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La Nueva Voz

The New Voice, a Bilingual (English/Spanish) Publication
Pomona's *only* community newspaper!



Issue No. 140
Thursday, March 25, 2021

Was Sheraton-Fairplex COVID operation out of control?

Were doctors at now-closed COVID hotel profiting from the pandemic in Pomona with skimming, kickbacks?

By Jeff Schenkel
Publisher

Pomona's own "COVID hotel," the once-venerable Sheraton Fairplex Hotel, without fanfare or announcement closed its doors last week as an isolation and quarantine facility for COVID patients – a year to the day from the start date of a lease between Los Angeles County and Fairplex repurposing the 244-room landmark during the pandemic emergency.

Even before the stealth closing, unofficial reports from La Nueva Voz sources earlier this month were that e-mails already had been circulating around the county that the hotel operation was winding down, was no longer accepting new patients, and would be shutting down as a COVID facility as of March 31 after a deep cleaning of the facility, possibly because of reports of numerous irregularities and complaints from inside and outside of

IT REALLY IS BACK TO SCHOOL! --

Kindergarten and first grade students went back to school Monday throughout Pomona Unified School District for the first time in actual classrooms this school year after comprehensive preparations because of COVID-19 for a safe re-opening of the schools. And, of course, students, teachers and staff all wore masks and students were sitting at desks with plexiglass partitions. As Assistant Supt. Fernando Meza told school board members last week, all schools were ready to go with some \$3.7 million in personal protective equipment, extra air filters were added for classrooms, and staff was prepared for constant cleaning. Supt. Richard Martinez said of the district's 3,800 employees, all who wanted to receive COVID-19 vaccinations had them -- about 65 percent of the district's staff. Additional elementary school grades were expected to continue phasing in through April 12. Pictured at Pomona's Westmont Elementary School is school resource teacher Monica Guzman taking the temperature on the first day of a kindergarten student with a fresh haircut and a fresh backpack as his dad looks on. Principal Cynthia Badillo told La Nueva Voz two thirds of her students for now will alternate in a "hybrid" plan between classroom learning and distance learning, and the remaining third opted to continue full time distance learning from home. Westmont is one of three schools in the district offering a "Dual Language Immersion" program, with students spending half of their day working in English and the other half working in Spanish.



Private security guards this month check credentials as a car pulls into the parking lot of Pomona's Sheraton Fairplex Hotel, now closed to the public, the largest COVID isolation and quarantine facility in Los Angeles County and apparently the largest in the country. The "temporary" guard shack has been at the entrance to the hotel for the past year.

the operation.

On deadline day for this issue, last Friday, the hotel for the first time in the last 12 months had been removed from the county's on-line list of "current medical sheltering locations," leaving only two out-of-the-area facilities in the system with a total of 75 clients – in a county with a population of 10.1 million and currently reporting 861 COVID hospitalizations. At the peak of the pandemic there were eight facilities in the system.

On reflection, of course, the past year – and COVID-19 itself – has caused the loss of lives, jobs, businesses, houses and more throughout Pomona, the United States, and the world.

There is no shortage of Americans in neighborhoods everywhere who are unable to pay their rent or their mortgage payment, lining up in food banks and unable to afford proper medical care.

But some, according to sources who have provided information to

La Nueva Voz, were actually profiting from the pandemic – and they were doing it big time, right here in Pomona, allegedly by taking unfair advantage of contracts with Los Angeles County, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the federal CARES Act (Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act), which was set up to provide economic assistance to get the country through the COVID-19

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PAID ADVERTORIAL

California expands COVID-19 vaccine eligibility to people with high-risk medical conditions or disabilities

On Monday, March 15, California added COVID-19 vaccine eligibility for an additional 4.4 million people. As the state's rollout continues to expand, those now eligible include people ages 16 to 64 with certain significant, high-risk medical conditions, chronic disease or disabilities that put them at higher risk for serious COVID-19 illness.

According to the state's guidance, people could be eligible if they have one or more severe health conditions outlined by the state such as cancer, heart conditions, pregnancy or severe obesity, or if, as a result of a developmental or other significant, high-risk disability, one of the following criteria applies: a COVID-19 infection would result in severe life-threatening illness or death; acquiring COVID-19 would limit their ability to receive care services vital to their well-being or survival; or receiving COVID-19 related care would be too challenging. These criteria also include people with severe behavioral health conditions and substance use disorders.

Persons in this eligibility group are not required to present proof of their conditions, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has said, citing the need to protect confidentiality. Instead, they can provide verification with a letter from a provider or an agency providing services or sign an attestation saying they meet the criteria. Please be patient and persistent when scheduling an appointment as the vaccine supply is limited and more vaccine sites and appointments will soon be available.

All public health agencies and Tri-City Mental Health recommend that everyone who is eligible get the vaccine. It is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones. "We know based on many well-documented studies that, in addition to minorities and communities of color, individuals with mental health diagnoses have a higher risk of severe complications and death from a COVID-19 infection. It is vital for people to actively defend themselves by getting vaccinated," says Dr. Seeyam Teemoori, MD, Medical Director of Tri-City Mental Health. The COVID-19 pandemic has created a mental health crisis, but the increased availability of the vaccine is a critical step in the healing process for our community. While it takes several weeks for full protection to take effect, there is one immediate effect that everyone can grasp on to now — hope.

Tri-City Mental Health is here to support individuals in Pomona, La Verne and Claremont. For those without access to a computer or the internet, the Wellness Center is open to help eligible persons schedule COVID-19 vaccination appointments. Please call 1 (888) 593-4448 or call our Navigator team at (888) 436-3246 for resources.



One in three in L.A. County suffered from ‘food insecurity’ last year

Nearly one million households in Los Angeles County suffered immediately from hunger related issues at the outset of the pandemic a year ago, and one in three county residents suffered from food insecurity in 2020.

Meanwhile, inequities surrounding the distribution of COVID-19 vaccine in the county are being worked out as new “tiers” of vaccine eligibility are opening up.

These key conclusions were among topics last month during a virtual bi-weekly update “L.A. County combats hunger in pandemic,” presented by Los Angeles County and San Francisco-based Ethnic Media Services.

Gary Gero, director of the county’s emergency food security branch, told representatives of Southern California’s ethnic media outlets that of the 10 million residents of Los Angeles County, some three million didn’t have enough to eat.

“The county recognized immediately a year ago that this was not just a public health crisis, but it’s truly an economic crisis as well,” Gero said. “So many people have

lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic.”

“And we understand and know that it’s economic insecurity that causes people to go hungry,” he added.

So, at the same time the county launched efforts to protect the health of residents during the pandemic, the county also launched its new food security branch with specific programs designed to attack the problem.

“But we also wanted to truly understand the nature and scope of food insecurity in Los Angeles County, and we partnered with USC to conduct research among the population,” he said. “What we discovered was shocking and astounding – one in three residents of L.A. County over the past year has struggled with food, getting adequate food resources.”

“We’ve worked very hard to address that and I think we’ve made a dent,” Gero said. “But this is a huge problem.”

He said some of the research



Dr. Eloisa Gonzalez



Gary Gero

pointed out who those three million people are, and that Black and Latinx populations was much more affected than the general population – for example, 40 percent of the Latinx population were food insecure at some point over the last year.

And, he added, young people – those 18 to 40 with children and without a college degree – were the most affected.

Gero pointed to the WIC (the California Department of Public Health’s Women, Infants and Children Program) program, which helps families receive healthy food, as an important part of the package, particularly in today’s environment.

“I think it’s critical that the WIC program . . . is enhanced and promoted,” along with the

senior meals program.

He said the county Board of Supervisors has allocated more than \$135 million in county CARE (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act) tax funds to provide food support during the pandemic.

And he said the county has distributed more than nine million pounds of food to about 150,000 households through food giveaway events in the past year.

In addition, the county has provided \$20 million in grants to community organizations that have stepped up to handle needs in their community, and \$30,000 in grocery store gift cards to support the most food insecure residents of the county.

The county also has provided meals to nearly one million homeless residents.

“You can’t fight a pandemic on an empty stomach, and we want to offer not just food but hope,” Gero said.

Dr. Eloisa Gonzalez, director of integrative medicine at County-USC Medical Center’s Wellness

Center, said the county is continuing “to make progress in reducing the average number of daily new cases of COVID-19 though our numbers remain elevated.”

She said the seven-day average number on Jan. 8 of more than 50,000 cases dropped by 90 percent to only 1,600 a day by the time of the Feb. 25 briefing.

“This significant drop in our case numbers reflects action and choices taken by millions of residents, workers and employees,” Gonzalez said. “You should continue to see less cases. We can move forward in our recovery as lower case rates allow for other sectors to reopen.”

And on the issue of COVID “variants,” she said doctors at the county’s Department of Public Health and USC were investigating a cluster of four cases of COVID-19 UK variant at USC.

Two were confirmed as UK variant and two were suspected, she said.

She said that at the time of the briefing there were 18 confirmed cases of UK variant in Los Angeles County, and that all individuals were doing well and were in isolation.

At that point, she said, officials had found no cases of the South African variant in Los Angeles County.

She also focused on the cumulative percent of the population age 65 and older who had received at least one dose of vaccine as of Feb. 20.

In that age group, she said 38.4 percent was American Indian/Alaska native, 44.6 percent was Asian, 28.9 percent was Black/African American, 34.3 percent

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Local students get 'live' lesson from outer space

Students in the Inland Empire learned last week from astronauts on the International Space Station, who were speaking to them "live," that their current mission is to carry out science and technology experiments for researchers on the ground.

Flight engineer Dr. Shannon Walker, responding to a question from "Isaac," a student at Pomona's La Verne Science and Technology Charter School, explained those experiments include work in the fields of biology, material science, engineering, and manufacturing.

"That's why we're in space," she said in the 22-minute program called "Reach for the Stars" which was broadcast over NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) live-streamed television.

The program was arranged by

Jr., also a flight engineer. The students' questions were prerecorded.

"It's not every day that you get to speak with astronauts, especially while they are in outer space," Torres said, adding that the astronauts were answering student questions "from 254 miles above our heads where they are orbiting the earth at more than 17,000 miles per hour."

Torres introduced the astronauts, adding that Glover grew up in the Inland Empire and "attended the same schools that you do."

"Just like all of you, Victor and Shannon had big dreams for their future," she said. "They made their dreams a reality and you can, too."

"Gianna," a student at Lincoln Elementary School in the Ontario-Montclair School District, asked if the astronauts design the space-



Astronauts Victor Glover and Shannon Walker speak to local students last week from the International Space Station.



"Gianna"
Lincoln Elementary School
Ontario



"Isaac"
La Verne Science and Technology
Charter School
Pomona



Congresswoman Norma Torres

Congresswoman Norma Torres. Live answers were provided by Walker and Pomona native U.S. Navy Commander Victor Glover,

craft they go in.

Glover, whose aunt works in that school district as a librarian,

good as they can be like we were able to do with SpaceX designing our Crew Dragon spacecraft."

The "town hall" style program was hosted by Torres and NASA.

Students from seven local school districts from Pomona to

Rialto and Fontana were on the call that Torres called a "once in a lifetime conversation." More than 1,100 viewers logged in.

The entire program is on-line at www.youtube.com/watch?v=_-WLfby_wel.

Simons Middle School students 'graduate' from FBI 'youth academy'

More than 30 students at Pomona's Simons Middle School in a 21st Century Career Exploration class successfully completed the FBI's "virtual" youth academy this month after attending hour-long weekly presentations for eight weeks, according to a Pomona Unified School District spokesperson.

Students had the opportunity to learn about multiple career pathways and opportunities with the FBI including operational medicine, counterterrorism, crisis response team, bomb technician, crisis negotiation team and forensic accounting.

They also heard presentations from members of the school dis-

trict superintendent's "cabinet" and from school board members on their own employment and career experiences.

"Graduation" from the academy, also held via Zoom, was March 4.

The partnership also included participation by representatives of the Los Angeles County Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services Division.


Because of the program's success at Simons, it will be expanded to provide the "virtual" opportunity at Marshall Middle School, and other classes throughout the district are expected to join in as well, according to Dr. Enrique Medina, director of career readi-

ness for the district. explained that while they do not design the spacecraft, they are fortunate "to have the opportunity to help the companies that design those spacecraft make them as

"We are grateful to the FBI for selecting Pomona Unified School District as a pilot district for the implementation of the virtual FBI Youth Academy and our students greatly benefited by participating," Medina said. "We look forward to the spring semester to continue offering this opportunity to our students and continue to expand another pilot program to our high school students in the FBI Teen Academy."

For more information on the program, contact the FBI at (310) 996-3343.

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Out of control?... from pg. 1

emergency.

To put it in perspective, what does “big time” mean in this context?

For starters, sources have told La Nueva Voz they saw \$10 million in invoices for payroll for medical personnel at Pomona’s Sheraton Fairplex Hotel, the largest COVID isolation and quarantine facility in Los Angeles County and apparently the largest in the country.

Then how far does \$10 million go for employees of a facility that at its peak housed 254 patients on Dec. 24 but this month had been averaging around 40?

Former employees – both county employees and outside contractor nurses – told La Nueva Voz they did the math on that \$10 million in invoices and it looked like the “outside” nurses were being paid about three times what county nurses – who last month were being phased out – were paid.

And that’s three times the pay for the same work in the same hotel that county workers were performing only weeks before.

That’s really three times with a lot left over and, when La Nueva Voz asked several of its confidential sources who provided information for last month’s story what they thought about the \$10 million in invoices (Feb. 25 La Nueva Voz, available online under “Past Issues” at www.lanuevavoz.net), nobody was surprised.

Other sources this month have told La Nueva Voz there has been a lot of finger pointing as to where funding is going – a “registry” or employment agency for nurses operated by a friend of the boss or other vendors and suppliers handling “huge” contracts, and all without the usual county-mandated purchasing and inventory tracking procedures in place.

Last month’s story focused, among other things, on how most of the employees allegedly were coming from the same registry. New information received from an anonymous source this month alleged that one agency had been over-billing, regularly charging for 16 hours a day, seven days a week for registry workers. There also were numerous allegations of kickbacks associated with these billing practices.

The same source alleged that the registry, Master Staffing, Inc., a skilled nursing



Dr. Heidi Behforouz

agency based in Glendale, was part of a larger company that management was using for “everything.”

After all, the Sheraton Fairplex, Pomona’s “COVID hotel,” for the past year closed to the public and sealed off by security officers because of the pandemic for exclusive use as a quarantine facility, allegedly provided operators with an easy environment in which to operate a little “fast and loose” without the county’s usual checks and balances in place.

‘Skimming, kickbacks, under the table payments?’

So, it came as no surprise – when La Nueva Voz was contacted after last month’s issue featuring a story on the hotel was published – that a former nurse called and tossed words and allegations around like “skimming,” “kickbacks” and “under the table” payments.

Then how high up did these allegations go? La Nueva Voz is looking closely at former medical director of the facility Dr. Kevin D. Burns, whose last day on the job reportedly was March 5. Apparently, he was removed from the position



Dr. Kevin D. Burns

because of an overwhelming number of complaints from staff, all right in the middle of a La Nueva Voz investigation for last month’s story on activities at the hotel.

(It is still unclear whether Burns was terminated or reassigned to another Los Angeles County quarantine facility – there were four still in operation earlier this month.)

For one thing, one of the first things he did when he arrived on the job last September, sources told La Nueva Voz, was remove all documentation procedures for inventory tracking, purchasing of supplies, and even appropriate hiring practices required by Los Angeles County.

But based on additional allegations from anonymous sources, it began to appear that Dr. Heidi Behforouz herself may have been part of the scheme or at the very least was aware of it since, for example, she immediately asked subordinates in the early stages of the La Nueva Voz investigation how much “they” know and who was providing the newspaper its infor-

mation.

Behforouz, who oversees all of the county’s COVID isolation facilities during the pandemic emergency, is medical director of the county’s Housing for Health program, part of the county’s Department of Health Services.

And then there’s the part about how apparently the bulk of the services and supplies were being provided by the same parent company.

And there are allegations that Burns actually was being paid twice for his work at the hotel – once by the county and again by a registry where he was “on call” – a registry that brought doctors to the operation.

“It’s (the money) not being used correctly,” a former contract registered nurse at the hotel told La Nueva Voz.

Another registry, JWCH Institute, mentioned in last month’s story, claims in its promotional materials that its mission is to improve the health status and well-being of underserved segments of the population of the Los Angeles area.

A new source this month alleged JWCH operators work regularly with Behforouz in other areas of her Housing for Health operation.

The source also alleged the owner of JWCH, a nurse practitioner and a friend of Behforouz, is married to an attorney who writes his wife’s contracts and also works for Los Angeles County in an apparent conflict of interest.

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Efrén Batayola, at left, and Anna Sessions, both Los Angeles County Department of Health Services registered nurses, discuss a patient while working in the lobby command center at Pomona’s Sheraton Fairplex Hotel.



Photos courtesy of Los Angeles County

Los Angeles County Department of Health Services staff members prepare food, snacks and other essentials for delivery to patients isolating in the Sheraton Fairplex Hotel, used as a COVID-19 quarantine facility for the past year.

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Printed on recycled newsprint (25 percent recycled content) using soy-based inks.

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New Third Street Gallery ‘run by artists, for artists’

There’s a new gallery in town in this city of galleries, and this one is both giving local talent another outlet and taking advantage of artists who because of the pandemic have had more time to focus on their work.

Third Street Gallery is located at 256 W. Third St., Pomona (at the corner of Main Street) and is operated by Oscar Leal and Jose Juarez, both local artists.

The small store-front gallery is “run by artists for artists,” Leal said. “We offer opportunity for all levels of artists to curate and promote their own solo art exhibition.”

He said what makes the gallery unique is that “we give the opportunity for new and exciting artists to plan and organize their own art exhibition.”

“Our gallery is small but full of potential and heart,” he added. “We have had a great response and through word of mouth, the word got out quickly and we are already booked for the remaining year of 2021.”

The gallery’s first artist exhibit was in December and plans are to

feature a different artist each month.

“The pandemic has turned our lives upside down and social distancing has stopped our social interaction,” Leal said. “However, through art, we can all heal and support our talented community to thrive.”

He said the entire community is invited to “come and support our artists.”

“There’s a lot of talent in the Inland Empire and we wanted to be a part of the change that we are featuring in artists,” he said, adding that the gallery is open to artists from surrounding cities.

The gallery also features new



Photo by Renee Barbee
Oscar Leal, co-operator of the New Third Street Gallery in Downtown Pomona, stands in front of this month’s art exhibit.

artists during Second Saturday “Art Walk” in Pomona.

For more information or to make donations to the gallery, call (909) 636-9557 or visit the gallery on Instagram.

Food insecurity... from pg. 2

was Latinx, and 47.8 percent was white.

“While these inequities are stark and unfair when we look at the relative percent change ... we see that we are making some progress improving vaccination rates in the hardest hit communities,” Gonzalez said.

Also, the county has opened additional vaccination sites in these areas.

“We are happy to see these early increases in vaccination rates as they indicate that our strategies may be working,” she said.

Gonzalez added that new tiers of vaccine eligibility were expected to be opened in March and would include education/childcare, emergency services and public safety, and food and agriculture sectors.

In all, the newly eligible groups were expected to add about 1.4 million county residents.

“I want to acknowledge the remarkable work that is being done by our many partners to vaccinate people who are currently eligible,” she said, adding that more than 400 vaccination sites county-

wide were providing vaccines to thousands of people.

Moderator Pilar Marrero, associate editor for Ethnic Media Services, asked about the vaccine supply issue and Gonzalez said supply is different based on sector and how many doses they are allocated.

“Supply still remains our great limiting factor,” Gonzalez said, explaining that it ultimately comes from the federal government, with some distributed through the state.

She pointed out that 25 percent of all Californians with health insurance are covered by Kaiser Permanente which has a direct source of vaccine and is pitching in through a network of vaccination centers.

The briefing was the second in a series of video conferences sponsored by Los Angeles County and hosted by the Intercounty COVID-19 Joint Information Center for Ethnic and Community Media.

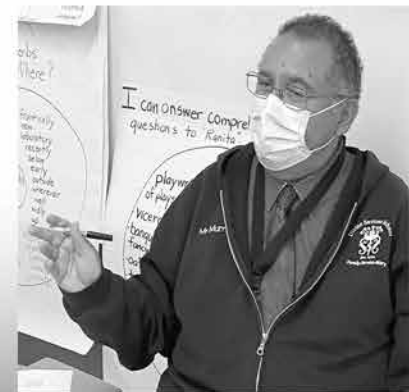
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Gente Organizada annual report recaps last year's 'world-changing' developments

Gente Organizada, a social action non-profit organization based in Pomona, released its wide-ranging annual "equity" report last month, concluding that 2020 has had "many world-changing paradigm-shifting developments" and "unprecedented challenges" but that the group's "commitment to serving the community of Pomona and challenging institutional systems of oppression remains stronger than ever."

"From social uprising demanding racial justice to global pandemic, 2020 has challenged our community in unprecedented ways," the group's board of directors said in prefatory comments in the report.

The introduction pointed to the entire "Black Lives Matter"

movement and said, "Black liberation must be achieved to begin to liberate all other marginalized communities."

"Together, we must forge the path toward a more inclusive, humane, and sustainable future for our collective liberation," the board's opening statement continued.

It claimed the Coronavirus pandemic exposed "deeply rooted health disparities . . . creating a devastating and disproportionate impact on communities of color."

"Let us honor the lives lost this year and continue paving the way for lasting transformative change in the City of Pomona," the statement added.

The report itself included an in-depth look at mental health

resources available in Pomona, the operation of the city itself including a look at the budget, housing, parks and policing the city's youth, and Pomona Unified School District, its budget, its declining enrollment and more.

Among its conclusions:

Mental health

Pomona needs to support their teens and their mental health by making sure they have accessible mental health resources both in and out of school.

Only 41 percent of Pomona youth are aware of school mental health services and only 3 percent turn to school mental health services for support.

While 93 percent of Pomona residents surveyed shared that COVID-19 has caused them

stress, only 5 percent of those residents currently are accessing mental health services.

Survey results showed 86 percent of Pomona residents are not aware of no-cost mental health services in the city.

City of Pomona

The Pomona United for Stable Housing Coalition has led efforts to bring rent control to Pomona as a direct and urgent response to the housing crisis affecting the Pomona community.

Some 41 percent of those surveyed do not feel safe in Pomona parks and 53 percent believe that parks are not well maintained and do not have adequate resources.

Over the past four years, Pomona police arrested nearly 6,000 young people including 3,901 Hispanics, 1,279 Blacks, 411 whites and 29 Asians.

Nearly 70 percent of all youths arrested are male.

Roughly 34 percent of Hispanic youths arrested are charged with felonies.

Over the past four years, Pomona police arrested 251 juveniles (11-17) and 27 percent of those were Blacks.

Pomona Unified School District

Student enrollment in Pomona Unified School District has declined steadily since 2010-2011 when it was at 28,295 to 2019-

2020 when it was at 22,766 (annual declines have ranged from 400 to 900 students each year).

The school district's "lexile" literacy scores (reclassifying "English learner" students to "reclassified fluent English proficient") show for second and third graders that only three out of 27 schools are on track compared to state averages, and for seventh graders, only one out of 10 schools is on track. For grades four through six and eight through 12, none of the district's schools are on track, according to the organization's findings.

English learners in Pomona Unified K-12 schools make up 29.4 percent of the student population.

Low-income youth in the school district's schools make up 98 percent of the student population.

The complete report is available on the group's web site at www.genteorganizada.org.

Gente Organizada's mission is to bring together generations to access, build and wield their collective power to achieve educational, economic and social justice in its communities.

According to its literature, the organization is "deeply connected to the families of Pomona, a majority of whom are immigrants."

It was established in 2014.

Pomona Lions, neighboring clubs awarded grant to help fund local food bank upgrade

Members of the Pomona Host Lions Club partnered with Lions in Walnut, Diamond Bar, Chino Valley and Seal Beach to help fund an \$11,000 upgrade project at Pomona Valley Food Bank in Pomona.

Most of the funding was obtained through a grant approved Jan. 21 from the Lions Clubs International Foundation, which helps various humanitarian efforts around the world. This time, during COVID-19 support activities, that cause was right here in Pomona.

Pomona Lions Past President WendyAnn Stuard said contributions from members of the four Lions clubs supplemented an \$11,000 grant from the foundation to install four

ceiling fans at the food bank to help keep the food cool and to install a rolling garage door for unloading and loading food into trucks for distribution.

"The food bank is trying to upgrade itself to be able to provide better, fresher food," Stuard said.

Pomona Valley Food Bank, located at 284 E. Holt Ave., Pomona, provides family pack boxes for \$30 – two full boxes of food that can last for two weeks and that would cost \$100 or more in a store.

Director Alan Espinoza, a God



Photo by Renee Barbee

Local Lions Club members teamed up with the Lions Clubs International Foundation to help fund improvements to the Pomona Valley Food Bank, as shown in a new banner in the food bank window. Pictured this month, from left, are Alan Espinoza, director of the food bank, Pomona Host Lions Club past president WendyAnn Stuard and her husband Bob Stuard, also a member of Pomona Host Lions Club.

Provides Ministry, Inc. pastor in the faith-based food distribution facility which he described as a Native American food bank, operated in South El Monte for 26 years before moving to Pomona two years ago.

The food bank serves groups regionally, nationally and even internationally, selling at discounted rates and sometimes even giving the food away, as he has during the COVID-19 pandemic at numerous events in Pomona and surrounding communities.

His facility handles 10 to 14 million pounds of food each year and hopes to get up to 20 million pounds.

Since 1968, the Lions Clubs International Foundation has awarded more than 15,000 grants totaling \$1.1 billion to help Lions improve health and well-being, strengthen communities and protect the most vulnerable.

Grant funds are made possible by financial support from Lions, their clubs and friends of the foundation.

Public service ad courtesy of La Nueva Voz

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• **Business Resource**

Information on starting or expanding a business, financial assistance and more.

For more information on joining the Pomona Chamber of Commerce, please visit www.pomonachamber.org or call (909) 622-1256.

ATTENTION ALL BUSINESSES IN POMONA!

With COVID-19 cases dropping and restrictions being lifted, more businesses are beginning to re-open their doors! The Pomona Chamber of Commerce would like to offer all businesses in Pomona a Grand Re-Opening Ceremony. If you would like more information on scheduling a Grand Re-Opening, please contact us!

California-Hawaii NAACP chief tells Pomona Valley branch members they are part of fight for justice

NAACP California and Hawaii State Conference Executive Director Betty Williams told members of the Pomona Valley Branch NAACP last month that “the NAACP that you serve and that you stand on is the baddest, the boldest, the meanest, the most discussed, the most cussed, the largest civil rights organization in the nation.”

“That’s what you are part of,” she said. “NAACP is the fight for justice when there is injustice . . . when you understand why we became who we are, the foundation was built on fighting for justice.”

Williams comments came during a “virtual” second annual “Freedom Fund” fundraiser event, this year on the theme “Pursuing Liberty in the Face of Injustice.”

The long-time president of the Sacramento Branch NAACP was hired as state conference executive director last December.

She said the organization’s focus this year will be in five areas – education, economics, health disparity, environmental justice, and criminal justice.

And she told Pomona Valley members their branch – like all others in the organization – is comprised of 22 committees “building an army to fight the injustice . . . wherever you go.”

She cited as an example the George Floyd story, “the greatest injustice that the world was able to see in a collective visual.”

“We watched that injustice,” she added, referring to the case in which protestors nationwide and around the world voiced their objections to police conduct in the wake of the death of a Black man at the hands of police May 27 in Minneapolis.

“We even watched after everything was said and done . . . an attorney general instituted instructional racism at that time” by giving direction to the jurors but did not include that the officers “would go up for murder.”

She told members their work in Pomona to enact a local version of “Breonna’s Law” (prohibiting “no-knock warrants”) was “huge.”

(Pomona city councilmembers last month unanimously approved a resolution prohibiting no-knock warrants by Pomona police officers, following the lead of the Louisville, Kentucky Met-

ro Council and its own ordinance unanimously approved last June. That action came in response to an incident last March in which Breonna Taylor, 26, was killed when she was shot eight times by Louisville police who had been armed with a no-knock warrant.)

“You came in like the big dog that you are and you made sure that it happened,” she said, referring to the work of the Pomona Valley Branch NAACP in pushing for that resolution.

She thanked members for “making that happen.”

Williams said it is institutionalized racism that allows rules to be put in place that “prohibits us from moving forward.”

“When you are looking at justice or injustice while pursuing liberty by getting in the face of individuals, you know you have to continue to fight,” she said. “We fight with our school districts, we understand there is a pipeline to prison in our school districts, we understand that instead of back in the day when you did something wrong you went to detention . . . that was your first go to.”

“But now, your first go to is the on-site patrol officer, the on-site school police officer,” Williams said. “That’s your pipeline to prison. So that’s what you are fighting for every day, your life at the NAACP.”

“So, when you’re fighting these criminal injustices, the census tells us that it estimates approximately 18 million people in the U.S. population are black males of all ages,” she said. “The bureau of justice statistics . . . reports that in the same year over a half million were in the state or federal prisons and as of mid-year since 2013 over 200,000 are in local jails.”

She pointed out that there are 380,000 prisoners in the entire country of India.

Yet there are more African-American men incarcerated in the U.S. than the total prison population of India, Argentina, Canada, Lebanon, Japan, Germany, Finland, Israel and England combined.

“That’s the injustice that the NAACP is constantly working against happening,” Williams said.

Then how does the organization accomplish that?

“We have to look at our police and our prosecutors and the judges who are not held accountable for misconduct that leads to wrongful convictions such as fabricating evidence or pressing false testimony and refusing to consider proof of evidence,” she said.

However, she added that it is important to make a “clear target” only on “bad” police officers and bad policies “because we know that not every officer is a bad officer.”

“But what we do know as Black people is that we have been under the pressure of injustice for more than a century and it’s time to stop,” she said. “And the purpose of the NAACP is to make that happen.”

And the way to make that happen, she said, is through vision, capacity and execution, starting with the local branch.

“Without a vision on how to get there to the injustice, you will never make it,” she said.

And she added that it takes committees to act as “soldiers” along with regular communication to maintain capacity “because there’s going to be many times you don’t have a victory.”

But she said it is important to celebrate victories when they do have them.

She said the execution is the “landing” or the “arrival.”

“Remember that you are NAACP and you have one sound for justice speaking in one voice,” Williams said in her 25-minute address. “Remember you can’t do it alone.”

Williams acknowledged Ted Burnett, second vice president of the Pomona Branch, who she said grew up next door to her in Ur-

bana, Illinois.

She said Burnett’s mother, Evelyn Burnett, made civil rights history there when soon after the historic *Brown v Board of Education of Topeka* ruling (U.S. Supreme Court 1954, declaring state desegregation laws were unconstitutional) she learned that African-American elementary school students were two years behind in their education by the time they were in junior high school.

Williams said Burnett’s mother went to work organizing making sure the Black children soon became part of “those influential schools on the other side of town.”

She said Burnett became Urbana’s first Black school board member and created history there by integrating the local schools.

“To this day she is actually in the Museum of the Grand Prairie” in Urbana, she said.

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chair Hilda Solis and Cal Poly University Pomona President Dr. Soraya Coley both appeared at the event before Williams’ address.

Gas Company scholarships presented at event

The Pomona Valley Branch awarded Southern California Gas Company scholarships to five students at the “virtual” meeting.

The Gas Company awarded a total of \$75,000 to three local NAACP branches for their scholarship programs. A total of 15 students, five from each branch, were receiving \$5,000 each to help pay for tuition, books, housing and other expenses.

Pomona Valley Branch recipients of scholarships from the Gas Company grant and other dona-

tions were BiJohn Stevenson, a pre-nursing student at Chaffey College; Rachel Barnes, an early childhood education student at Mt. SAC; Bryan Brown, mathematics and music major at UC Santa Barbara; Thali Cobbs, a mathematical economics and media studies major at Pitzer College; and Terry Ford II, a teaching major (single subject concentration in educational technology) at the University of La Verne.

Other branches receiving the scholarship funding from the Gas Company were the San Fernando Valley and Riverside County branches.

“SoCalGas is proud to partner with the NAACP to support students within the communities we serve,” said Eugene Mitchell, vice president for state government affairs and external affairs. “Paying for tuition and other school-related necessities can be intimidating for many young people, so we are pleased to provide some financial relief for these deserving students, especially during a time when so many families are struggling.”

According to the news release, the Gas Company understands it has a responsibility to recognize racial injustices and assist in closing the gaps in social inequities.

Last year, the company doubled its charitable “spend” among Black communities it serves in areas including educational resources to students from vulnerable communities, Black-owned businesses and supporting workforce training programs that could lead to jobs at the Gas Company.

The Gas Company has been a community partner of the NAACP for more than 20 years, according to the news release.

Rubio Gonzalez sentenced to two years of probation

Former Pomona City Councilmember Rubio Gonzalez was sentenced last month to felony probation for two years and summary probation for one year after pleading no contest to possessing child sexual abuse material and taking an inappropriate photo of a girl at a Pomona elementary school where he was a substitute teacher, according to a news release from Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascon.

His sentencing by a judge immediately followed his plea. He

was ordered to register as a lifetime sex offender and is prohibited from teaching.

Gonzalez also was ordered to attend a minimum of 52 weeks of counseling.

“He took advantage of his position and violated the privacy and innocence of children,” Gascon said.

Gonzalez, 46, entered his plea to one felony count of possessing child sexual abuse material and one misdemeanor count of annoying or molesting a child, the news release said.

He had been charged with taking inappropriate photos of female students at Pomona elementary schools. His no contest plea was to one count of photographing a girl at one of the schools. He also allegedly had child sexual abuse material in his e-mail accounts, according to the district attorney’s news release.

Gonzalez was arrested last May by San Dimas Sheriff’s Deputies and booked at the San Dimas Sheriff’s station. He was released on \$20,000 bail.

Deadline next month for Sarah Ross science, math scholarships

Deadline is April 9 for applications for the annual Sarah Ross Science and Math Scholarship, named after Ross who was a cherished and dedicated educator in Pomona Unified School District.

She was known for touching the lives of her students with love and maintaining the belief that every child can succeed, according to a news release from the "Promoting Academic Achievement Task Force," part of Pomona's Promise.

Ross, always an inspiration to her students, was the founding member of the Learning Expo and Science Fair.

The scholarships – ranging from \$250 to \$1,000 – are available only to students in Pomona Unified School District.

They will be presented to win-

ning essays submitted by high school graduating seniors.

To enter the competition, students must submit a 500-word essay (maximum) describing their interest in science, technology, engineering or mathematics, and how they plan to utilize those interests in the future.

They may also include people who have inspired them, their interests, and any challenges they have faced on their educational journey.

For more information and for access to the application, visit the web site at paa1.org.

Pomona's Promise, working to promote college and career readiness, brings together the schools and the community to magnify their ability to transform children's lives.

Programs continue, hours changing at Pomona Public Library!

"In person" programs were canceled this year at Pomona Public Library but a creative staff still found ways to encourage reading including observing National Read Across America Day this month.

The annual celebration, launched in 1998 by the National Education Association, is the nation's largest celebration of reading.

As a year-round program, it focuses on motivating children and teens to read through events, partnerships and reading resources.

Read Across America "goodie bags" are still available to library patrons and can be picked up using "doorside service" at the "Pomona Public Library to Go" door, Mondays through Thursdays from



It was National Read Across America Day this month at the Pomona Public Library and, of course, that means it was time for a little Dr. Seuss. Oh, and they've got a few leftover "goodie" bags for those who want them at the "doorside service" on library days (see story for details). The library has come up with creative ways to continue both programs and book-lending during the pandemic.

New library hours

Library hours also have been expanded in response to patron requests – noon to 5 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays.

Patrons can apply for new library cards, reserve books, check out Chromebooks, print and e-mail documents for free and more.

The location has been changed, due to construction, to the downstairs entrance to the library next to the parking lot just south of the building.

Construction was scheduled to get under way this week

on a remodeling of the library's lobby and front desk area. Work should be completed by the first week of May.

For more information, contact the library by telephone at (909) 620-2043 or by e-mail at library@ci.pomona.ca.us.

noon to 5 p.m., while supplies last.

In addition, books are available for checkout in person and using the "cloudLibrary" app, and a special 30-minute Pomona Public Library story time recording can be viewed on YouTube at [TR_94-beZfM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TR_94-beZfM).

Do you have a news story?

We want to hear from you or your organization.

Send your news tips to: reneebarbee7@gmail.com

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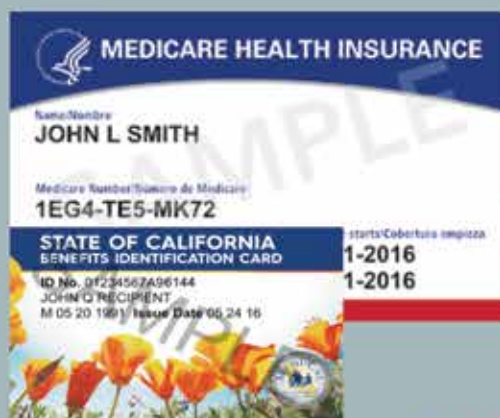
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Cars were moving quickly this month through Los Angeles County's "drive through" COVID-19 vaccination site at Pomona's Fairplex. The large-scale center opened for business on Jan. 19.

Pomona Chamber -- advocate for business community!

In operation since 1888, the Pomona Chamber of Commerce has been an advocate for the business community and actively supports economic development in our city.

The four pillars we pride ourselves on are CONNECTION, ADVOCACY, EDUCATION, COMMUNITY!

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Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz gives the "thumbs up" sign just after receiving her first Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine shot last Saturday at Pomona's Western University of Health Sciences. Barbee said there was no waiting at the time of her appointment and she "just walked right in." She said the operation was very efficient. "It was great," she said.

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Mitchell Todd, Joel Diaz, Nina Hernandez, Rudy Urrea
Hablamos Español



Pomona Host Lions Club members participated in a statewide month-long non-perishable food collection drive last month with the Pomona club collecting more than 2,000 pounds from both stores and individuals -- far exceeding their goal of only 400 pounds. The project was designed to provide Lions throughout California a way to address the issue of homelessness resulting from layoffs, loss of jobs and quarantining during the COVID-19 pandemic. Target Department Stores in Diamond Bar, La Verne and Pomona participated in the effort. The statewide goal was 150,000 pounds and more than 198,000 pounds was collected, according to WendyAnn Stuard, community service director for Pomona Host Lions. Pictured, from left, presenting their contribution of \$327 along with various food items are Diamond Bar Target's Nicholle Brand, human resources executive, and Grant Ganther, service and engagement executive; Stuard; and Emilee Tulley, Target Diamond Bar director. Food items collected in the project were being distributed to organizations throughout the state. Locally, the food donations went to Inland Valley Hope Partners at their Beta Center in Pomona. The organization serves Pomona and surrounding communities through a total of seven food pantries.



Historical Society unveils 'new' bell from former First Baptist Church

Public service notice to our readers: If you hear a bell ringing out in west Pomona down the hill by the old Phillips Mansion, you don't have to rush and get your Sunday best on -- the bell's not attached to a church any more.

In fact, it's not attached to anything -- just an old pallet used for moving it around on a forklift.

You see, it's kind of a long story but the short version is the bell used to be part of the old First Baptist Church in Pomona at Garey and Holt Avenues.

Well, the bell's not there anymore but neither is the church -- they tore it down when they built the new Purpose Church.

"It doesn't fit in the Purpose Church thing anymore," said Deborah Clifford, president of the Historical Society of Pomona Valley.

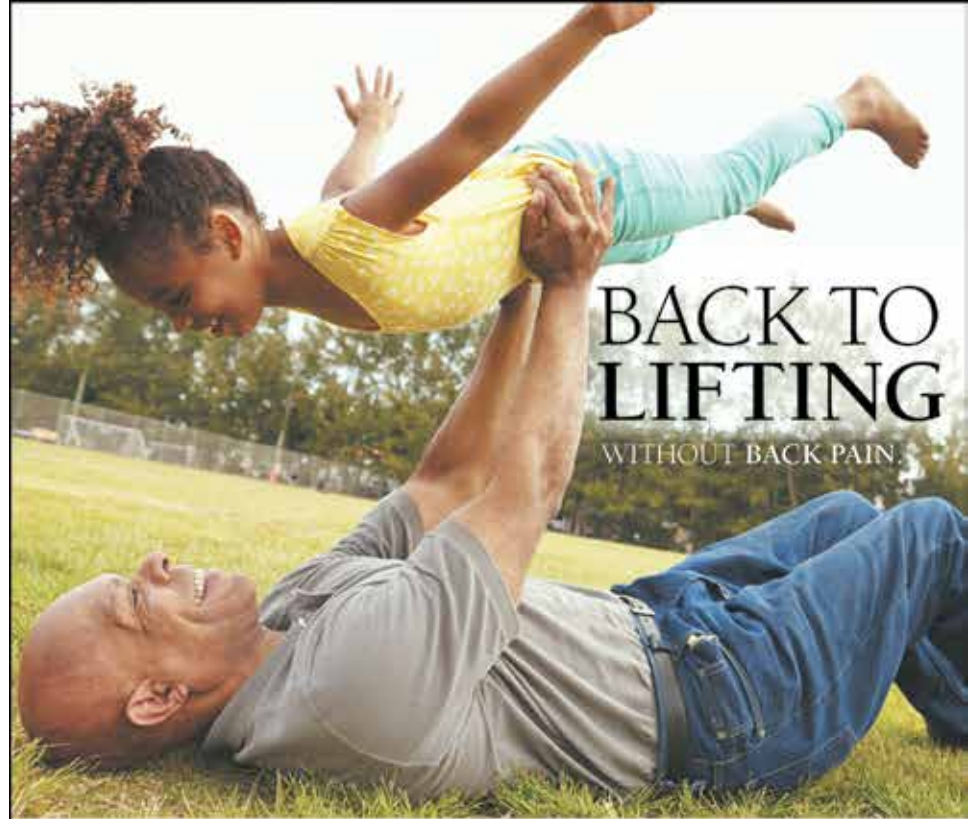
So, for those quick studies in the audience or just those who are jumping down and reading ahead, you are right -- the family gave the bell to the Historical Society.

The bell is huge (it is five feet high), weighs in at more than 1,500 pounds, still has its original clapper (raise your hand if you knew that was



Jim Gallivan demonstrates how it takes a few pulls to get the Historical Society's new bell to ring. The bell once was used for a call to worship by the old First Baptist Church in Pomona.

"New" bell... pg. 13



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A talk with 'Mayor Tim'

Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval focuses on the pandemic and getting Pomona 'back to normal'

By Ron Cobas

Editor's note: Ron Cobas, a community volunteer and member of the city's "COVID-19 Action Committee," took a few minutes to chat with Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval this month by "Zoom" on the anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic. Following are his reflections and Sandoval's responses.

March 2020 will always be a time that people will remember. Some look back and think how fast this last year has passed while others will reflect on 2020 like waiting at a train crossing while a very, very slow train rumbles by. You know there's an end, but you are unsure of when.

At this time last year, we were all just learning about the pandemic. Nobody could possibly understand what was happening or when/if it would directly impact your life, your loved ones, your way of life. We were scrambling for answers and making adjustments, almost daily. One year ago, there were far too many questions with very few

answers.

In Pomona, we looked towards our leadership for help in getting us through the crisis and today, one year later, we can see the "light" at the end of our train tunnel. Mayor Sandoval launched the COVID-19 Action Committee in April of 2020 to engage community leaders in discussions to help identify current community needs and strategize effective solutions to these issues.

We sat down by 'Zoom' with Sandoval this month to get his thoughts on what Pomona has endured and where he sees inspiration and hope for a brighter tomorrow.

What must happen before Pomona can return to "normal," with the understanding that everyone has their own vision of "normal."

Pomona looks towards the es-



Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval

tablished medical and societal entities such as the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, the office of Gov. Gavin Newsom, the State of California, and the U.S. Small Business Administration, just to name a few, for guidance and planning. We want to see the numbers of deaths and illnesses go down

while the availability of opportunities for vaccinations rise. While we head towards 'herd' immunity, we must stay vigilant and protect ourselves and others.

What do you say to those who express fear or doubt about the vaccine and its safety?

I have received the vaccine as well as my older family members. While I can appreciate that people will have doubts, getting a vaccination is the right thing to do. It is safe and millions of people have received the shot,

all around the world. The vaccination will help and has helped lower the death rate due to this pandemic, along with social distancing, masks, avoiding crowds and confined spaces and washing your hands. When you are safe, you protect others.

Your administration has stressed the importance of volunteerism. What do you say to people who want to volunteer with Pomona in its efforts to bring services to all Pomona residents?

My first reaction is to get engaged, get engaged with family, friends, neighbors and loved ones. Reach out to folks just to let them know that you are thinking about them and you care. This can go a very long way in helping folks find comfort in these times. Compassionate Pomona (compassionatepomona.org) is a group of civic and community leaders who represent over 50 groups in and around our city.

Where do you anticipate that most Pomona residents will receive their vaccination shots?

As more vaccines are distributed, we see institutions like Fair-

plex, Cal Poly Pomona, Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center along with Western University of Health Sciences as local vaccination sites. There are also retail sites such as Walgreens and CVS. However, we are focused on those residents who want the vaccination and struggle with the registration process as well as access to these sites. Our plan is to bring mobile sites to areas where people are the most impacted. Senior housing developments are a good example. Our goal is that access to sites should be no more than a 15-minute walk.

What words of encouragement can you provide our community?

This past year has been very hard on our seniors, our youth, our small businesses. It has been hard both physically and mentally. Pomona is a young city with many front-line workers who have been impacted the hardest. I am so proud of the resiliency of our community (and) the willingness of our people to ask "what can I do to help." I look towards the day when our parks can re-open, and our people feel safe.

The following are resources and services related to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- City of Pomona website (COVID-19 F.A.Q. and City Services): ci.pomona.ca.us
- City of Pomona COVID-19 Hotline: (909) 620-2311
- VaccinateLACounty.com
- MyTurn.ca.gov
- publichealth.lacounty.gov
- California COVID Hotline: (833) 422-4255
- Health and Human Services Information Line: 211
- Tri-City Mental Health: tricitymhs.org (909) 623-9500
- Suicide Prevention Hotline: (800) 273-8255
- Pomona Police Non-Emergency Line: (909) 622-1241

Gonzalez... from pg. 8

The case was investigated by the district attorney's bureau of investigation.

Gonzalez, whose term expired last year, did not seek reelection in the November election. He was elected to represent the first district in November 2016 with

57 percent of the vote.

He is a native of Pomona and a graduate of Ganesha High School. He received an undergraduate degree from Cal Poly University Pomona and a master's degree from Cal State University Fullerton.

Have Medicare questions?

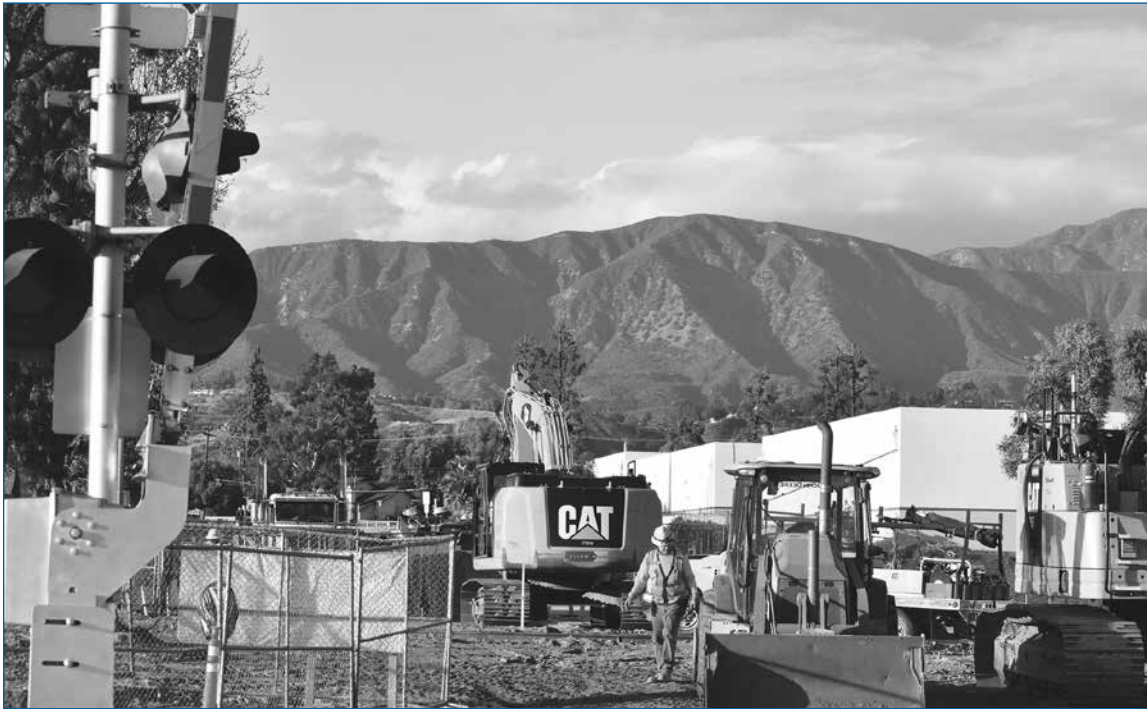
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Work clearly was well under way this month at the Fulton Road crossing of the tracks in North Pomona, as seen in this photo looking north from just south of the tracks, after construction expected to continue for 90 days got underway on Feb. 1 for the new Foothill Gold Line extension into the North Pomona station. The west entrance to the existing North Pomona Metrolink station, now closed due to the construction, is located immediately to the right (east) of the Fulton Road project. Detour signs are everywhere, but the short version is the existing station can still be accessed using the east entrance off of Garey Avenue. Fulton Road was the first road closure in Pomona due to Gold Line construction. The Gold Line is expected to reach Pomona by 2025.

Casa Colina's free virtual 'Tribute to Courage Gala' set for next month

The annual "Tribute to Courage Gala," an annual fundraiser for Casa Colina Hospital and Centers for Healthcare, is scheduled as a free "virtual" event next month highlighting success stories and honoring the hospital's courageous patients.

This year's event, scheduled for 6 p.m. Thursday, April 8, will be hosted by actor, producer and comedian Bonnie Hunt.

To join this virtual event, visit casacolina.org/WatchTribute2021.

Although the event can be

viewed at no charge, donations can be made to the hospital's Free and Subsidized Care Fund by sending checks payable to Casa Colina Foundation to P.O. Box 2001, Pomona, CA 91769.

For charge card contributions, call (909) 596-7733, ext. 2237, e-mail tribute@casacolina.org or visit casacolina.org/tribute.

Casa Colina Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Funds received for this event may be used without restriction for the general benefit of Casa Colina programs and

services.

Casa Colina Hospital and Centers for Healthcare is an independent, nonprofit provider of medical-surgical and rehabilitative care serving children and adults since 1938. It is located in Pomona and provides a broad continuum of specialized services for patients in the surrounding community and beyond.

Casa Colina is committed to ensuring the gift of exceptional care to all who need it, regardless of their ability to pay.



Last month's graduates display their certificates at graduation ceremonies after completing course requirements of a 16-week business administration academy (a five-hour session once each week) of the Camara de Comercio Hispana del Valle de Pomona (Hispanic Chamber of Commerce). Chamber President Minerva Hernandez, of Minerva's Flowers on Third Street in Downtown Pomona, is pictured at left. Ceremonies for the group of new and existing business owners were held at the chamber's offices at 495 W. Second Street in Pomona. The academy is offered twice each year and is conducted in Spanish. It includes everything from creating a business plan, developing a structure and a vision, legal advice, business administration, contracting with corporations, accounting and more.

Sexual Assault Awareness

Month set for April

Project Sister Family Services is kicking off a Sexual Assault Awareness Month campaign that will be held throughout the month of April on the theme "But First, Consent."

It will educate coffee drinkers, millennials, and Gen Z about the importance of understanding and receiving consent before any type

of sexual activity by partnering with local coffee shops to provide informational coffee sleeves, stickers and postcards displaying the message.

Project Sister, the local nonprofit rape crisis center, serves Pomona and 23 surrounding cities. The 24-hour hotline is (909) 626-4357.

"New" bell... from pg. 11

what you call that thing in the bell that rings it), and just kind of rocks back and forth on the stand "until it starts to just ring all by itself," Clifford said.

Well, it is not really all by itself – when the Historical Society introduced the bell to Pomona at a "History at the Drive-in: The First Baptist Church Bell" drive-in event this month, it was really Jim Gallivan who pulled on the rope to give it a little help (OK, a lot of help).

Gallivan told visitors that Pomona has been known as the city of churches. (La Nueva Voz has heard there are still 140 churches in town today.)

This bell, of course, originally was used as "the call to worship," he said.

And now, thanks to the Historical Society and as a piece of history, he said Pomona can expect to hear this "bell ringing for centuries to come."

Hopefully it won't ring too early on Sunday mornings.

But it really is a piece of history – past president of the Historical Society Mickey Gallivan said the casting on the bell said 1844. She's just not sure if that was when this particular bell was made or if that was just the date on the casting. There are just so many details in the history business!

And it does sound like the real deal (or, in this case, the real peal).

"This bell, not only being the sweetest sounding bell you have heard in a very long time, is a symbol of that whole Baptist Church that started here in Spadra," Clifford said. "So to have the bell at the Phillips now is just like bringing it home and so we're ringing it, making some money so we can build a shelter for it, to protect it, but then ring it every time we come out to the Phillips to do tours and events."

Still reading? Here's the backstory.

Clifford said it takes a couple of people to move the bell – that's how they moved it out of storage at

Purpose Church, rolling it on pipes. At Phillips Mansion, they use that forklift we were talking about, and they are keeping it in an old carriage house temporarily.

Mickey and Jim Gallivan were involved in the moving process, but apparently a couple of church members rented a flatbed truck and drove it over.

It had been in a back building on the church campus for 15 years since the old church was torn down in 2005.

Now the real history part – John Osgoodby donated the bell to be used in the church in 1892.

He was originally from England and brought his family to Spadra in 1878. He purchased 40 acres from Louis Phillips and soon became a key member of the Pomona community and a deacon in the church.

A building at Park Avenue and Fourth Street in Pomona was used as the church until 1911 when, according to the Historical Society's "Legacy Bell" brochure, "a large, beautiful landmark building was constructed on the corner of Holt and Garey Avenue.

Yes, it was that large, beautiful landmark building that was torn down in 2005. (At least they didn't pave paradise and put up a parking lot as in the Joni Mitchell song.)

The original church building was demolished in 1957 and the bell was moved to the south belfry (we didn't ask about bats up there) on the new building where it remained until the belfry was heavily damaged in the 1990 Upland earthquake.

And that's when it was moved into storage.

Also according to the brochure, residents of Pomona's Lincoln Park were "extremely fortunate," as for many years prior to the 1990s, they frequently had the pleasure of hearing the church bells of Trinity Methodist, St. Paul's Episcopal and Pilgrim Congregational in addition

"New" bell... pg.19

Special message to readers of California's ethnic news media**On the record with Gov. Gavin Newsom: A shot in the arm against COVID-19****By Gov. Gavin Newsom**

After one of the most challenging years of our lives, there's a light at the end of the tunnel – the COVID-19 vaccines are here, and my administration is working to ensure that no community is left behind.

The COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. They are our best hope to end the pandemic. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is free, even if you're undocumented or don't have health insurance.

After the federal government authorized the use of the vaccines back in December, our own Western States Scientific Safety Review Group confirmed that the vaccines are safe. The panel includes nationally acclaimed scientists, many from California, with expertise in public health.

Although supplies of the vaccine are limited right now, we're working in close partnership with the federal government to get more vaccines into the state. And we're working hard to build a system for swiftly and safely vaccinating Californians with equity at the forefront.

While supply of vaccine is

constrained, we're prioritizing vaccines for the Californians most at risk – including healthcare workers, individuals 65 and older, and workers in education and childcare, emergency services and food and agriculture. That means grocery store workers, restaurant workers, farmworkers, those who work in food processing facilities and many others may now be prioritized. And we're working to ensure that the communities most impacted by COVID-19 – so often the communities of color and essential workers who have been sustaining us through this crisis – can access the vaccine.

We're investing in community-based organizations and partnering with trusted messengers who have been providing critical services and information to California's diverse communities during the pandemic so that

**Governor Gavin Newsom**

they can help educate, motivate and activate people to get vaccinated when it's their turn. We're also building messaging through a public education campaign, creating in-language content with cultural humility and meeting Californians where they are – literally, through the mobile vaccination sites that have deployed throughout the state to

community centers, places of worship and health clinics. Vaccination sites are being set up throughout the state, and we're working closely with community partners to make sure that vaccines are distributed to those who have been hit the hardest by this virus. You may see people in uniform or police protecting vaccine sites. They are here to help Californians get vaccinated and are not immigration officials.

The federal government, under President Biden, has confirmed that they will not conduct immigration enforcement operations at or near vaccine sites or clinics. You should not be asked about your immigration status when you get a COVID-19 vaccine.

Also, your medical information is private and cannot be shared with immigration offi-

cial. And, vaccinations do not count under the public charge rule.

All Californians can sign up on myturn.ca.gov to be notified when they are eligible for a vaccine. Eligible individuals in several counties, including Los Angeles, San Diego, Fresno and San Francisco, can also use My Turn to schedule an appointment, with more counties expected to begin using My Turn for scheduling in the coming weeks. My Turn is also accessible via a toll-free hotline at 1-833-422-4255. Operators speak English and Spanish, and third-party interpretation is also available in 250+ languages. You can also ask your physician or your pharmacy about scheduling an appointment.

After you've been vaccinated, it's still important to wear a mask, wash your hands often and continue to stay six feet apart to protect others in your community who have not yet been vaccinated.

I encourage every Californian to get vaccinated as soon as it's your turn. Together, we can end the pandemic.

Mensaje especial para lectores de medios de información étnicos de California**Que quede constancia, con el Gobernador Gavin Newsom: Una inyección en el brazo contra la COVID-19****Por Gobernador Gavin Newsom**

Después de uno de los años más difíciles de nuestras vidas, hay luz al final del túnel – ya llegaron las vacunas contra la COVID-19, y mi gobierno está trabajando para asegurarse de que ninguna comunidad se quede atrás.

Las vacunas contra la COVID-19 son seguras y efectivas. Son nuestra mejor esperanza para acabar con la pandemia. Conseguir una vacuna contra la COVID-19 es gratis, incluso si es usted una persona indocumentada o si no tiene seguro médico.

Después de que el gobierno federal autorizara el uso de las vacunas el pasado diciembre, nuestro propio Grupo científico de evaluación de seguridad de los estados del oeste confirmó que las vacunas son seguras. El Panel incluye científicos reconocidos en el país, muchos de California, con especialización en salud pública.

Aunque por el momento las existencias de la vacuna están reducidas, estamos trabajando en

estrecha colaboración con el gobierno federal para conseguir más vacunas para el estado. Y estamos trabajando duro para construir un sistema para vacunar de forma rápida y segura a los californianos con equidad en primer plano.

Como el suministro de la vacuna es limitado, estamos priorizando las vacunas para los californianos con más riesgo – incluyendo a trabajadores sanitarios, personas mayores de 65, trabajadores docentes y al cuidado infantil, y trabajadores de los servicios de emergencias y de la alimentación y agricultura. Eso significa que a los trabajadores de los supermercados, trabajadores del campo, los que trabajan en instalaciones de procesamiento de alimentos y muchos otros ya se les pueden dar prioridad. Y estamos haciendo lo posible para asegurarnos de que las comunidades más impactadas por la COVID-19 – que a menudo son las comunidades de color y los trabajadores esenciales que nos han estado sosteniendo durante esta crisis

– puedan acceder a la vacuna. Estamos invirtiendo en organizaciones basadas en la comunidad y asociándonos con mensajeros de confianza que han estado brindando servicios fundamentales e información a las comunidades diversas de California durante la pandemia para que puedan ayudar a educar, motivar y activar a la gente para que se vacune cuando les toque. También estamos construyendo mensajes mediante una campaña de educación pública, creando contenido en idioma con humildad cultural y viéndonos con californianos allí donde estén – literalmente, mediante los sitios de vacunación móviles que se han desplegado por el estado a los centros comunitarios, lugares de adoración y clínicas de salud.

Se están estableciendo sitios de vacunación en todo el estado, y estamos trabajando estrechamente con socios de la comunidad para asegurar que las vacunas se distribuyan entre los que se han visto más afectados por este virus.

Puede que vea a gente en uniforme o policía protegiendo los sitios de vacunación. Están aquí para ayudar a los californianos a vacunarse y no son autoridades de inmigración.

El gobierno federal, bajo el presidente Biden, ha confirmado que no llevarán a cabo operaciones de aplicación de inmigración en ni cerca de los sitios de vacunación o clínicas. No le deben preguntar acerca de su situación migratoria cuando reciba una vacunación COVID-19.

Además, su información médica es privada y no se puede compartir con las autoridades de inmigración. Y las vacunaciones no cuentan bajo la reglas de carga pública.

Todos los californianos pueden registrarse en myturn.ca.gov para ser notificados cuando estén elegibles para una vacunación. Las personas elegibles en varios condados, incluyendo Los Ángeles, San Diego, Fresno, y San Francisco, también pueden usar My Turn para programar una cita, y se espera que

más condados empezarán a usar My Turn para la programación en las semanas que vienen. También se puede acceder a My Turn a través de una línea directa gratis en el 1-833-422-4255. Los operadores hablan inglés y español, y también hay interpretación por una tercera parte en más de 250 idiomas. También puede preguntar a su médico o en su farmacia acerca de la programación de una cita para vacunarse.

Después de vacunarse, todavía será importante llevar una mascarilla, lavarse las manos con mucha frecuencia y seguir manteniendo una distancia de seis pies [dos metros] para proteger a aquellos en su comunidad que aún no se hayan vacunado.

Animo a todos los californianos a vacunarse en cuanto les toque. Juntos podemos poner fin a la pandemia.

La Nueva Voz...
For ads,
call (909) 629-2292

Montclair's Metro Honda and Metro Acura partner with City of Montclair, Christian Development Center on clothing drive for the homeless

All 183 employees of Metro Honda and Metro Acura in Montclair contributed something to a used clothing drive for the homeless in that city that involved the city itself, the police department and a local church.

Some 60 boxes and bags of clothing were presented to Montclair and Christian Development Center last week in an event at Metro.

Montclair City Councilmember Tenice Johnson told Metro's general manager John Lee that she appreciated his leadership.

"I appreciate you, I appreciate your vision, the people here in Montclair who need your help appreciate you more than you know," she said. "You are impacting a lot of people."

Johnson added that some 500 families in Montclair are served by the city's homeless programs and will benefit from the donations.

Lee said he and corporate staff member Pam Gordon and others had worked on the project for the past three months since their toy drive campaign during the holidays.

"We just took it to another lev-

el," he said. "I'm very proud that we have this kind of inclusion with our employees. They do care about this city. They do care about humankind."

He told Montclair Code Enforcement Officer Gabriel Fondario that the homeless need to remain a priority even after the pandemic – at the local, county and national level.

"I think we need to address this on-going issue that really is not being tackled in my opinion in the right way," he said.

Lee said the work that Fondario and Robert Hargett, also a code enforcement officer, are doing in the area of rehabilitation is building a foundation.

"I think it's going to send a message out there and I think other cities are going to look upon Montclair as a city that really cares about these people in the community," Lee said.

"This is a problem that takes a joint effort from everyone," Fondario said.

Fondario told La Nueva Voz most of his time is devoted to working with the city's homeless population.

He told the group that the Metro



CLOTHES FOR MONTCLAIR'S HOMELESS -- Metro Honda and Metro Acura in Montclair teamed up with the city and a local church on a clothes drive to help the homeless and last week donated some 60 boxes and bags of carefully used clothes. Pictured surrounded by boxes and bags of clothing, from left, are Metro General Manager John Lee; Montclair code enforcement officers Robert Hargett and Gabriel Fondario; Metro corporate staffer Pam Gordon; Montclair's Christian Development Center Pastor Donald Rucker and his wife Ethel; and Montclair City Councilmember Tenice Johnson.

effort was "amazing."

"This is going to help us out so much with our homeless program, with ones that are going into programs, they really don't have much but just the shirt on their back," he

said. "At least they can go in, they are feeling good about themselves, and (we can) try and help them build their confidence and it also shows that people care."

He said the clothes also will be

used by homeless individuals who are applying for jobs and going in for job interviews.

Pastor Donald Rucker, senior pastor at Christian Development

Clothing drive... pg. 17

@theselfcarelab

**Self-Care Lab
Boxing & Fitness**
273 South Park Ave
Pomona, CA 91766
909-561-1751
www.theselfcarelab.com

@thestageglobal

let's move pomona
DOWNTOWN POMONA OWNERS ASSOCIATION

The Stage Global
163 W. 2nd St.
Pomona CA 91766
909-742-9453
www.thestageglobal.com

Evies Dance Studio
237 East 2nd St.
Pomona CA 91766
909-242-4462
www.eviedancestudio.com

Tradición Dance Company
"A Mexican Folk Dance Company"
237 E Second St.
Pomona CA 91766
909-803-6331
www.tradiciondc.com

Out of control?... from pg. 4

Another source alleged Behforouz formerly worked at Martin Luther King, Jr., Medical Center's Recuperative Care Center for four years as medical director, where she eliminated all of the emergency medical technicians and replaced them with JWCH personnel.

One source questioned why additional contractors were not involved in the Pomona hotel operation, and why positions were not opened up to county staff before going to any outside agency.

Even hotel medical director Burns reportedly came in at three times the pay the previous director, a county employee, received.

County's chief nursing officer investigating Pomona hotel operation

La Nueva Voz learned from another source soon after publishing last month's issue that Sue Currin, R.N., chief nursing officer for the Department of Health Services, and a couple of levels above Behforouz on the department's organizational chart, had assigned an entire team of investigators to look into the operation of all of the quarantine facilities – including instructing investigators to make personal on-site visits and conduct reviews at the

Sheraton Fairplex Hotel.

Currin reports directly to Dr. Christina Ghaly, director of the county's Department of Health Services, the second largest health department in the country.

Currin's investigation reportedly got under way roughly 10 days after La Nueva Voz published its February issue enumerating the many irregularities reported by various sources to this newspaper.

La Nueva Voz, immediately upon learning she had ordered the review, e-mailed a detailed list of nine questions to Currin this month asking what she was learning and what she planned to do about it – ranging from employee complaints her team was investigating to Burns' actions in eliminating standard county controls and protections for purchasing, inventory tracking and hiring, and even to the allegations of "kickbacks" and "skimming."

Neither Currin nor the county's public information staff responded by deadline time for this issue (public information spokespersons said they don't comment on internal personnel or client matters).

Meanwhile, another continuing source of information for this on-going story alleged this month

that both Burns and Behforouz are under investigation by the Medical Board of California where they have an "open case." The board is charged with administration of the state's licensing and regulation of physicians and surgeons.

The source added the two also are being investigated by "other federal/state agencies."

Carlos Villatoro, the news media spokesman for the Medical Board of California, would not confirm or deny any activity, claiming investigations are confidential under California law, although any resulting disciplinary actions, judgments or other red flags eventually are posted on the board's public web site.

Similarly, Nicole Nishida, the news media spokesperson for the Los Angeles office of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, **Out of control... pg. 17**




Photos courtesy of Los Angeles County Medical assistant Seth Alvarez is on his way to disinfect after conducting a blood glucose check for a patient isolating at Pomona's Sheraton Fairplex Hotel.



Los Angeles County Internal Services Department employee Florida Hernandez sprays disinfectant in outdoor common areas where patients were allowed twice a day while staying at the Sheraton Fairplex Hotel for COVID quarantine purposes.

The following public service ads are courtesy of La Nueva Voz

Project Sister Family Services
Sexual Assault and
Child Abuse Services
909-626-4357
or 626-966-4155
www.projectsister.org

**Feeding the Hungry,
Sheltering the Homeless**
Grocery Distribution at
209 W. Pearl St.
Pomona

Volunteering: 909-622-3806
www.inlandvalleyhopepartners.org

HOUSE OF RUTH
Abused by your partner
and need help?
24-hour hotline:
**(909) 988-5559 or toll
free at (877) 988-5559**

Pomona Public Library Hours
("Walk up doorside service" only)
Noon to 5 p.m.
Monday through Thursday
(For "Walk up doorside service,"
please use south parking lot
entrance due to construction.)

Info on student group programs at AGRIsCAPes:
www.agriscapes.cpp.edu
4102 S. University Drive, Pomona (next to the Farm Store)

Sign up for Pomona Unified School District's
Free 'Early Learning Literacy' App!
It's a fun way to improve reading skills.
Register at www.myf2b.com/register/pomona
footsteps2brilliance
La Nueva Voz is a proud member of PUSD's Literacy Collaborative.

APERTURAS DE EMPLEO INMEDIATAS PRODUCTION WORKERS & PACKERS
La empresa de procesamiento de aves de corral ubicada en Chino, CA, tiene vacantes inmediatas para trabajadores de producción y envasadores. Buscando estudiantes confiables y rápidos, con capacidad para trabajar horas extras y algunos fines de semana. La compañía entrenará.
Los candidatos interesados pueden presentar su solicitud en persona
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(909) 628-9808

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Poultry processing company located in Chino, CA, has immediate job openings for production workers and packers. Seeking reliable, fast learners, with ability to work overtime and some weekends. Company will train.
Interested candidates may apply in person
Accepting Applications
M-F 8am-2pm
Wing Lee Farms
13625 Yorba Avenue
Chino, CA 91710
(909) 628-9808

Leyva bill on 'rape kits' clears committee
With strong bipartisan support, the State Senate Public Safety Committee this month approved legislation authored by State Sen. Connie Leyva that will require the addition of a new online portal to California's existing rape kit tracking system to allow survivors of sexual assault to anonymously and electronically track and receive updates regarding the status, location and information regarding their rape kit.
"SB 215 empowers rape survivors, strengthens public safety and prioritizes healing and justice," Leyva said. "The fact that rape survivors in California must currently contact law enforcement agencies by phone or in person in order to receive an update... is clearly not a survivor-sensitive process and a reality that we must swiftly change."

Out of control?... from pg. 16

asked about Burns and Behforouz, was unable to disclose whether her agency was investigating a medical practitioner because such a disclosure “would be compromising our case.”

La Nueva Voz reached out to the DEA early this month following up on last month’s story in which a variety of drugs allegedly were being used – officially and unofficially – by patients at the hotel.

Providing patients marijuana, alcohol to keep them from leaving

For example, as reported last month, sources told La Nueva Voz that nurses and other staff members were required to provide marijuana, “edibles,” alcohol and “vapes” to patients at the hotel in order to discourage them from leaving against medical advice – and employees have been disciplined if they refused to comply.

Managers allegedly were attempting to “keep the numbers up” in the hotel in order to keep billings up, and these practices – among others – were reportedly prompting numerous employees to leave.

Then, as La Nueva Voz also reported last month, there was the issue of patients in the hotel allegedly ordering deliveries of “crystal meth,” a popular party drug, from outside providers who delivered it in pizza boxes or sandwich bags to get past security.

Pomona police confirmed in a telephone conversation – after researching calls for service from the hotel at the request of La Nueva Voz – that they responded at least once to confiscate a quantity of the illegal drugs and store them as “found property,” since they were unable to determine who delivered the drugs to the hotel and who the intended recipient had been for the order.

The cost of running the hotel as a COVID facility, which was being operated by Los Angeles County, is expected to be passed on to FEMA and funding under the CARES Act.

And those costs have been adding up quickly over the past year – the contract between Fairplex and the county for exclusive use of the hotel and all of its 244 rooms alone totals \$897,920 per month plus an additional \$89,792 per month to cover the City of Pomona’s Transient Occupancy Tax.

And those invoices for payroll totaling \$10 million came to light this month in an after-hours interview

with a former night shift nurse at the hotel who said she and a colleague spotted the invoices in an office at the hotel while looking for supplies.

She reached out to La Nueva Voz after seeing last month’s revelations in February’s issue.

La Nueva Voz left voice mail messages on the personal cell phones of both Burns and Behforouz indicating in detail the direction this month’s story was taking and giving them the opportunity to provide comments in response.

Neither returned the call by press time this month.

Both chatted briefly with this newspaper last month and comments from each were included in last month’s issue, although Behforouz insisted at the time that all of the allegations were “unfounded.”

La Nueva Voz also reached out this month to the county’s joint emergency public information center, handling media inquiries during the COVID pandemic for the county’s Department of Health Services, with four questions providing the county with an opportunity to respond on topics including clarification as to whether Burns was fired or reassigned, and a general inquiry asking if the county has reached out to any law enforcement or prosecutorial agencies asking them to investigate anything on a growing list of allegations.

“In response to your inquiry, Los Angeles County Health Services does not comment on internal personnel or client matters due to privacy laws,” a spokesperson for the county’s Department of Health Services’ Office of Communications said in an official e-mail response.

‘COVID hotel’ an evolving story

This month’s update on the “COVID hotel” story is the third month in the series. La Nueva Voz news sources have been an important part of the development of this story, and many of the sources involved have preferred to remain anonymous. La Nueva Voz has continued to respect their wishes.

And each month, readers with additional information have contacted La Nueva Voz, broadening the scope of this evolving story.

At this point, clearly, law enforcement agencies and agencies with subpoena power ultimately will be required to fully connect all the dots and determine who the suspects are and what criminal charges, if any,

will be appropriate.

The closest account with any similarity to activities in the Pomona hotel was discovered in a quick internet search in which the San Francisco Chronicle reported last May that San Francisco was providing methadone, alcohol and marijuana to some addicts and homeless patients isolating from COVID in hotels who were interested in beginning addiction treatment while under the Department of Public Health’s supervision.

One former night nurse at the Pomona hotel told La Nueva Voz patients here in need of detoxification were referred to Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center.

As of deadline day for this month’s issue, La Nueva Voz has confirmed that various allegations have been brought to the attention of and are being reviewed, to some extent, by agencies including the Pomona Police Department, the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s office, the California Attorney General’s office, the FBI and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

Pomona’s Sheraton Fairplex Hotel was converted last March

to exclusive use by Los Angeles County as a COVID isolation facility for those exposed to COVID and in need of a place to quarantine or those who have contracted the disease but with only mild symptoms not requiring full hospitalization.

It has been used by first responders, members of the region’s homeless population and others.

La Nueva Voz has been the only news media outlet to break this story and continue to cover it since January after receiving reports and documents from a medical worker at the hotel who first brought to light allegations of improprieties and mishandling of patients, in some cases moving them to other county quarantine facilities in the system to keep the census reporting up so “the numbers look very high and the funding keeps coming.”

Anyone with any information regarding possible criminal violations or other information is encouraged to contact La Nueva Voz at (909) 629-2292, the law enforcement agency of your choice or, if you prefer to provide information anonymously, “Crime Stoppers” at (800) 222-TIPS (8477).

Clothing drive... from pg. 15

Center, told La Nueva Voz the results of the clothes drive showed what is possible “when you’ve got leadership that has a vision and they can galvanize help.”

“Nothing is impossible in terms of addressing our social issues when you have proper leadership that has a vision and a willingness to make it happen,” he said.

The church is involved in working with the homeless throughout the year. He said the “community driven” church feeds 750 families every month and offers a clothing give-away the fourth Saturday of each month.

And on-going volunteers always are needed for the food drive effort.

He added the church also works with the city to help those in need find housing, “helping them to assimilate back into mainstream society.”

The Christian Development Center, which serves Montclair, Pomona, Ontario and surrounding communities, is located at 5080 Kingsley St., Montclair, and, according to Rucker, services are open to everyone on Sunday.



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Janet Roy
General Manager

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It was just about spring this month at Cal Poly University Pomona when La Nueva Voz happened to be driving through the campus, so we stopped to see how the animals were doing. And frankly, they all seemed happy to see us since there aren't very many students around these days. Of course, we don't want to brag, but we thought that cow photo was suitable for framing. And we couldn't resist shooting the donkey and the horse when they came up to the fence (hey, guys, why the long face?). But the goats back off the road in the farm just seem like they are always smiling.

Alzheimer's Association services continue during COVID

As COVID-19 continues to impact Californians, especially those living with dementia and their caregivers, the Alzheimer's Association Southern California Chapter is maintaining an entire list of free services for family caregivers, according to a news release.

The association's 24/7 "helpline" at (800) 272-3900 is a vital, free resource providing confidential support, information, crisis assistance, emotional support and translation services in more than 200 languages.

And the association also provides local support groups and education classes online and via

telephone.

On-going classes include topics like effective communication strategies, healthy living for the brain and body, 10 warning signals of Alzheimer's, aging well for Latinos and support groups.

Some of the topics are presented in Spanish.

For information on upcoming classes or to register for classes or support groups, contact the helpline at (800) 272-3900 or visit alz.org/socal.

Statistics show that Hispanics are about one and a half times more likely to have Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia than older white adults.



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Board of Supervisors Chair Hilda Solis says one-year anniversary of COVID marks beginning of “a new era of hope”

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chair Hilda Solis, reflecting on the one-year anniversary since the “Safer at Home” order was instituted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, said that “despite what we have gone through this past year, we are now entering a new era of hope.”

“A year ago, there was no such thing as a red or purple tier, nor were there COVID vaccine mega PODs, and yet now these topics are part of our everyday conversations,” Solis said in a prepared statement.

“We have sacrificed so much to save our family members and our neighbors, and we have mourned the loss of people who have fallen to COVID,” she added. “Because of all we have done to keep one another safe, staying home, limiting our interactions with others, wearing our masks, and following the health officer order whenever possible, we are finally beginning to see the easing of restrictions and a decreasing death toll from the world’s deadliest virus.”

“Not only are we now in the red tier,

but we have three incredibly effective vaccines already received by millions of people,” she said. “These events seemed almost unimaginable only a few months ago, but what seemed like distant dreams have now become inspiring realities.”

“The worst phase of this crisis seems to be behind us,” she said. “Our children are beginning to go back to the classroom, our economy is slowly recovering, and we are vaccinating tens of thousands of people each day across the county.”

“Our county’s recovery will not happen overnight,” Solis said. “Our key to beating this pandemic once and for all lies within these vaccinations, which is why I am doing everything in my power to bring vaccines where we need them most to our hardest hit neighborhoods, to all our abuelitas and tios, to our essential workers, and to teachers and those with disabilities.”

“Together we will get to the finish line, leaving COVID-19 far behind,” she said.

“New” bell... from pg. 13

to the First Baptist Church of Pomona.

The bell was made in Troy, New York, and transported to Pomona by train.

Osgoodby’s descendants, Clifford said, have been asking that the bell be donated to the Historical Society. There are two great-granddaughters involved in the project – one in Arizona and another in Nevada.

“It’s a way of making a lasting monument to something that the family did,” Clifford said.

And we agree with that, of course – it certainly is a better way to keep history than to just put it in the basement somewhere.

In fact, even the very idea has a nice ring to it.

Interested in bells or just interested in helping out? Here’s an opportunity to get involved and help out when the Historical Society gets started building a protective structure for the

bell. The idea of the structure is to keep the bell out of the weather and keep from having to move it out of storage on a forklift for special events.

Clifford said the plan is to build “the sort of thing where you can open all the doors and lift all the sides so that you can hear the bell all across the valley and then once we’re finished with it we will lock it back up again.”

“We want to be sure the bell stays as beautiful as it is right now,” she said.

Or, you can just donate to the building fund at pomonahistorical.org/donations.

Who knows, the next time they ask for whom the bell tolls, it might toll for thee!

For now, the bell is on temporary display – for special events, until the structure is completed – at Phillips Mansion, located at 2640 Pomona Blvd., Pomona.

CITY OF POMONA WANTS YOU!

Pomona City Council seeking members of ‘Independent Redistricting Commission’

The City of Pomona is looking for Pomona residents interested in filling one of seven openings on the city’s Independent Redistricting Commission, which will be responsible for reviewing and potentially realigning City Council electoral district boundaries based upon the 2020 Census.

Deadline for applications is Thursday, April 29, according to a news release.

Suggested requirements are having a strong interest in the community and the ability to give generously of your time for this position. Applicants must live in Pomona.

Commissioners will have an opportunity to make a difference in the community by providing recommendations to the City

Council.

The commissioners will serve on a volunteer basis and will be appointed by members of the council.

Applications are available on the city’s web site at www.pomona.ca.us or in the city clerk’s office in Pomona City Hall, 505 S. Garey Ave., Pomona.

Applicants are urged to read the qualifications, requirements and post-service restrictions before completing and submitting an application for this commission.

All information is included on the application form.

For more information, contact the city clerk’s office at (909) 620-2341.



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COME to one of our local Medicare Information and Vitality Centers. They are sanitized, no-contact locations that will help keep you safe.

*No obligation to join. For accommodation of persons with special needs at sales meetings, call the number above. Inter Valley Health Plan is a not-for-profit HMO with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in Inter Valley Health Plan depends on contract renewal. Inter Valley Health Plan complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. Inter Valley Health Plan cumple con las leyes federales de derechos civiles aplicables y no discrimina por motivos de raza, color, nacionalidad, edad, discapacidad o sexo. Inter Valley Health Plan 遵守适用的联邦民权法律规定,不因种族、肤色、民族血统、年龄、残障或性别而歧视任何人.

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La Supervisora del Condado de Los Angeles, Hilda L. Solis, honra el trabajo de **César Chávez** por su compromiso de proteger a nuestros trabajadores de agricultura. A través de la pandemia, reconocemos nuestra responsabilidad de proteger los derechos de quienes trabajan arduamente para ayudarnos a poner comida en nuestras mesas durante estos tiempos difíciles.



Los Angeles County Supervisor

HILDA L. SOLIS

First District - Chair



@HILDASOLIS



¡FELIZ CINCO DE MAYO!

OK, it may be a little early, but not too early to start thinking about it.

La Nueva Voz is already making plans for our April 22 issue, which comes out a couple of weeks before Cinco de Mayo.

Here's the deal:

We're offering special half price rates for all Cinco de Mayo ads, regardless of size -- new clients or regular customers (for regular customers, the special offer applies to "extra" ads celebrating the holiday).

We'll take our published rate card rate for black and white ads and cut it in half, regardless of size. Want color in your ad? The cost is only \$100 extra for eighth page and quarter page, and \$150 extra for half and full page ads.

And, as always, we can create the ad at no extra cost using your logo, any graphics and ad message. Plus we'll help at every step, all at no extra cost.

Interested? Call Renee Barbee now to reserve space -- reneebarbee7@gmail.com or (909) 629-2292. (No texts to this number please.)

She'll get your message out to the Pomona and surrounding market in Pomona's only community newspaper, including free social media, with more readers IN POMONA than any other print media, period (and more than three times the print media readership of the suburban daily).

She's waiting by the phone to hear from you!

