and sense of self... and that just can't happen.

The sparse set allows the viewer to focus entirely on the cast, and all the performances are magnificent, by all the players. Flum's Steve is both subdued and manic in his interactions, yet clearly wounded; Clark's Chris is patently terrifying – his appearance gives the impression

of a white collar businessman or modern politician, and the sharp, biting cadence of his words and almost robotic mannerisms give an uneasy discomfort to the audience; and Spencer's Carl is a delightful breath of fresh air, fun and frivolous, dancing around to his music... and yet incredibly-soulful, with unknown depths of emotion, and certainly harmless... right?

Mainstage Theater veteran Car-

rie Vinikow played FBI Agent Rogers and David Rodriguez plays Agent Collazo, excellent in their grilling of suspects: and of particular note is Mia Josimović, whose sudden appearance does a stellar job of turning the show on its head, and whose performance and demeanor are undeniably chilling. But the driving force of the show is undoubtedly Dosier's Ellie. Armed with the best of intentions, she wants to make the world a better place by exploring and exposing the darker depths of the internet... but, to paraphrase, when you gaze into the abyss, the abyss is all too happy to gaze back.

Ellie is charmingly easy to empathize with, and one can see how that while she may originate

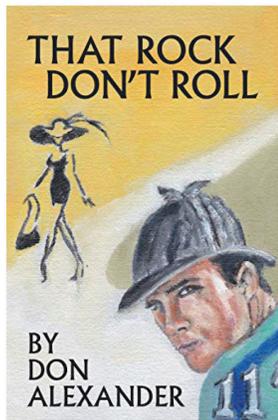
from a more liberal perspective, that her interactions are indeed affecting her, as she plays a kind of everywoman stand-in for the viewers who may wonder where the world is going these days... and what can be done about it.

It's a stark, yet riveting production that demands wider viewing: written by a local talent, it's a show that will make the viewer think and consider how some of these more extreme perspectives come to be, and if there are any ways to enlighten or counter them.

"Eight Seconds" may not be for the faint of heart, but it is for the courageous of spirit: a powerful statement on internet culture, and the darkness it may foster within.

## Some serious fun

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– The Orange County Tribune

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## Retorts: Stick with basics

Continued from page 3

Remember the experience of Gretchen Whitmer – a relative unknown – who was elected governor of Michigan on the slogan of "Fix the Damn Roads."

Who can't support that?

## Sports Retorts: Uncool in Canada

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"Talk all you want, Ernie," he said. "Results speak louder. We won, fair, square and we're moving on."

Later on, Witt backed off a bit, blaming his outburst on emotion. "I said what I thought in the moment."

You don't suppose any of this mood change has anything to do with that whole "51st state" thing, do you?

## GGUSD schools honored

Continued from page 3

rooms every day."

The California Distinguished School awards recognize schools in three categories including Exemplary High Achievers, Achievement Gap Closers and Beacons of Oppor-

tunities.

The award recognizes schools that demonstrate excellence in academic achievement, academic progress of historically underserved students, and multiple outcomes at very high performance levels.

## Gas prices in West OC on a rise

Continued from page 3

These price "spotting" numbers by consumers are subject to rapid change and may be quite different by the time you read this article.

According to the website finder.com, the national average price

of a gallon of regular gasoline is \$3.52, up 31 cents from the previous week.

The average price in California is \$5.37, but bear in mind that the Golden State has the highest gas taxes in the U.S.