

LOCAL ELECTION RESULTS • TEACHER OF THE YEAR • JOSHUA TREE ART STOPS

IRVINE

WEEKLY

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GIADA DE LAURENTIIS: COMING FULL CIRCLE
THE CELEBRITY CHEF IS BACK TO BASICS WITH GIADZY

NOVEMBER 18, 2022 NO. 14

CONTENTS



NEWS: 2

The 2022 midterm results in Irvine and beyond.
BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

ART: 6

Art Desert Highway: Creative stops in Joshua Tree.
BY SHANA NYS DAMBROT

FOOD: 8

Giada De Laurentiis is back to basics with Giadzy.
BY MICHELE STUEVEN

COMMUNITY: 10

Barn owl rescued from Silverado Fire in 2020 on road to recovery.
BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

EDUCATION: 11

Northwood High School teacher named Teacher of the Year in California.
BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

NEWS: 12

Hoag Hospital's \$1 billion future in Irvine..
BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

THE 2022 MIDTERM RESULTS IN IRVINE AND BEYOND

WITH APPROXIMATELY 45% OF BALLOTS TALLIED IN ORANGE COUNTY, IRVINE MAYOR FARRAH KHAN AND IRVINE COUNCIL MEMBER LARRY AGRAN BOTH HAVE MAINTAINED EARLY ELECTION NIGHT LEADS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE RE-ELECTION CAMPAIGNS.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

As the nation awaits the final results of the 2022 Midterm Elections and tallies trickle in, voters in Irvine are starting to get a clearer picture of how candidates fared during election night.

On Tuesday, Nov. 15, the OC Registrar of Voters estimated that 45% of ballots had been counted with still approximately 176,000 ballots left to process, according to its website. The Registrar has released daily results on weekdays at 5:00 p.m. since the night after the elections.

There is no official timeline on when the final counts will be available according to Bob Page, the county

Registrar of Voters. However, Page explained that the department will work to certify election results by December 8, which is the statutory deadline.

In an email with Irvine Weekly, Page said he does not "predict the number of days it will take to certify an election," but will be executing a number of things to ensure the results are properly, and accurately recorded.

"The Registrar of Voters will do the following in order to certify the election results no later than the statutory deadline of December 8:

Process every vote-by-mail and provisional ballot cast in this election

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NEWS

as they are received (we do not sort or prioritize ballots by certain contests on the ballot, such as Irvine Mayor).

Provide voters an opportunity to cure a signature issue on their vote-by-mail ballots.

Complete several tests and audits to ensure the accuracy of the results."

In Irvine, incumbent Mayor Farrah Khan has maintained a steady lead with 36.85% of Irvine voters opting for her reelection, with a total of 24,102 votes, as of Tuesday, November 15.

Of Khan's four challengers, mayoral candidate Branda Lin trailed Khan with just over 17,982 votes, at 27.50% of the vote. Simon Moon has claimed 19.47% of the vote in Irvine, with 12,735 votes. Kathrine Daigle claimed 6,187 votes and Tom Chomyn garnered 4,391 votes, appealing to 6.71% of voters.

Khan's social media gave no indication on how the mayor was feeling on the Wednesday after the election. When asked about her thoughts on the results, Khan said she was optimistic, but said there was still a lot of ground to cover in this election.

"There are still a lot of ballots to be counted so we're going to wait for any announcement until all ballots have been counted. I spent election night with friends and family and feel good about our numbers," Khan shared in a text to Irvine Weekly on Wednesday, November 9.

Lin, however, has been active on social media.

"One message is loud and clear: Irvine residents want a new mayor! 33.6% of the ballots have been counted so far with 30,657 votes against the incumbent, and 17,114 votes for the incumbent," Lin wrote in a Facebook post on the Branda Lin for Mayor campaign page.

In a phone call with Irvine Weekly, Lin said she was "thankful" and planned to keep close tabs on the results.

On election night Irvine City Council member Larry Agran jumped out to an early lead seeking another term on Irvine's City Council. Agran has claimed 26,211 votes, connecting with roughly 24% of Irvine voters. Trailing Agran with 24,118 votes, Dr. Kathleen Treseder has claimed just over 22% of the vote, slightly edging out incumbent Anthony Kuo.

As of Tuesday, November 15, Kuo had

received 23,006 votes, connecting with 21.05% of voters. Challengers John Park received 21,382 votes at 19%, while Scott Hansen received 10,611 votes, and Navid



Sadigh claimed 3,970 votes.

Speaking to Irvine Weekly by phone Wednesday, Agran was pleased about the initial results but was cautious due to the amount of votes left to count. Agran said he felt that his "serious approach," connected with voters, giving him an early lead.

"It is really quite close, but I feel pretty good as we look forward to the final results – that probably won't be clear for at least several days," he said. "I was pleased that the couple hundred thousand dollars in vicious attack mail seemed to be rejected by most of the people."

The race between Kuo and Treseder is very close – a difference of less than 1,200 votes.

In a text message with Irvine Weekly on Wednesday, November 9, Treseder said she was happy about her position in the polls, adding that she would continue to follow the results as they became available.

"I'm glad we are where we are, and I'm looking forward to the final votes coming in," she said.

With more ballots still to be counted, Kuo remained optimistic

"While votes continue to be counted, I'm grateful for the robust conversation that

candidates and voters had over the last number of months. I've worked hard for the community I grew up in during my first four years on the City Council, and

remain optimistic with each update the Registrar of Voters provides."

Orange County Supervisor 5th District: Katrina Foley vs. Patricia Bates

Incumbent 2nd District Supervisor Katrina Foley currently leads her opponent Senator Patricia Bates for the 5th District seat on the Orange County Board Of Supervisors.

As of November 15, Foley had accumulated 99,263 votes appealing to 50.88% of voters. Bates had accumulated 95,834 votes, or 49.12% of voters, according to the OC Registrar of Voters website.

California State Assembly District 73: Cottie Petrie-Norris (D) vs. Steven S. Choi (R)

Democratic State Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris, the 74th District incumbent, is leading her Republican opponent Steven Choi by approximately 10,000 votes in the race for State Assembly District 73, as of November 15.

Petrie-Norris has accumulated 61,510 votes, or 54.6% of the vote, while Choi has received 51,148 votes, or 45.4%, according to

the Secretary of State's website.

U.S. House 47th Congressional District: Katie Porter (D) vs. Scott Baugh

With approximately 30 days left before official certification, Orange County Democrat Katie Porter is currently in the lead for U.S. House 47th Congressional District against Republican Scott Baugh.

Porter has accumulated 114,392 votes, appealing to 50.6% of voters. Baugh claimed 111,501 votes at 49.4% of voters, according to the Secretary of State website.

California State Office Results as of November 15, 2022

Secretary of State

Shirley N. Weber (D) – 4,614,801 votes (59.5%)
Robert Bernosky (R) – 3,136,462 votes (40.5%)

Controller

Malia M. Cohen (D) – 4,215,527 votes (54.7%)
Leehan Chen (R) – 3,485,560 votes (45.3%)

Attorney General

Rob Bonta (D) – 4,531,598 votes (58.6%)
Nathan Hochman (R) – 3,200,531 votes (41.4%)

State Treasurer

Fiona Ma (D) – 4,486,912 votes (58.4%)
Jack M. Guerrero (R) – 3,196,178 (41.6%)

Insurance Commissioner

Ricardo Lara (D) – 4,541,802 (59.4%)
Robert Howell (R) – 3,104,385 (40.6%)

District 1 Member, State Board Of Equalization

Jose Altamirano (D) – 681,101 votes (43.9%)
Ted Gaines (R) – 869,192 votes (56.1%)

U.S. Senator Full Term

Alex Padilla (D) – 4,723,948 votes (60.5%)
Mark Meuser (R) – 3,081,849 (39.5%)

Lieutenant Governor

Eleni Kounalakis (D) – 4,585,444 votes (59.2%)
Angela Jacobs (R) – 3,154,970 votes (40.8%)

Governor of California

Garvin Newsom (D) – 4,631,939 votes (58.9%)
Brian Dahle (R) – 3,229,013 votes (41.1%)

ART

ART DESERT HIGHWAY: CREATIVE STOPS IN JOSHUA TREE

TEN OFFBEAT SPOTS FOR HIGH DESERT
CULTURE IN NATURE.

BY SHANA NYS DAMBROT



AutoCamp Joshua Tree

It's no secret that the string of high desert towns along Highway 62 – Pioneertown, Joshua Tree, 29 Palms, Morongo Valley, Yucca Valley, Landers, Wonder Valley, and environs – has long been home to an eclectic, prolific, and constantly evolving community of artists and independent creative explorers. The area's visionary cultural bent finds expression in everything from land art and open-air installations to maker boutiques, craftspeople, architectural confections, gallery spaces, artist residency projects, and many more unconventional, undefinable offerings. Like every once-sleepy enclave of immense

natural beauty currently withstanding an influx of recovering urbanites, Joshua Tree's cultural landscape is a fascinating mix of stalwarts and new arrivals, with expanding L.A. connectivity and deepening regional identity.

Shari Elf's landmark Art Queen & World Famous Crochet Museum is one old school landmark that has held its own, looking as inviting and iconically eccentric as ever. One of the most recognizable artsy outposts in the region, the intimate architectural entropy, mixed media installations, enchanted doll trailer, and hand-embellished slow-fashion boutique compound is surrounded with other

favorite local art destinations. This micro-arts district includes La Matadora Gallery, The Station's quirky souvenir site in a vintage gas station and garage, Space Cowboy Bookstore, and the artist-run gallery and bookish collectibles emporium, Hey There Projects.

Opened by Colleen Hake in summer 2017, La Matadora's program embraces the ornate, gothic, folkloric rococo of ritualistic found-object assemblage, as though all the world were an altar being built. Their current (through December 4) exhibition Holy Relic features work by artists Alea Bone and Shrine – two artists who each elevate the choreography

of found-object arrangement to fresh heights of spirit-infused, meaningful mosaic.

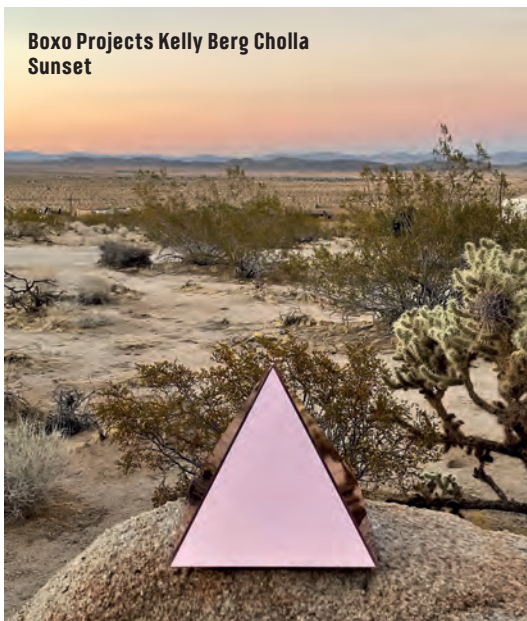
Hey There Projects was founded in 2019 by artists, friends, locals, and sometime Angelenos Mark Todd and Aaron Smith, with the simple goal to showcase emerging and established artists in a broader regional discourse, specifically in a setting of natural beauty instead of concrete jungle. It further includes a retail space which features folk art, books, zines, wearables, collectibles, ceramics, and sundry "desert lifestyle supplies" like the ubiquitous inventively scented candles that are somehow literally everywhere. Think of the Wacko/La Luz de Jesus arrangement, but less Lowbrow and more dusty trails. They are currently exhibiting a two-person show featuring new portrait-based works and sculptures by Ryan Heshka and Rob Sato; next up is the annual print show in December, just in time for giving the gift of art.

More or less across the street, weekend mornings are well spent wandering the wonderland that is the Sky Village Swap Meet – a truly trippy fabricated ghost town that plays host to a panoply of vintage, estate, tag sale, salvage, and straight-up curiosity sales, as well as several slightly inexplicable, quasi-immersive, extremely photogenic, interpretive architectural concoctions that are their own reward quite apart from the epic treasure bargains. A giant chicken, a faux stained glass citadel, a handmade crystal cave, some last chance saloon-type Dada, and weathered wagon wheels are festooned with vintage appliances, estate china, handmade jewelry, curious ornaments and rescued art.

There's a new gallery and bookstore at Joshua Tree Retreat Center; the 29 Palms Art Gallery is thriving and continues to offer community-based arts and education programming; and the Yucca Valley Art Center which was forced to close during covid has reopened post-pandemic as the Joshua Tree Gallery of Contemporary Art and is presenting some really interesting local and international programs.

Heading north up toward Landers, the internationally known mecca of sound-frequency based chakra alignment, ley line-enhanced waters, and extraterrestrial wisdom that is the Integratron is

Boxo Projects Kelly Berg Cholla Sunset



very much still functioning as intended. The intimate meditation yard and sculpture garden of its grounds are free and open, but you'll want to book your sound-bath session tickets ahead, it fills up fast. The sessions are accompanied by informative lessons on the site, the structure, and the broader bohemian history of the project, but simply put, it's pretty much the ultimate sound-bathing and consciousness-attuning experience everyone says it is.

Off another long and winding road toward the north, and if you're willing to quickly scale a lowkey mountain, British land artist Andrew Rogers' *Rhythms of Life* is a two-part petroglyphic sculpture perching atop a rocky ridge. Meant to be physically experienced up close but only fully optically perceived from the air, like all of Rogers' work around the globe, it blends historic research into regional civilizations with a modern take on the meaningful monument.

While you're out Landers way, besides attempting to eat at La Copine, whose legendarily elusive seasonal schedule and interpretive reservation system is a bit of an experiential art piece in itself, check out the fairly new artist-run Goat Gallery. They are currently showing an exhibition of text-based mixed media works by Atwater/Whitewater resident Bettina Hubby, whose love of enlightening puns is only exceeded by her love for

wild desert vistas and sacred rocks.

Noah Purifoy also loved a pun and the desert, and the late artist's greatest work, the Desert Art Museum, is still out there doing amazing. After the LACMA show of several years ago, certain of the site's largest works were returned to the parcel of land, a bit tidied up from the experience, and indeed the whole site seems neater than before, for better and worse. Entropy and erosion are being kept at bay, but one misses the sense of the desert sands being in a slow-motion battle to reclaim the artist's found-object monuments for its windswept oblivion. But its commentary on reclamation and repurposing materials, re-envisioning what art and the art world can be, sustainability and skepticism are as poignant – maybe more so – than ever.

Down the road from this historic site, sculptor, storyteller, and one-man imaginarium Eames Demetrios' *Krblin Jihn Cabin* is also somehow still standing. Purpose built as a ruin, a disrupted intrusion into our plane of existence from a neighboring nested reality, the site draws on the harsh, hardscrabble balance of freedom and exile that informs so much of the western mythology. Its vibe is both secular and consecrated, inviting the wind and sun inside its abandonment, carving out a moment in the shape of a place for a story that did not need to have taken place in the desert, but could

Integratron



PHOTO BY SND

not have happened anywhere else.

If you're looking for a specific occasion to take this particular road trip, the BoxoPROJECTS 10th anniversary festival BoxoOxIO kicks off on November 19, and its artist residency-derived site-specific projects, performance events like opening night at the Integratron, and other public programs, most free, some ticketed, continue through December 31.

Ten artists who have participated in residencies at BoxoPROJECTS over the past ten years are featured in BoxoOxIO, a 10th anniversary exhibition and celebration of exploring "contemporary art at the new frontier." The milestone offers a moment to reflect, celebrate, and look ahead. The residency, which launched in 2012, provides artists from a range of disciplines with an inspirational space outside their everyday experience, as well as an extended family of artists, experts in a range of topics from ecology and land use to indigenous history and geology, and independent thinkers from across art theory, philosophy, and social practice. To date, Boxo has hosted and presented nearly 50 residencies, visiting and studio artists, 15 exhibitions, and three editions of the conceptual and convivial sculptural installation mini-land art festival, the Joshua Treenial.

For BoxoOxIO, artists Eli Hirtle, Heather L. Johnson, and Jim Toia return to Joshua Tree to create installations that advance

their previous residency projects. Kelly Berg and Ben Cuevas will present work updated or completed since their time on site, while Megan Evans, William Lamson, and Ana Sanchez-Colberg reprise aspects of their projects from afar. Caroline Partamian and Ethan Primason, who settled in the area following their residency, will produce a sound installation and performance at the Integratron.

One of the messages of BoxoPROJECTS – and indeed all these high desert projects and many more like them – is to absorb, honor, respect, and reflect on the natural landscape. To that end, remember that one more special thing about the area is its immediate proximity to the glorious Joshua Tree National Park. Branching off from its main north-south route is an east-west semi-circle with entrance/exits along Highway 62 in Joshua Tree and 19 Palms. Whether you're pressed for time or just not feeling like a proper hike, this loop takes about half an hour to cruise, moving through several miles of stunning, continually changing terrain. Tip: like everything, it looks its best at magic hour.

A spectacular way to scratch your itch to be in nature without giving up hotel-style creature comforts completely is to stay at a place like AutoCamp Joshua Tree. A gated community of sleek, shiny, superbly outfitted, full mini-kitchen, cozy and comfy AirStreams (and a few tiny houses) with a charming clubhouse, 24-hour glamping-themed general store, s'mores kits, wine fridge, outdoor dining rooms and wood grills, and even some music and wellness activities on site, centrally located AutoCamp is much less remote than it feels. It's a big enough site to rent a handful of AirStreams for a group outing, but private enough for a more romantic or just relaxing alternative to both motels and full-on campgrounds. Stepping outside into a light pollution-free view of the starry night and waking up to the big bright cloud-streaked blue sky at sunrise, at the same time being mere moments away from hipster beanery Joshua Tree Coffee Company and the excellent scones at Boo's Organic Oven, might just be an art-curious city-slicker's perfect high desert happy medium.

FOOD

GIADA DE LAURENTIIS: COMING FULL CIRCLE

THE CELEBRITY CHEF IS BACK TO BASICS WITH GIADZY.

BY MICHELE STUEVEN



Emmy Award-winning celebrity chef Giada De Laurentiis has been on a 20-year marathon of nine cookbooks, countless episodes of 11 very personal shows on the Food Network including *Giada at Home*, restaurants, merchandise and is recognized by the International Hospitality Institute as one of the Global 100 in Hospitality, a list featuring the 100 Most

Powerful People in Global Hospitality. She's crossed the finish line and is ready for the next race.

In June, she walked away from the Food Network after an intense 20 years, having been a significant part of the basic cable channel's international success, to return to the roots that propelled her to fame in the first place. The Italian-born chef is bringing it all under one roof

with her own lifestyle and e-commerce platform, *Giadzy*, and kickstarting the catering business she started after college that attracted the attention of her former boss, super chef Wolfgang Puck.

"I've had lots of different homes for my different businesses and they've all been great," De Laurentiis tells Irvine Weekly at an intimate poolside dinner at her Pacific Palisades home. "I've learned a lot and

want to give more of the 360 Italian experience and have control over it as much as I can. That's what I'm trying to create with *Giadzy* – to have the content and the products and have it all under one roof and really curate that whole experience and micro-manage it for a while. I wasn't able to do that through all of my other endeavors. I needed to go through all that to get to this place. It's a journey of experiences to understand what your end goal is. *Giadzy* is a culmination of all that experience brought into one home and innovating it with the digital world and going direct to consumer without the middleman. Food Network was always my middleman."

The new platform features Italian products like panettone, pasta, sauces, antipasti, sweets, spices and books, as well as meal kits and gift sets. The Cinema Night Box is an homage to her grandfather Dino De Laurentiis, one of Hollywood's most famed film producers and the inspiration behind her love of food. It comes with a movie poster from one of his films including *King Kong*, *Bitter Rice* and *Barbarella* as well as amaretto truffles, Granisi Cookies With Manna Orange, Chocolate Cantucci from the third-generation bakers at Bonci and Guido Gobino hot chocolate. There are plenty of recipes, tips and an "Ask Me Anything" section, and for fans who will miss her shows, there are cooking demonstrations to come as well.

As for many of the Food Network's major stars like Pioneer Woman Ree Drummond and Michael Symon, the pandemic forced chefs to pivot and film their shows at home with minimal family crews, which changed the cooking show landscape. Turns out, the public loved the more personalized, less stylized versions.

"Covid was the turning point," she says. "It changed a lot of things for a lot of people, but for me, it completely shifted my perspective and asked myself, what do I actually need to create content? Not very much. I went back to doing my own thing all the time – shopping for the food and prepping everything myself, setting up my demos and the recipes. I basically did it all myself and realized, oh man, I can do so much more if I can just focus my time on this one thing. That's when I realized I can do all this on *Giadzy*. I don't need to do it for the Food Network the

way I was doing it anymore. I wouldn't have realized it, if I hadn't been put in the position of shooting at home with a phone. It was a lot easier than I thought it was going to be. I enjoyed it so much more and it was so personal. I could never get that personal on a set. I think Covid also gave us the permission to say, it's OK, and people saying, we'll accept it this way. It doesn't have to be so perfect, and we really want to be more intimate and connect on a different level. Without Covid, I don't think I would have gotten here so quickly."

But getting here was at times a bumpy transition and her life wasn't always charmed. She came to Los Angeles from Rome with her family at age 8.

"Coming to the states was rough," De Laurentiis says. "In those days, it was rough for most immigrants no matter what. Kids can be cruel at times if you don't fit into whatever they believe you should either look like or you should eat or how you should speak. I didn't fit any of those characteristics. My parents were fierce about keeping our Italian culture and language intact. Family was above everything else. My parents were like, there's four of you and you have all these cousins, why do you need all these friends? You can have fun at home!"

"I was embarrassed to have people over because my parents would just speak in Italian and make Italian meals, which was not what my friends would eat," she says. "I'd get ridiculed at school or on the bus to school for my short hair, because my mother insisted on cutting my hair short so I would have golden locks when I was older. She insisted on nutella sandwiches and mortadella and leftover pasta. She would put it in little containers for my lunch. It was awkward. Kids teased me, so I would eat by myself a lot of the time. But then at times, when she made me a Toblerone sandwich, I could trade with other kids. So I got in trouble for that, because in those days, you couldn't have chocolate for lunch. I was very shy about my name and my culture and my language and the food I was eating, and I was ashamed of it for a long time and angry. As a kid you just want to be like everybody else. As I grew up I realized how fortunate I actually was."

Long before there was Eatatly, Dino



brought childhood chef friends over from Italy to open the DDL Foodshow Italian specialty foods market and restaurant in Beverly Hills in the 1980s, where his granddaughter spent her free hours and developed a love of hospitality as she watched Dino hand out bread samples and toss pasta.

"It brought me to life," she says. "I realized how much I loved being around it and watching the 'AHH' moment on people's faces and that somehow I would like to create that for people. I spent a lot of time there as a kid after school eating, messing around and helping out.

I was just in Italy a few weeks ago with the Lazaroni family who make the little amaretti cookies and spoke to the grandfather who is in his 90s. We were in an upstairs room where he had all these historic artifacts, boxes from his parents. He said to me, 'You know I used to sell all these different cookies and ship them to your grandfather for DDL Foodshow.' He had some photos that he had saved of the two of them when he personally brought a shipment to Beverly Hills and helped my grandfather set it all up. Sometimes life really takes you full circle."

Family has always been the core of the De Laurentiis brood and focus of Giada's shows. We've watched her 14-year-old daughter Jade grow up on the network, with her mother Veronica and aunt



Marfuga Olive Oil On Caprese Salad

Raffy making regular appearances, as well. Siblings Eloisa and Igor have been regulars on her various series. She lost her brother Dino to melanoma 17 years ago. Stepping away from the grind of regular TV shows has offered the UCLA graduate flexibility and the chance to call her own shots.

"I can choose to do the things I want to do when I want to do them," she says. "I can work until 4 p.m., and then go watch Jade's volleyball game. I didn't have that flexibility before. When I was shooting, I'd shoot every day until 8 o'clock at night. You would think I could call the shots on that, but when you have a crew, it doesn't work that way. I want to take Jade to school every day. I've only got about two years left to do that; she'll be driving herself soon. I want to be able to pick her up. I want to be able to go to her plays. I now have the flexibility to incorporate those things into my schedule. For the last 14 years, it's been rough. I used to think having her on the show was time spent together. Oh, she's coming to set right after school and I'll hang out with her then. But you never hang with them, because they're asking you things and want your attention and you can't. Hold on Jade, I have to finish this act, or hold on, I just have to do a quick voice-over or talk to the director for one second. Then by the time you're done, it's time to go to bed. Jade's had a lot of that in her life. It's



Roasted chestnuts in Rome

too bad I didn't do this 10 years ago."

Moving forward, De Laurentiis is going full speed ahead with her catering business, which has been close to her heart since college and few high-profile chefs are capable of taking on, save for her former boss Puck, whom she plans to challenge in the major event space. She already has two big galas scheduled for December. It will be a real test, as Puck pretty much has the corner on all of the major Hollywood events, including the Academy Awards.

"For now," says the diminutive former food stylist. "People are looking for change and a new experience in catering. Things that stay static die, so you have to be able to evolve. It's time for someone new to come into the game. I think we'll have restaurants forever, but people aren't looking to eat out like they used to and that's going to narrow down who's going to be successful in this business anymore. This is a good time for me to go back to where I started."

While she may have inherited a little of her grandfather's hubris, the free-spirited Italian California girl still understands the Hollywood pecking order.

"Somebody came up to my grandfather at the airport a few years back," says De Laurentiis. "They said, 'Oh my gosh! Are you related to Giada?!' He said no, she is related to ME.' That's how it goes."

COMMUNITY

SAVING SMOKEY

SMOKEY, A MALE BARN OWL RESCUED FROM THE SILVERADO FIRE IN 2020, HAS BEEN RECOVERING AT THE OC BIRD OF PREY CENTER. HIS HANDLERS SAY HIS RECOVERY IS REMARKABLE.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OC BIRD OF PREY CENTER



A barn owl rescued by firefighters during the Silverado Fire in October 2020 continues to make progress in rehabilitation, recently celebrating two years of recovery. The owl, who was given the name Smokey, had lost all of its feathers after suffering severe burns.

While not yet back to full strength, Smokey continues to impress volunteer caretakers and veterinarians at the OC Bird Of Prey Center, who say the lucky bird has displayed resilience in a remarkable recovery.

Joanne McDermott, who has volunteered at the OCBPC for about six years, called Smokey's recovery unprecedented.

"Most raptors molt sequentially – a

feather, or two at a time," McDermott explained. "It's basically an unprecedented thing for a raptor to lose all its feathers at the same time. So, it's quite a bit of growing feathers – they don't normally grow feathers all at once."

It is uncertain at this point if Smokey will regain full-flight capabilities that will allow for his re-release into the wild, but considering the amount of recovery from the extent of his injuries as a result of the fire, Smokey continues to defy the odds.

McDermott expects Smokey to be released eventually, but said there is no target date for the raptor.

Dr. Scott Weldy, President of the OCBPC, is the veterinarian that initially treated Smokey. Given the extent of the injuries

the raptor sustained, Weldy shared that in more than 30 years of working with animals, Smokey's recovery is something he has never experienced.

When asked if he had seen a recovery of this nature, Weldy responded, "Not personally, no – I've seen bad ones. You can burn your mustache or eyebrows with a sparkler that goes off wrong, but this is damage to the skin and the tissue," he said.

In addition to smoke inhalation, Weldy said Smokey received severe thermal burns on the underlying skin on the top and bottom of his wings. Weldy added that until Smokey can rebuild the main flight feathers, he will have difficulty flying.

"He's gotta have full feathers – when he

puts his wings out, there's a lot of open spots. He hasn't grown the new feathers," Weldy said. "He can fly right now, just not real well."

Weldy reiterated that Smokey's road to recovery has been difficult, and did not have a definite timetable on when he expected the bird to fully recover. But, based on his observations, Smokey continues to improve day by day.

"He's got most of his body feathers on but he's still missing a few primary feathers here and there, so he doesn't fly very well. The main flight feathers – the follicles have been damaged, but I mean, it's amazing because the first year he didn't really molt well in the fall, so this year he's really molted in a lot of the damaged ones. But I don't know if he's going to finish that molt next year," he said. "It's been a long, long path."

Smokey, on the other hand, remains unimpressed with the help of Weldy and other volunteers, like McDermott, assisting in his rehabilitation at the Lake Forest-based OCBPC.

But, that might be a good thing.

"He definitely doesn't like us," Weldy said. "That's good, he's not habituated to us. He has other barn owls around him, he has a large cage that he flies in. Sometimes he's by himself, sometimes he's with five to 10 birds, so mentally he's got – as best we can give it to him – stimulation and interaction."

The main hurdle will be regrowing the main flight feathers. And considering the condition of Smokey's burned follicles, Weldy says only time will tell if that regrowth will happen.

"That's the big problem, he hasn't healed completely from all these scars that he had from the fire."

For now, Weldy says Smokey is simply eating and being a barn owl. From Weldy's perspective, Smokey continues to demonstrate a natural quest for survival in his recovery, as volunteers continue to hope he can molt his way back to natural flight.

"He's a very rare case," McDermott said. "I would say he's a very, very lucky bird to have been found by the right people, and then brought to the right people."

A GoFundMe page, established when the Smokey was originally rescued has raised \$4,890 of its \$5,000 goal.

A CASE FOR STATE'S TOP TEACHER

BEN CASE, A HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC INSTRUCTOR AT NORTHWOOD HIGH SCHOOL, HAS RECEIVED HIGH MARKS FOR HIS IMPACT IN THE CLASSROOM, RECENTLY BEING NAMED TEACHER OF THE YEAR IN CALIFORNIA.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER



Earlier this year, Ben Case, a music instructor at Northwood High School, was recognized as High School Teacher of the Year within the Irvine Unified School District. Shortly thereafter, he received the same honor for the whole of Orange County.

And just last month, Mr. Case became one of five educators in the state to be chosen as a California Teacher of the Year.

"I was able to apply for the County Teacher of The Year, which I was one of six finalists for," Case explained. "And being a finalist for that I was able to apply for the state."

Speaking to Irvine Weekly by phone, Mr. Case shared his reaction to his first Teacher of the Year honors and explained the impact the professional acknowledgment comes with.

For Case, being recognized at the district level was a huge accomplishment, but he added that being acknowledged by the State Superintendent as Teacher of the Year still feels surreal. Most importantly, Case says that regardless of any award, he remains extremely passionate for music education which he hopes will ignite a spark in all of his students.

"It still hasn't set in," Case said of becoming California Teacher of The Year. "I know it sounds so cliché, but I feel so humbled to be part of the conversation. I've always just been so incredibly inspired by my colleagues at Northwood and throughout the district."

Sonia Kearney, President of the Irvine

Teachers Association, said she was thrilled when she learned about Case receiving the award. However, Kearney was not surprised.

"My son and daughter had Ben all four years of their high school careers," Kearney wrote in an email to Irvine Weekly. "I am so excited that he has won this award. He truly made such a positive impact on both of them, that I will be eternally grateful to him and the program he has built."

Case, a 17-year teaching veteran at Northwood, co-manages Northwood's instrumental music program which caters to more than 800 students. From music theory classes to multiple different styles of instrumental ensembles, Case has developed a fine-tuned reputation among his colleagues and students.

"I teach instrumental music, which includes four bands, four orchestras, four jazz bands, a marching band of over 200 kids," he said. "Then we got guitar class and music theory – so it's a really extensive and comprehensive music program."

The music started at a young age for the Irvine educator, who explained that his mother and grandfather were both musicians which helped reinforce an abundance of "positive memories."

"It's always been a huge part of my life. My mom was in a folk rock band in the 60s. She was the choir director at her church. My grandfather was a jazz drum set player back in World War II, so music has always been around," he said. "I remember when I first got my saxo-

phone when I was in fifth grade and my grandfather happened to be in town. My mother was on piano and my grandfather was playing on pots and pans – I was just kind of jamming along with."

Case has been jamming along ever since.

From his perspective, music education is symbolic of society as it ultimately teaches the members of the band the value of working in groups and collaborating. Lately, however, Case admits the music department has been challenged by the modifications needed for pandemic safety.

"It ultimately forced our hand into rethinking what our experiences were about," he said. "The really special thing about making music is that instantaneous collaboration – kind of a microcosm of society, you can't just show up and say, 'I'm not going to play with the trumpets today' – everybody has to play with everybody and we all work to the benefit of the group."

Unfortunately, the pandemic uprooted many of those core philosophies of the curriculum. The inability to play wind instruments on campus, for example, led Case and his colleagues within IUSD to find alternatives in their teaching methods.

"When we were thrown that curveball, all of my music colleagues across the district spent a lot of time trying to rethink what we could do to provide as experiences. It's still a work in progress. I suspect it's going to be like this for a few years

now. We all did everything we could," he said. "My colleague and I – and I know a lot of others – were buying Home Depot buckets and drumsticks, and we taught the entire band how to drum because that was something you could do without putting out aerosol."

While students in the music department are closer to a sense of normalcy than they were prior to the pandemic, Case said there's still more work to be done.

"I think if you were to come into a rehearsal today it would look similar to what we were doing before the pandemic. But just like everything, I think we're dealing with a certain level of learning loss. But I think the persistence, resilience and that passion to come back – you really are seeing it."

As Case embarks on a path toward inclusive normalcy in Northwood's music department, he says he will do so without thinking of the Teacher of the Year recognitions, but rather the passion for music, education and aspects of collaboration.

"The reason why I signed up for this was never to get the pats on the back or the accolades. The reason why I teach, the reason why I go back day after day – it's the students," he said. "Being able to forge connections with students, to be able to show them things they haven't experienced before through music and understand something deeper about themselves."

NEWS

HOAG HOSPITAL'S \$1 BILLION FUTURE IN IRVINE

THE HOAG HOSPITAL FOUNDATION'S NEWLY ANNOUNCED "BOLDLY HOAG" WILL BRING AN EXPANDED CAMPUS TO IRVINE IN 2025, ADDING MORE REGIONAL HEALTH CARE OPTIONS TO ORANGE COUNTY.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER



Construction in progress on the Hoag Irvine campus

The expansion also includes renovation of the existing campus, and the addition of 120,000 square feet of ambulatory facilities. In terms of funding, the Hoag Hospital Foundation has raised approximately \$148 million, with a goal of \$300 million by 2025.

Burton L. Eisenberg, MD, Grace E. Hoag Executive Medical Director Endowed Chair of the Hoag Family Cancer Institute, said once this project is complete, Hoag's newly renovated Irvine campus will serve as a hub for medical research and a gateway for clinical trials.

"The Hoag expansion represents our continued commitment to our patients: to stay at the forefront of the most rapidly evolving medical specialties," Eisenberg said.

Hoag's Irvine campus is set to be

named the Sun Family Campus in recognition of a \$50 million donation from the philanthropic Orange County couple Diana and David Sun, who say they simply wish to inspire others with this generous donation.

"It's no more important or meaningful than any other gift to Hoag, no matter the amount, if it comes from the heart and is made in the hope of helping others," Mr. Sun, who is also the co-founder of Kingston Technology, said. "Diana and I simply hope our gift will inspire others to give whatever they can."

Speaking on Hoag's newly announced plans for expansion, Robert T. Braithwaite, President and CEO of Hoag said this project is symbolic of Hoag's mission to provide the best level of health care.

"Hoag is elevating healthcare and wellness in Orange County by transforming our delivery of care to an integrated, specialized services-based model," he said. "The benefits this expansion will bring to the communities we serve can't be overstated."

Rick Taketa, chair of the Hoag Hospital Foundation Board of Directors, echoed Braithwaite's comments adding that this \$1 billion project will continue to help evolve healthcare in Orange County.

"When I reflect on what Hoag has done for my family and our community, I am so grateful for our visionary philanthropic supporters. I could not be more excited about how this ambitious expansion will advance Hoag's world-class health and wellness care right here in Orange County," Taketa said. "I encourage everyone to support Boldly Hoag."

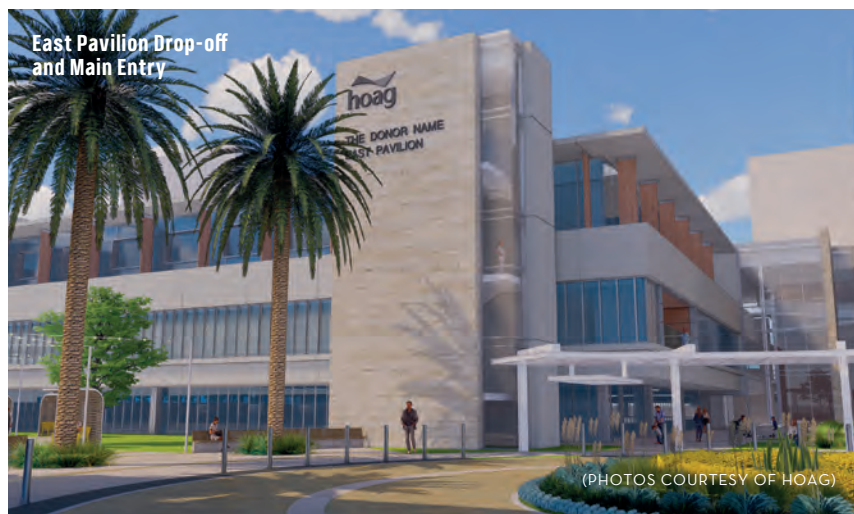
Celebrating its 70-year anniversary, Boldly Hoag is Hoag's the medical group's largest campaign to date.

Addressing the future of medical innovation in Irvine and across Orange County, President of the Hoag Hospital Foundation Flynn A. Andrizzi, PhD, said this project was a monumental step forward for Orange County healthcare.

"Thanks to several visionary donors, the campaign is already garnering remarkable momentum and will enable Hoag to continue increasing access to innovative health care for more communities. Together, we can make Orange County stronger and healthier," Andrizzi said.

In an effort to strengthen health care options in Orange County, the Hoag Hospital Foundation has announced a new capital campaign that will bring approximately \$1 billion in upgrades to Hoag's existing facilities in Irvine.

Aptly named Boldly Hoag, the multi-hundred million dollar campaign was announced on Thursday, Nov. 10, will bring an expanded campus to the Hoag facilities on Sand Canyon Avenue, with half a dozen new buildings, 155 inpatient beds, and two new specialty hospitals – one for the Women's Health Institute and one for the Hoag Family Cancer Center Institute and Digestive Health Institute.



East Pavilion Drop-off and Main Entry

(PHOTOS COURTESY OF HOAG)