

THE ORANGE COUNTY
REGISTER

PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

Area club pro makes
a name for himself



ANDREW REDINGTON — GETTY IMAGES

Michael Block celebrates his hole-in-one on the 15th hole during the final round of the PGA Championship at Oak Hill Country Club on Sunday in Pittsford, N.Y. Block, a PGA pro out of Arroyo Trabuco Golf Club in Mission Viejo, became a cult fan favorite during the four rounds, but the emotion he felt after his ace Sunday was beyond belief. “To do it on that hole on this stage was a lifelong dream,” Block said. “It can never get better.” But perhaps it can. With his his 15th-place finish, he also qualified for next year’s PGA Championship. Sports, B1

ORANGE COUNTY

Outlook
on aging
causes
concern

New report says older population is growing faster than data and disjointed agencies can handle

By Andre Mouchard
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A new report on the status of older people in Orange County uncovers problems such as hunger, dementia and loneliness, but it offers just two specific conclusions. First, the county’s older population is growing quickly. The county has about 495,000 residents age 65 or older, roughly 15.7% of the total population. By 2050, that age group is expected to nearly double, to 926,000, or 28% of the total. Second, when it comes to the needs of that older crowd, nobody — not the county, insurers, health providers or nonprofits that work with older people and provided the information in the report — knows exactly what they are. AGING » PAGE 17

SACRAMENTO SNAPSHOT

OC lawmakers’
bills among many
blocked by panels
as being too costly

Editor’s note: Sacramento Snapshot is a weekly series during the legislative session detailing what Orange County’s representatives in the Assembly and Senate are working on — from committee work to bill passages and more.

By Hanna Kang
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In what is a rather speedy process of approving or axing legislation, California legislators essentially killed hundreds of bills last week. During the twice-a-year process of what is called the “suspense file,” appropriations committees in the Assembly and Senate — responsible for SNAPSHOT » PAGE 17

CALIFORNIA JOBS

Layoffs increase 60%
to a 27-month high

California bosses laid off 236,000 workers in March, a 60% jump from the average pace of job cuts in the previous 12 months.

The jump in workers’ involuntary departures to the fastest pace since December 2020 was found in my trusty spreadsheet’s review of the federal government’s monthly Job Openings and Labor



Jonathan
Lansner
Columnist

Turnover Survey. The report, dubbed “JOLTS” by economists, tracks what’s moving the job market.

March’s layoffs are nowhere near the historic 1.5 million cuts of March 2020 amid coronavirus lockdowns. However, it’s a noteworthy spike that follows months of high-profile job cuts, no-LANSNER » PAGE 19

MUSIC

Foo Fighters reveal Josh Freese as new drummer

By Kelli Skye Fadroski
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If you’ve been to a rock or punk concert in the past two decades, there’s a good chance you’ve seen Foo Fighters’ new drummer, Josh Freese.

The group revealed during a free “Foo Fighters: Preparing Music for Concerts” global livestream event Sunday that Freese will be taking over the drum kit in place of the late Taylor Hawkins, who died suddenly while the band was on tour last year.

Last month, the band dropped an emotional new song, “Rescued,” and last week put out the punk



Josh Freese, Long Beach resident and drummer for the Orange County punk-rock band the Vandals, Devo, Sting and many others, will now anchor Foo Fighters. PHOTO BY MICHAEL GOULDING

rock-tinged “Under You.” The band has mentioned on social media that its entire new record, “But Here We Are,” which is due out June 2, is dedicated to both Hawkins and

vocalist-guitarist Dave Grohl’s late mother, educator and author Virginia Grohl.

In true Foo Fighters fashion, FREESE » PAGE 19

INDEX

Business A18 Comics A21-22 Lottery A2 Obituaries A17
Classifieds B9-10 Horoscope A20 Nation+World .. A8-9, 11, 14 Puzzles A20, 22-23

TODAY’S FORECAST
Coastal: High 67/Low 61
Inland: High 76/Low 59
Full weather report A12

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Aging

FROM PAGE 1

That information gap isn't trivial.

While nonprofits and others that work with older people collect data useful to their organizations, there's no person or group in charge of monitoring how the county's older population is faring over time. As a result, government agencies and others don't always have a clear window into where to deploy money or services that might make life easier, or even sustainable, for at-risk older residents.

"We're facing a landslide of human beings of people over 65, but we have no idea what to do about it," said Jim McAleer, chief executive of Alzheimer's Orange County, one of the nonprofits that financed and published the 2023 "Report on Aging in Orange County."

"If we had coordinated data, kept in one place, you could know how big a problem you might have with, say, dementia or hunger. You'd know how wide the gap is, and where to direct your resources," McAleer said. "But, as it is, we don't have that. So we're spending a lot of money on guesswork. And until we figure it out, we're not going to be able to help people who need it, at least not as well as we could."

The report acknowledges as much. Before diving into how the age group is faring in five key areas — access to technology, nutrition, social isolation, transportation and housing — the report starts off with a section called "Nature and Limitations of Provided Data."

That's where the report notes that its conclusions are based on information from 18 organizations, and

that the data from those groups was wildly inconsistent. Groups offered different definitions on everything from where services for older people are offered to the time frame(s) for the information they collected. Some even used different rules to define "older person," with some applying that label to people age 50 and older, others starting at 60, and still others at 65.

"Overall," the report concluded, "there was a dearth of consistent and complete demographic data. As such, no inferential analyses were possible; outcomes could not be linked to demographic factors."

That said, the report was able to piece together statistically viable glimpses of current problems and trends — some of which don't seem like problems at all.

For example, the report suggests that local older people might be more likely to use the internet than older people in other parts of the country: "County-level data from 2021 indicate that 94% of older adults in Orange County have internet access; more recent data, as provided from one agency for this report, shows that nearly 100% of their respondents have the internet and can access WIFI at home and via their cell phones."

Still, while the report could find statistics for smartphone use by older people nationally (61% own such a device and 45% use it to access social media), the report couldn't find that same information for older people in Orange County.

The report also noted that technology use among older people varies greatly depending on race and ethnicity, and that the county's older population soon will be less White, and less



COURTESY OF THE ORANGE COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR AGING

The 2023 Report on Aging in Orange County shows that better coordination between agencies, among other things, is needed to keep up with the needs of older residents.

likely to speak English, than the current crop of older people.

"Given that nearly 45% of Orange County residents aged 60 years and older are minorities, with projected increases in the prevalence of older persons of color (2023 Census data), examining demographic correlates of technology usage at the county level is becoming essential."

In other areas, even clear data didn't necessarily portray a clear picture.

For example, the report notes that from June 2021 through January of this year, the number of older people in Orange County who used CalFresh, the state program to help feed people living in poverty, jumped 42%, from 54,404 to 77,367.

While the raw numbers highlight a dramatic problem — the number of older residents who need help get-

ting enough to eat is about equal to the population of Tustin — it's unclear if the problem is getting worse or if the numbers reflect a shift in the way free and low-cost food is provided. During the pandemic, as smaller food pantries closed, food providers stepped up their efforts in enrolling older people in CalFresh.

"I think what we can say is we're starting to do a better job of identifying (older) people who are hungry," McAleer said.

The section of the report that looked at social isolation and loneliness pointed out that, particularly for older people, emotional health and physical health are entwined. Men over 80 are at the highest risk for depression, and depression can accelerate everything from heart disease to dementia. Groups most likely to be at risk include people of color and people who are

unmarried, the fastest rising subgroups of older people in Orange County.

Still, the report noted that even if nonprofits and others were focused on isolation — and many aren't — it would be a difficult issue to track: "Those most at risk are the very people most difficult to recruit into studies."

A similar lack of information hindered the report's findings about how older people in Orange County are meeting their transportation needs.

The report notes some national statistics — about 1 in 5 Americans age 65 or older no longer drives, and public transportation services around the country often don't do much for people with physical challenges or trouble walking — but it offers little that's specific to the county. Instead, it concludes by saying, "Obtaining both objective and sub-

jective data on factors that relate to transportation, across the county, is necessary."

Likewise, the report found that there's no reliable local data on how many older people in Orange County are homeless. The report does note that for older people, housing insecurity can include physical problems that might make a house unlivable, such as no longer being able to use stairs or navigate a driveway.

On that front, data suggest a lot of local older people might be at risk of finding suitable shelter. The report says 148,000 county residents 65 or older have some kind of disability, including more than 21,000 who report a difficulty that impairs "independent living."

But the biggest statistical finding, locally, is a rise in dementia.

Using a variety of measurements, the report found that more than 63,000 people in Orange County currently have dementia, either from Alzheimer's or some other source. If you include people who are diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment — often a precursor to Alzheimer's — the number jumps to more than 163,000, or about 1 in 3 residents age 65 or older.

Statewide, Alzheimer's cases are projected to jump more than 21% over the next two years.

"The dementia numbers were astounding," said McAleer, who works in that field. "It's not a bump, it's a massive surge."

Still, McAleer said his biggest takeaway from the report is this: "The county is facing a big set of issues related to seniors that we are not currently prepared to handle. We could start by collecting better data."

Snapshot

FROM PAGE 1

discussing and passing bills that have to do with where and how money is spent — held back hundreds of bills they deemed to have a potentially great fiscal impact on the state.

California this year is facing an estimated \$31.8 billion budget deficit, something legislators had to keep in mind as they decided the bills' fates.

The Senate approved 326 measures on the suspense file, or 78%, and the Assembly approved 535, or 71%, according to CalMatters.

This year, bills from Orange County representatives dealing with electricity rates, housing plans and more hit the suspense roadblock.

That includes a bill from Assemblymember Laurie Davies, R-Laguna Niguel, that aimed to require calls made by counties to applicants or recipients of a social services benefits pro-

gram to be made using a displayed number. A majority use blocked or masked numbers, she has said, and immigrants, people with disabilities and elderly residents, in particular, may not answer those calls, meaning they could be denied benefits.

Also killed was a bill included in the Assembly GOP's "supporting law enforcement and California" package that would have required the Office of Emergency Services to create a website with resources, including readily available local and statewide services, for victims of domestic violence.

Assemblymember Tri Ta's bill to "cap electricity rate increases to the rate of inflation" also did not make it through the process. The Westminster Republican said he is "extremely disappointed that my colleagues have decided not to protect consumers from out-of-control prices."

Over in the upper chamber, legislation from Sen. Catherine Blakespear to

mandate cities and counties provide proposals for homeless-serving housing as part of the Regional Housing Needs Allocation plans was killed.

"I identify homelessness as the state's top problem," Blakespear, a Democrat who represents southern Orange County communities, previously said. "I don't look around at our systems right now and believe we are going to reduce homelessness because all of the current systems provide money or help for people but doesn't have the goal of reducing homelessness to zero."

And then there was a bill from Sen. Kelly Seyarto, R-Murrieta, to give tax credits to people who provide housing below market rates to nonprofits that assist domestic violence victims. Seyarto had said his bill would help rectify California's high-cost rental markets, which can be a barrier to helping domestic violence survivors obtain housing.

In other news:

■ Blakespear convened the first hearing of the Transportation Subcommittee on LOSSAN Rail Corridor Resiliency last week, with Sens. Josh Newman, D-Fullerton, and Janet Nguyen, R-Huntington Beach, also participating. The LOSSAN corridor, which stands for Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo, moves freight and passengers through the region.

"The LOSSAN rail corridor has never been in more jeopardy," Blakespear said during the hearing.

The tracks are not resilient, she said, not due to

human error but because of climate change. In the southern portion of the corridor, trains haven't run but for two weeks out of the last six months.

The next meeting is expected to explore the science behind the threats to the corridor, such as sea level rise, coastal erosion and impacts from our built environment on rail, according to Blakespear's office. Set for July, it will also cover the overall regional, inter-regional, state and national benefits of the rail line, the various investments that have gone and are going

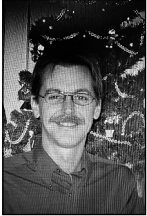
to the corridor and what more needs to be done, her office said.

■ Anaheim Mayor Ashleigh Aitken and Irvine Mayor Farrah Khan traveled to Sacramento last week as part of the Big City Mayors coalition — made up of mayors from California's 13 largest cities — to advocate for more homeless funding and mental health and substance abuse beds. Aitken also lobbied legislators in Sacramento in early March regarding housing policies.


Kaitlyn Schallhorn contributed to this report.




Obituary	Obituary	Obituary
Tina S. Maraj 1970 - 2023 Our much beloved, daughter and sister, Tina S. Maraj, aged 52, of Yorba Linda, California sadly left us on the morning of Sunday, May 14th. We take solace in the fact that she passed away peacefully in her sleep at her home. She is survived by her parents Bal & Alice Maraj and brother Mark Maraj. She was a dedicated RE/MAX realtor who proudly earned a lifetime achievement award and a charitable volunteer who served her community faithfully for over 30 years while making lifelong friendships along the way. She was a passionate music enthusiast who enjoyed attending live concerts including the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame who also loved and cared for her cherished Shih Tzu's Max and Jarvis. Given the vast number of family, friends, colleagues, neighbors and clients she touched over the years, there will be two services to pay tribute to Tina who will be dearly missed but not forgotten. A viewing will be held in her honor from 5 PM – 7 PM Tuesday, May 23rd at McAulay & Wallace Mortuary, 902 N Harbor Blvd., Fullerton. Services will be at 1 PM Wednesday, May 24th also at McAulay & Wallace Mortuary. McAulay & Wallace Mortuary		

	David Bacon May 18, 1959 - May 17, 2023 David is survived by his mother, Nancy Davidson; his brother, Michael; his sister, Kathleen MacDonald (Rocky) and a large extended family. He is predeceased by his father, Michael W. Bacon and his step-father, James Davidson. David was a graduate of Downey High School.
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