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COACHELLA



WATCHARA PHOMICINDA — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Fans dance to Bresh as he performs at the Do Lab stage on the first day of the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival at the Empire Polo Club in Indio on Friday. “It’s exciting to be back,” says Danielle Portney of Los Angeles.

THE THRILL
IS REAL

Regulars and first-timers to the desert festival embrace the experience. ‘It never gets old to me.’



PHOTO BY DAVID BRENDAN HALL

The Murder Capital performs in the Sonora Tent during Coachella’s opening day Friday. Fans flew and drove in from around the world to attend the two-weekend festival.

By Holly Alvarado
and Peter Larsen
Staff writers

For stepsisters Danielle Portney and Tamara Lett, waltzing into the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival early Friday afternoon was a homecoming of sorts.

Portney, 32, of Los Angeles and Lett, 33, of San Diego haven’t missed a festival since they were juniors in high school 16 years ago.

“It’s exciting to be back,” said Portney, who along with Lett was accompanied by Dylan Carro of Imperial Beach.

“It’s fun for me because while people complain about the festival not being like it used to be, I have the most fun just discovering bands I’ve never heard of before,” Portney said of their annual decision to buy tickets before the lineups are known.

COACHELLA » PAGE 9

HEALTH

Abortion
pill case
in 5-day
pause

Justice Alito temporarily halts restrictions in Supreme Court battle over drug’s FDA approval

By Mark Sherman and Jessica Gresko
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON » The Supreme Court said Friday it was temporarily keeping in place federal rules for use of an abortion drug, while it takes time to more fully consider the issues raised in a court challenge.

In an order signed by Justice Samuel Alito, the court put a five-day pause on the fast-moving case so the justices can decide whether lower court rulings restricting the Food and Drug Administration’s approval of the drug, mifepristone, should be allowed to take effect in the short term.

The justices are being asked at this point only

ABORTION » PAGE 11

NATIONAL SECURITY

Leak suspect
in court, U.S.
details case on
classified info

By Alanna Durkin Richer, Eric Tucker
and Nomaan Merchant
The Associated Press

BOSTON » A Massachusetts Air National Guardsman accused in the leak of highly classified military documents appeared in court Friday as prosecutors unsealed charges and revealed how billing records and interviews with social media comrades helped pinpoint the suspect.

Among the revelations: That the platform Discord provided information that helped lead the FBI to guardsman Jack Teixeira, and that Teixeira used his government computer to search for the word “leak” on the day last week when news

LEAK » PAGE 11

ACURA GRAND PRIX OF LONG BEACH

Gearing up for the big beach party

Crowds warm up to roar of engines on the first day of the three-day motor racing extravaganza

By Kristy Hutchings
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The first day of the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach kicked off Friday offering unforgettable experiences for race fans and casual race watchers from across Southern California.

The gates opened early Friday morning, marking the start of the 48th iteration of the Grand Prix, with the city’s biggest annual event also taking over downtown today and Sunday.

And though an unseasonably cloudy morning loomed over the downtown circuit early on, the marine layer had burned off by the afternoon, returning familiar, sun-soaked skies to Grand Prix visitors.

More than 180,000 people are expected to attend this year’s Grand Prix — dubbed “Southern California’s 200-mph beach party” — and by Friday after-



PHOTO BY CHUCK BENNETT

Stadium Super Trucks jump ramps during a practice session for one of their two races at Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach on Friday.

noon, thousands had congregated throughout downtown to revel in the day’s offerings.

Friday’s events included practice and qualifying runs for the various races that will take place the rest of the weekend. The first finale, the Super Drift Challenge, was held.

A slew of other offerings, in-

PARTY » PAGE 7

INSIDE: L.A.-based Boombox Cartel lights up the the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach’s first Fiesta Friday in four years. PAGE A7

IndyCar driver Scott Dixon learns he’ll be inducted into the Motorsports Hall of Fame of America in March. PAGE B1

IRVINE

Free conference will discuss
Alzheimer’s disease, offer tips

Her mom was an attorney — a “brilliant, brilliant, bright star.” They used to talk every single day. “She was my cornerstone — she always had the best advice,” Jil Wexler said.

But now, “She’s disappeared.”

Alzheimer’s disease is a slow death, a long goodbye, a soul-crusher as the people we know and love fade before our eyes. It’s one of the leading causes of death in California, and the Alzheimer’s death rate here is among the highest in the nation — eclipsed only by Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Louisi-



Teri Sforza
Columnist

ana, Arkansas, Texas, Tennessee, Washington and Utah, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As people live longer, the number of people with Alzheimer’s is expected to grow exponentially — and, disturbingly, more young people are being diagnosed with early-onset dementia and Alzheimer’s, according to a sobering 2020 study by Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Though the numbers were small, diagnoses among insured people aged 30 to 64 increased 200% over just five years,

SFORZA » PAGE 7



NHL
Ducks fire Dallas Eakins
after four seasons

Team decides not to renew coach’s contract after they went 100-147-44 in his tenure. PAGE B1

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ACURA GRAND PRIX OF LONG BEACH

Fans keep the party going during Fiesta Friday

By Christina Merino
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They danced.
They boogied.
They strutted and stomped — pretty much anything but the waltz or fox-trot. Rule out the tango while you're at it. None of those classics, after all, works well when partying to electronic dance music during an outdoor concert.

Instead, hundreds of EDM fans — or race lovers who just wanted to listen to some music — helped close out Day 1 of the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach on Friday evening, April 14, by grooving to the beats of DJ Boombox Cartel at the Terrace Theater Plaza.

Boombox Cartel, a Mexican American DJ based in Los Angeles, helped celebrate the return of the Grand Prix's Fiesta Friday concert for the first time since 2019. And the type of music — electronic dance music, or EDM — was also a first for Fiesta Friday.

"We're very happy that they have brought Fiesta Friday back," Long Beach native Alicia Hernandez, who has attended the Grand Prix with her family for the past six years, said in Span-



Los Angeles-based DJ Americo Garcia of Boombox Cartel headlines Fiesta Friday at Terrace Theater Plaza in Long Beach.

ish. "We missed it."

Like many other fans that gathered at the front of the stage, Hernandez said she was excited to be introduced to a new musical artist and genre.

Fiesta Friday had been a regular occurrence before the coronavirus pandemic. But then race organizers canceled the 2020 Grand

Prix. And there wasn't enough time ahead of the 2021 and 2022 iterations to also host the Friday concert, which is free to Grand Prix ticket holders. But on Friday, crowds migrated from throughout the Grand Prix concourse to the plaza outside the Long Beach Performing Arts Center to welcome the concert back —

and to enjoy the fiesta.

Boombox Cartel, an internationally recognized producer and performer whose given name is Americo Garcia, has risen to the ranks as an unparalleled force in the world of dance music by combining, EDM, hip-hop and Latin influences.

Some first-time Grand Prix attendees spent the day

exploring the circuit just to jam out to Boombox Cartel in the evening.

"This was the highlight of the day for me," said Stephanie Castro, who arrived from Los Angeles in the early morning, eager to see one of her favorite EDM artists.

"I'm excited to see (Boombox Cartel), listen and relax at the end of the day," Castro said.

Castro said she was surprised the Grand Prix would have him as a headliner — but she definitely approved.

"It brings in different crowds and different people," Castro said. "I'm going to jam out and maybe lose my voice from singing along."

Boombox Cartel represented a different style for Fiesta Friday, officials said previously. The Friday concert has traditionally featured rock bands.

But officials said they hoped the change would broaden the concert's appeal, drawing a younger, more diverse audience — and particularly enticing the Latino community.

The show did its part: The concert was full of high energy and had fans of all ages jumping in the air and

dancing along.

As the sun started setting, Boombox Cartel took the stage.

He ran on stage with his hands in air and encouraged long time EDM fans and new listeners to take part in the concert experience. His set included remixes of songs by popular artists such as Rihanna, Sam Smith and Billie Eilish.

John Lumantas and Laura Navaja from Glendale put their hands in the air right along with Boombox Cartel — and jumped to the beat of each song the DJ played.

"I didn't expect him to perform in this setting but it's really cool," Lumantas said about the EDM artist.

"It's a good element for the Grand Prix to have multiple things in one place, not just racing."

Fiesta Friday was the first night in the concert series for this year's Grand Prix. The Saturday night concert, closing out Day 2, will feature all-star rock band Kings of Chaos on the same concert stage in front of the Terrace Theater.

Space in the plaza is limited and will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Party

FROM PAGE 1

cluding the Lifestyle Expo at the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center — featuring more than 100 retailers hawking mini-games, raffles and more — alongside hundreds of food and merchandise vendors scattered across the concourse occupied people's downtime between practices and qualifying.

For Desirae Hepp and Mitch Hutch, two Long Beach natives who'd never attended the Grand Prix before Friday, the event was a way to relax, and experience something new.

The pair sat on a grassy knoll just outside of the convention center, and near a turn on the Grand Prix circuit, to enjoy a plate of cheesy fries and the sunshine.

Hepp said she wasn't much of a racing fan, aside from attending one in Australia a few years back. She and Hutch decided to come this year, she said, after they scored a pair of free tickets.

"(But) it's great — my favorite part is the Super Trucks," Hepp said. "They remind me of (Hutch's) cars in 'Grand Theft Auto.'"

While Hepp and Hutch had a more laid-back approach toward the Grand Prix, for others, the event represents something more: family tradition.

Harold van Putten is a veteran of the event. He's attended more than 20 in Long Beach, and he has spread his love for the event to his daughter.

Van Putten has made a habit of taking his daugh-



Kids race in electric vehicles inside the Long Beach Arena at the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach on Friday.

ter, Hilaria, to Day 1 of the Grand Prix. For his friend, Hilton Armstrong, Friday was his first time attending and he brought his daughter, Faith, along with him, too.

In his two decades coming to the Grand Prix, van Putten said, no specific series, driver or win has stood out.

Rather, the most treasured part of attending — and what's kept him coming back all these years — is the music, he said.

Music is his metaphor for the roar of the engines.

"The music that comes from the cars," Armstrong said Friday. "That's the attraction."

The best place to stand and listen to the cars sing at the Grand Prix, van Putten said, is just beneath the crossover bridge at the end of the straightaway.

"It was so funny — I used to text him," van Patten

said, pointing to his friend, Hilton Armstrong, "when I was right underneath that bridge. I'd send him the sound and say, 'Hey, look where I am!'"

It was receiving those audio clips every year, Armstrong said, that finally pushed him to make the trip to the Grand Prix after relocating to Los Angeles from Sacramento.

"Every year (van Putten) would text me and I couldn't (go) because of work," Armstrong said. "I loved motor sports when I was younger — not so much cars, but I am a car enthusiast."

For Armstrong's first time at the event, the friends each bought a pair of one-day tickets for Friday's goings-on. They also paid for special access to the paddocks so they could catch a look at the technical



An IndyCar goes around the aquarium fountain during practice for the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach on Friday.

side of the IndyCars, and in hopes of running into a few of the drivers.

But they hadn't had any luck on that front — at least by midmorning.

Even so, Armstrong said, his first time at the Grand

Prix was a bit overwhelming — in the best way possible.

"It's amazing," he said. "I hope to make this a yearly event."

The Fimbres feels the same about the Grand Prix — and they family, like van

Putten, has been coming to the Grand Prix for years.

Laura and Francisco Fimbres — who carried several bags of goodies with them as they exited the Lifestyle Expo — also said that attending the Grand Prix is a tradition that's been passed down.

"My parents used to (come) a lot," Laura Fimbres said. "And I used to go with my dad a lot."

But now that her parents are older and don't have as much energy to walk for miles in the Southern California sun, she's trying to pass that tradition down to her own son, Matteo.

The Fimbres brought along their 6-year-old for his first time, previously avoiding it because they feared the screeching of the cars would hurt his ears.

But he's handled it well, Laura said, thanks to some noise-canceling headphones.

"We love it," Francisco said, noting that the Long Beach Grand Prix falls around the same time as his birthday every year. "It's always awesome."

His birthday is today and he'll celebrate during Day 2 of the Grand Prix.

Today's schedule includes the 100-minute IMSA SportsCar Grand Prix, IndyCar qualifying, the first Stadium Super Trucks and Porsche Carrera Cup races, the second drift challenge and the historic Formula One competition.

With even bigger crowds than Friday, there's no doubt Fimbres will celebrate his birthday alongside thousands of other race fans as the motor sports party moves into a higher gear.

Sforza

FROM PAGE 1

with women more heavily impacted than men, the study found.

Luckily — for those of us who are not getting any younger — Southern California is a hotbed of Alzheimer's research and the Alzheimer's Foundation of America is hosting a free Educational Conference for Southern California from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday at Hilton Irvine, 18800 MacArthur Blvd.

People can learn about the latest science from experts at UC Irvine, how to mobilize local support for the sometimes-overwhelming job of caregiving from Alzheimer's Orange County, explore how young people can get involved and get tips on keeping the brain in tip-top shape. Advance registration is highly recommended at alzfdn.org/tour.

Over the next 20 years, the impact of Alzheimer's disease and related

dementias in California will increase dramatically, a recent study from the California Department of Public Health said.

Learn, connect

Sessions will include "Looking Forward to a Future Without Alzheimer's," where Frank M. LaFerla, director of the UCI Alzheimer's Disease Research Center at the university's Institute for Memory Impairments and Neurological Disorders, will talk about the latest research underway.

UCI was recently awarded a \$47 million grant from the National Institute on Aging to develop next-generation mouse models for studying late-onset Alzheimer's and Hoag Hospital is the site of clinical trials that hope to uncover treatment and even cures.

There's also "It Takes a Village," where Jim McAleer, president and CEO of Alzheimer's Orange County, will walk people through how to access support groups, educational workshops, adult day care facilities



Jil Wexler says her her mom was her cornerstone. Her mom is suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

and the like. The group has two adult day centers — Healthy Aging Center Acacia and Healthy Aging Center Laguna Woods — and he'll stress the importance of engaging with the community.

In "Youth, Care and Alzheimer's," Giovanna Manson-Hing, a public health gerontologist, will explore the role younger people play in caring for those with Alzheimer's, and what they can do now to mitigate their own risks.

Free, confidential memory screenings will be conducted throughout

the day as well.

From the front lines

Dee Ransom has been married to her husband John for 51 years. He was an FBI agent, diagnosed in 2017 after having trouble communicating and understanding. They started taking classes together at Alzheimer's Orange County and she cared for him at their Huntington Beach home "happily and wonderfully" as long as she could.

But the disease progressed. He escaped one night.

"I could no longer keep

him safe," the former school administrator said.

She sold their home to keep him in a quality memory-care facility and moved to a less-expensive place in rural San Diego County. That, she said, is an economic eventuality that caregivers should prepare for.

"I just moved three weeks ago," she said. "It's an adjustment. I've never lived without John."

Her advice to others is to "connect, connect, connect" through the Alzheimer's groups. Events are not just informative, but social.

"We built a community," she said. "The caregiver needs to take care of him or herself as well as the person they're tending. It can be exhausting. You're not alone. Just ask."

Meantime, Wexler's mom is being heroically cared for at home by her stepdad.

"It has been heartbreaking to watch the brilliant woman who raised me become a shell of herself," she said. "Luckily, she is still a kind, caring and loving person. Some of her antics

are funny, but most are sad. At times she does not recognize her husband, my dear stepfather Paul, and asks him how long they have been married. It has been well over 40 years."

Wexler will be teaching a group Pilates class at Club Pilates in Newport Beach in June to benefit the Alzheimer's Foundation, with details to come.

"Knowledge is a useful and powerful tool that can help make any situation easier to navigate, especially something as challenging as caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease," said Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr., AFA president and CEO, in a statement. "Connecting families with useful, practical information and support that can help them now and be better prepared for the future is what this conference is all about."

Questions about Alzheimer's? AFA's helpline is 866-232-8484, or web chat at alzfdn.org. Alzheimer's Orange County's helpline is 844-373-4400, or alzoc.org.