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La Nueva Voz

The New Voice, a Bilingual (English/Spanish) Publication
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Pomona Chamber of Commerce



Member

Issue No. 175

Thursday, February 22, 2024

Anita Gutierrez named Pomona's first Latina city manager

Pomona city councilmembers this month unanimously voted to give the top city staff job of city manager to Anita Gutierrez, the city's first-ever Latina to hold the job she has been handling as acting city manager since former city manager James Makshanoff stepped down in November amid both controversy and a bit of mystery.

Her two-year contract called for an initial salary of \$295,000, automatic two-year extensions of the agreement, and a six-month "cooling off" period during which Gutierrez cannot be terminated before or after any city council election except for good cause.

Gutierrez has more than 20 years of experience in public service working at the local, state and federal levels of government and holds a bachelor's degree in political science

from Cal State University San Bernardino, a master's degree in planning from USC and is expected to complete requirements for her doctorate degree in organizational change and leadership at USC in May, according to the city's staff report.

She was hired by the City of Pomona in 2018 as a planning manager and served as director of development services before her appointment to the position of assistant city manager.

Even though the vote came on the next to the last item on an agenda that continued for more than four hours, a handful of speakers from the audience lined up



Anita Gutierrez

to comment on the decision, with Pomona Chamber of Commerce Board Chair Nef Cortez of Re/Max Galaxy Realty speaking first.

Cortez told councilmembers the chamber has worked closely with the city and found Gutierrez to be an "excellent partner" for both business interests and the city at large.

Pomona business owner John Pena added that "one of the best things" that has happened to Pomona has been having Gutierrez on staff, pointing out that she knows staff and the Pomona community well.

But Pomona activist Larry Ortega called the contract another "massive give-away" and compared it to issues surrounding the last city manager who left under "a cloud of secrecy."

He added that her new salary is only \$15,000 less than the top city administrator in Los Angeles.

Mayoral candidate and realtor Veronica Cabrera questioned whether it is "proper" to hire a city manager immediately before an election rather than waiting until after the March 5 primary in the event the make-up of the city council might be changing after the election cycle.

All comments from members of the council were positive – from Councilmember Robert Torres who

said he liked the idea of hiring someone from within existing city staff to Councilmember Steve Lustro who said it was the "right person at the right time for the job."

And Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval said "Anita has earned this" and said she has an ability to bring people together.

Gutierrez thanked Sandoval and members of the council "for their very kind and humbling words."

"I won't let you down," she added. She also thanked the "very passionate Pomona community" and the "amazing people to work with" on city staff.

The city ran into a little turbulence late last year when then-city manager Makshanoff cleaned out his office in November and stepped down under a separation agreement that was made public – and included everything but the actual reason for his mutually agreed upon voluntary retirement.

He left after serving for only four years and received about \$600,000 in severance pay, another issue that became controversial in the community.

The specifics of any disagreement with councilmembers, if there was one, remained confidential under terms of the separation agreement (see full story in December 2023 La Nueva Voz at www.lanuevavoz.net).

Temperature rises at Assembly District candidate's forum

Congresswoman Norma Torres and former State Sen. Connie Leyva became part of the show at this month's 53rd Assembly District candidate's forum at Cal Poly University Pomona where they were seated in the audience and became the target of a brief bout of shouting by apparent supporters of the lone Republican candidate on the stage.

The brief fireworks started fol-

lowing a question from the moderator regarding a 2020 report estimating that 1.1 million undocumented individuals participate in the California workforce contributing an estimated \$3.7 billion in annual state and local revenues while they are restricted from essential state resources like unemployment insurance and physical insurance.

"What is your position on ex-

tending these resources to the undocumented population in California," said moderator Jill Hargis, associate vice president for faculty affairs at Cal Poly.

"Are we really going to ask Californians and people who are already here to foot the bill?" asked Republican candidate Nick Wilson, who describes himself on the March 5 primary election ballot as

Candidate's forum... pg. 4



Green Ribbon Week

MARCH 18-22, 2024

Thrive in Mind

Promote mental health awareness during Green Ribbon Week!

Green Ribbon Week (GRW) is the stigma reduction campaign for Tri-City Mental Health's ongoing mental health movement in Pomona, Claremont and La Verne. Held annually during the third week of March, GRW continues the efforts to reduce mental health stigma and increase awareness of mental health needs and resources in our local community.

#ThriveinMind is this year's GRW theme. We encourage everyone to take action during GRW and throughout the year to help improve mental health in our community. Join people across our three cities and share how you practice self-care; how you get support for your mental health; and share your journey towards wellness. All of us should feel comfortable reaching out for and connecting with support. You can help promote open discussions about mental health and make it possible for the people you care about to get the care and resources they need to thrive.

Join us in March for free community-wide activities and events, both in-person and virtually. Visit www.tricitymhs.org to download our toolkit and learn ways to support yourself and your loved ones. Follow us on social media @TriCityMHS to get involved during Green Ribbon Week!



\$35 million verdict awarded in 30-year-old sexual assault case

An alleged victim of sexual assault by her former assistant track coach in a 30-year-old case was awarded a \$35 million verdict against Pomona Unified School District last month.

The amount of the verdict in the jury trial was not available in court documents but was announced in a news release by attorneys Natalie Weatherford and John Taylor

of Taylor and Ring, the Manhattan Beach law firm handling the case.

“Jane Doe 4” allegedly was raped by Herman Hopson, her former track coach at Pomona High School, when she was 16 years old while on an overnight track trip.

According to the news release, there were at least four other minor female Pomona High School stu-

dents Hopson allegedly assaulted.

Attorneys alleged Jane Doe 4 is one of nine women who have come forward to report abuse.

“(The) verdict is a huge victory, not only for Jane Doe 4, but for all the women who are currently waiting to fight their fight,” Weatherford said in the news release.

In addition to Hopson, the al-

legations included girls basketball coach Brian Crichlow, head track coach Kitrick Taylor, football coach Derick Pugh, and assistant football coach Vincent Spirlin, who is still employed by the school district today, according to the release.

According to the original lawsuit, filed in July 2022 in Los Angeles Superior Court, Jane Doe 4, an 11th

grader at the time, alleged her coach rented an apartment across the street from the school where he would take minor female students to drink alcohol and engage in sexual abuse.

Also, according to the filing, she alleged her coach raped her in a Las Vegas motel room while on a track trip.

Verdict awarded... pg. 5

RE-ELECT
MAYOR TIM SANDOVAL
CITY OF POMONA
2024

- Secured millions of dollars in grants for roadway improvements, park improvements and facility renovation, including the re-designed Hamilton Park and planned improvements to Civic Center Park, the San Jose Creek Greenway, and Garey Avenue and Holt Avenue corridors.
- Attracted millions of dollars in investment in large and small businesses in the city, including Siemens Manufacturing, Impex Manufacturing and The Union on Garey (historic YMCA building).
- Developed Pomona's Pro-Housing Plan to catalyze the construction of thousands of affordable and market-rate homes.
- Made shrewd management decisions to control spending, stabilize pension obligations, and build the city's reserves to historic levels.
- Represents our interests in the region in leadership positions on numerous boards, including LA Metro and the Transportation Committee of the Southern California Association of Governments.
- Founded and participates in Pomona Beautiful, a grass-roots revitalization effort to clean up our city.



i f TimSandoval.com Text Tim at (909) 907-9358

Paid for by Sandoval for Mayor 2024, Committee ID: #1457447



Photo by Renee Barbee
SNOW PHOTOS ARE BACK! -- It's time again for winter snow shots now that the San Gabriel Mountains have had a few good dustings to get just enough white on top -- and enough clear sky, at least early in the mornings -- to see it. Pictured is Mt. Baldy (Mt. San Antonio) taken from the top of Westmont before breakfast. The picture had more than 141 "likes" and seven shares on Facebook by press time.

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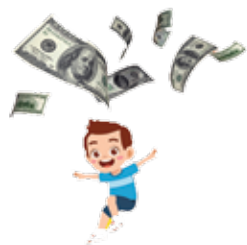
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Sandoval vs Rodriguez, council candidates weigh in at forum

Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval, who has led the city for the past eight years, has three challengers on the ballot in the March primary including Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez – who is terming out in Sacramento after an 11-year run – taking another shot at the top job after losing to former Mayor Elliott Rothman in 2012.

Rothman received 12,535 votes that year for 49.49 percent and Rodriguez received 7,807 votes for 30.82 percent. Tomas Ursua received the remaining 4,986 votes, or 19.69 percent.

Rodriguez was elected to the assembly in a special election the following year held to replace then-Assemblymember Norma Torres, who was elected to the state senate.

Also lining up in the mayor's race are political newcomers Veronica Cabrera, a real estate broker, and Gustavo Ramirez, a teacher, according to the ballot listings.

The four mayoral candidates and another 10 city council candidates in three council districts are on the ballot this year.

Candidates made their posi-

tions known in four Zoom candidates' forums held by the League of Women Voters Mt. Baldy Area. For the first time in the 15 years La Nueva Voz has published, the Pomona Chamber of Commerce, always the second "official" forum, decided to hold its own candidates' event after the publication date of this last issue of the newspaper before the election due to scheduling difficulties.

Members of the public will be able to attend that forum from 4 to 7 p.m. Friday (Feb. 23) at Pomona's Metro Sports Restobar, 197 E. Second St.

Sandoval told nearly 522 viewers of the Zoom forum (by press time for this issue) in his opening comments that he grew up in Pomona, attended Pomona Unified School District schools, and co-founded a non-profit program (Bright Prospect) that has helped more than 3,000 young people in Pomona go to and graduate from college.

"I ran for mayor in 2016 because I believed the mayor at the time could not lead our city to our full potential," he said. "I was elected in November 2016. I along with others have improved our financial

situation including (increasing) our reserve funds from \$14 million to now over \$16 million."

He said housing units today are being built all over the city and the city is benefiting both from the housing and from increased development fees, "fees that had not increased since 1989."

He added that those fees include park fees that are allowing the city to increase park acreage throughout the city.

"We have received millions of dollars in grants to repave our streets, improve walkability and rideability in our city," Sandoval said. "In fact, recently we received a transformative climate communities grant for \$22 million."

"And homelessness, which continues to be a challenge for us, where would we be if we didn't have Hope for Home (homeless services center)" taking care of the unhoused population that once lived in tents throughout the city, he said.

"While I believe we have made great strides, there is more work to be done," he said. "For

far too long, the city has faced intractable problems like sex trafficking, community violence and recently homelessness. I have committed myself to working with others to solve these problems together."

"They don't end magically – you have to plan and organize city resources to end these problems and that I have done and continue to do," Sandoval said. "You do not end these problems in a day, a month, or a year, problems that have existed for over 50 plus years – it takes time."

"Our work is not done – as I have done for the past eight years, I am committed to working with you to transform a city that we love," he said.

Rodriguez told the Zoom audience that running for mayor "was something I did not plan on doing."

"As it came close to the filing period toward the end of the year, I had outreach from many people, from business owners to many individuals, non-profits, urging me to run for office because they see the need that Pomona needs in a different direction," he said.

"And I'd agree with them 100 percent."

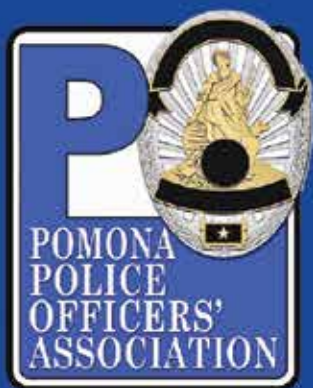
"Obviously, what we see out there on the streets of Pomona, the crime, the homelessness, the housing . . . and the fact that businesses don't seem to be very well welcomed in the City of Pomona," Rodriguez said. "And so with that said I decided to throw my name in for mayor in the City of Pomona."

"And I think my track record speaks for itself – I've brought over \$20 million directly to the City of Pomona, and directly, as I mean from the California state budget," he added. "No other elected official can say that."

"How many times have I been told by many folks in the City of Pomona, over \$10 million dollars to the city police department, over \$14 million to Pomona Unified School District," Rodriguez said, "for arts programs to career technical education and most recently funding for the Fairplex in Pomona to expand their welding program."

He said he's dedicated to the City of Pomona, was born and

Council candidates... pg. 6

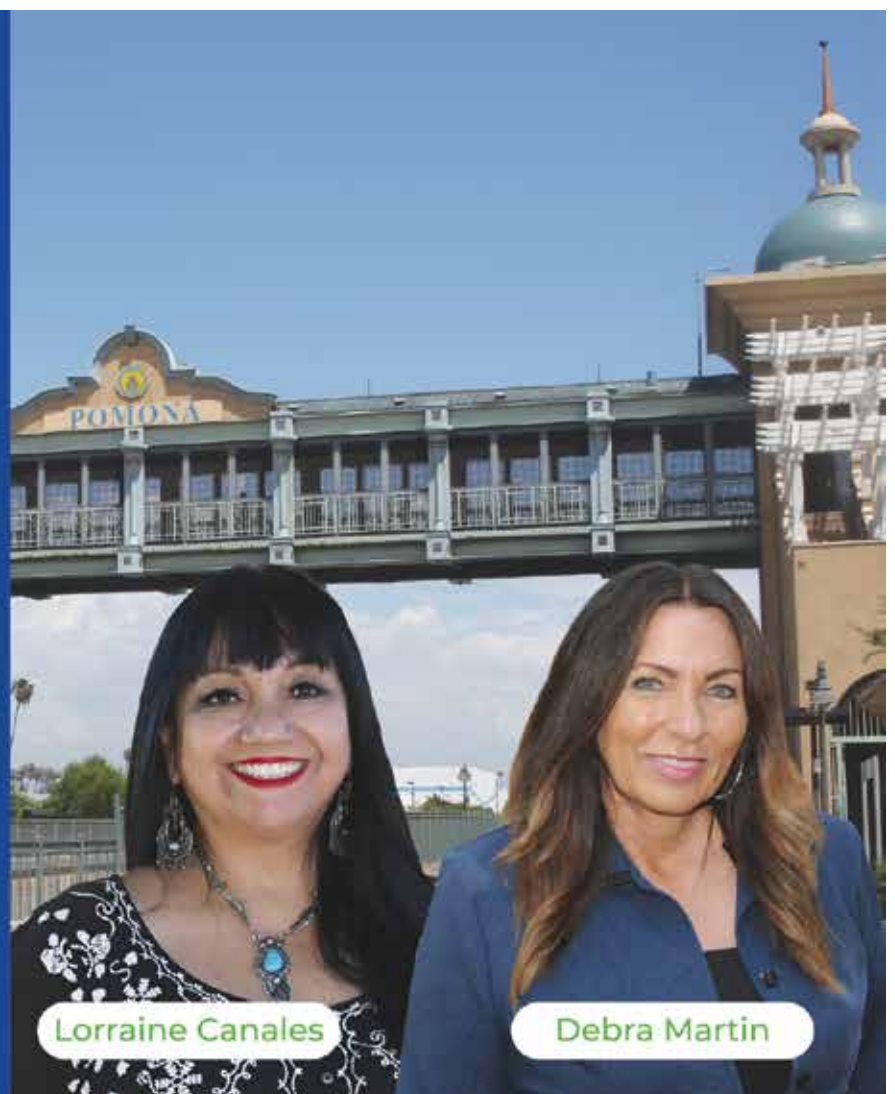


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for Pomona City Council D6

Elect
DEBRA MARTIN
for Pomona City Council D1

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Not Authorized by a candidate or a committee controlled by a candidate.



Lorraine Canales

Debra Martin

Candidate's forum... from pg. 1

a law enforcement educator.

That comment prompted a brief chorus of “yes” and applause from former State Sen. Connie Leyva and several others seated near the front of the room several seats away from Congresswoman Torres, whose son Pomona City Councilmember Robert Torres is also a candidate for the state Assembly seat.

That touched off a full 30 seconds of banter with Wilson’s supporters in the audience just over halfway into the 90-minute forum.

Apparently, a Wilson supporter mistook Leyva for Torres and said the congresswoman “thinks it’s OK,” despite the fact that Leyva is no longer in office and was not a congresswoman.

“Well, she’s a congresswoman, she can do that apparently,” Wilson replied.

After another couple of quick barbs were tossed, the incident became enough for the moderator to caution members of the audience about outbursts and to threaten to “ask people to leave if we can’t keep quiet,” and even Pomona Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Monique Robles stepped

back to the podium to attempt to calm the audience.

It was unclear whether Congresswoman Torres said anything at all during the quick exchange.

Two Cal Poly staff members left the room in the student services building to ask a plainclothes campus police officer to step back in.

“The people of District 53 and the people of California deserve better,” Wilson said after order was restored and after asking for permission to answer the question. “The answer

is very simple – I think we need to put the people that are here working hard first. There are homeless people that are on the street right now.”

He also pointed to the number of veterans in need of services, and said issues of the economy, homelessness, and the public safety “nightmare” are “all interchangeable.”

“I spent my whole life protect-

ing communities,” he said, adding that he knows how to fix communities because of his career in law enforcement.

Wilson said businesses are complaining because there’s a crime crisis “with a culture of law and lawlessness.”

“I think we’re going to have to get very serious very quick,” he said.

The other three candidates sup-

ported state resources for the undocumented population.

“Event rules and format” provided ahead of the event by Cal Poly called for audience members to “respectfully refrain from excessive exuberance for or against a particular candidate.”

Candidate Michelle Rodriguez, wife of current Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez and who identified herself on the ballot as a public

safety commissioner, did not attend the forum but responded to an e-mail request from La Nueva Voz to provide comments she would have used in her opening remarks. Her edited comments appear below.

In his own opening statements, candidate Carlos Goytia, for the past 12 years an elected director at Three Valleys Municipal Water

Candidate's forum... pg. 8



PHOTO OP AT THE CANDIDATES FORUM -- Pomona Chamber of Commerce officials and Cal Poly University Pomona employees line up for the camera after the California Assembly candidates forum on the Cal Poly campus. Pictured, from left, are Chamber co-chair Josh Landis of Foothill Transit, Executive Board member Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz, Board member Lanae O'Shields of SoCal Gas, Chamber President and CEO Monique Robles, Chamber Board Chair Nef Cortez of Re/Max Galaxy, Chamber Board member Grace Yao, and Michelle Viorata and Jonathan Lopez, both of Cal Poly.



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**Arturo Jimenez,
President**

Verdict awarded... from pg. 2

The lawsuit asked for an unspecified award of general, specific and punitive damages, costs of the suit and “such other and further relief as the court deems just and proper.”

The verdict was the first financial settlement to be disclosed in the case. Jane Does 1, 2 and 8 reportedly previously settled lawsuits with the school district, Jane Doe 3 reportedly also has settled, and cases against Jane Does 5, 6 and 7 are pending.

According to last month’s Pomona Unified School District news release, the district’s current administration first became aware in 2018 of the accusations originating in the 1990s.

“Upon receipt of this information, administration immediately contacted law enforcement and a full investigation was conducted,” the release said. “Law enforcement decided not to prosecute.”

“Nonetheless, we bolstered training to employees and students in an effort to enhance awareness and encourage reporting for the safety of our students,” the release continued. “Subsequent to 2018, and due to changes in the law, lawsuits arising out of those 1990s incidents were filed and the district became aware

of those additional complaints.”

“In this most recent trial, our district responsibly accepted liability for mistakes of the past,” the release said.

The changes in the law referenced in the district’s statement were included in Assembly Bill 218, introduced by Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez in January 2019 making such suits possible by increasing the time limit for commencing an action for recovery of damages to 22 years “from the date the plaintiff attains the age of majority or within five years of the date the plaintiff discovers or reasonably should have discovered that the psychological injury or illness . . . was caused by sexual assault, whichever is later,” according to the California legislative counsel’s digest on the bill.

State law previously required actions for recovery of damages to begin within eight years of the date the plaintiff attains the age of majority.

The school district’s news release added that the current school board and new superintendent began implementing innovative measures to enhance the safety of students including annual mandated “reporter training” for all staff members, enhanced training for all administra-

tors on recognizing and preventing “grooming behavior” toward students, and enhanced clearance requirements for volunteers at schools and off-site activities.

Also included was enhanced review of proposed field trips by risk management and educational services officials to maximize student safety, and enhanced monitoring of athletic and activity programs and directors.

“PUSD’s students are safer because PUSD is implementing new measures and is more transparent and more committed to protecting its students than ever before,” the district’s release said.

A school district response to a question from La Nueva Voz regarding insurance appeared to indicate some of the \$35 million would be covered, but officials aren’t saying how much.

“The district is currently reviewing the application of its insurance and related supports,” said district spokesperson Ronald Gonzales-Lawrence. “As the claims of the Jane Doe plaintiffs are interrelated with claims still pending in current litigation, however, we cannot provide additional information at this time.”

Historical Society to hold ‘baked potato bar’ dinner open to public at annual meeting

The Historical Society of Pomona Valley will hold its annual baked potato bar dinner open to the public – with baked potatoes and a smorgasbord of toppings – at its general membership meeting to install the new board of directors and officers.

Scheduled for 5:30 to 9 p.m. Saturday, March 23, the event will be held at the Historical Society’s headquarters in the Ebell Museum of Pomona History.

Price of admission is \$30 for members and \$40 for non-members. Wine and beer and a variety of non-alcoholic beverages also

will be available.

The event will feature updates on past and upcoming activities, as well as a preview of the work that will be done on the museum as part of the \$3.2 million state grant secured by Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez.

Chicano music historian and archivist David Reyes will speak at the event on the topic “Stompin’ at the Rainbow: Sounds of Pomona” as a look at Pomona’s Rainbow Ballroom and the city’s influence on popular music. He will also sign copies of his book “Land of a Thousand Dances.”

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OPINION

Compassion difficult as Pomona Council takes on Israel / Gaza

By Dr. Roberta Perlman

Member, Compassionate Pomona

Compassion can be difficult business. It’s easy to show compassion to people who agree with you. The difficulty comes in being compassionate to people with whom you disagree. Being compassionate requires listening with willingness to understand another’s perspective. It requires feeling the suffering of others. It is not about right and wrong, but about accepting, taking responsibility, and listening with your heart. Even when your heart is broken.

As I watched the Pomona City Council discussion on a ceasefire resolution for Israel/Palestine/Gaza on Jan. 22, I heard people who I know and like talk about a place that I have never visited. It is a place that is a home to people who have been hated, perhaps more than any others in history; a home to people cast away from their homelands because no one wanted them. The result of the 1917 Balfour Declaration issued by Great Britain designated a place in the desert to put all these unwanted people. These people were in fact indigenous to the land, since many of their ancestors had lived there for thousands of years, part of a people whose history there is long, deep, and indisputable.

Once the land was so designated by the declaration, every country, including Yemen,

Libya, Iraq, Syria, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Great Britain, Italy, France, Russia and Turkey—to name a few—had a place to deposit all those unwanted people. So there is no need to describe the trauma of displacement to Jews. Half a million Arab Jews were displaced to Israel. Yes, it’s true; most Israelis are not refugees from Europe, but from Arab countries. The reason I didn’t mention Germany is simply because by 1948 there were few German Jews left—most of the Jews in Germany having been annihilated in gas chambers, their teeth and skin removed to make ammunition and soap and their bony carcasses left to rot – six million of them.

The word genocide was literally created during World War II because until then there was no term to describe the horrific annihilation of a people carried out simply on the basis of their identity. Using the term genocide to describe a military response to an invasion, to a violent attack, to the taking of innocent hostages, is an inaccurate and careless use of that word.

I despise war. I don’t believe this war will be won with bombs and guns. I believe in a ceasefire. But I also believe that some of the rhetoric during the Jan. 22 city council meeting

Compassion difficult... pg. 17

Ánimo.

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Council candidates... from pg. 3

raised here, and believes Pomona needs to go in a different direction.

“I think it starts at City Hall,” Rodriguez added. “It starts at the mayor and city council, they need to be held accountable for all the actions that happen in the city, good or bad, right or wrong. We see what’s happening in the city and it starts at the mayor’s office.”

He said he will hold himself and his fellow elected officials accountable for everything that happens in the city.

“Far too often that we see fingers that get pointed in every direction, but I think it starts with us,” Rodriguez said. “Things cannot happen overnight. It’s going to take time, and I’m going to be that person to really address those issues of crime, homelessness and housing once and for all and take the lead in a different direction.”

Cabrera told viewers that while she is new in Pomona, she has traveled to and lived in different cities. She said she came to Pomona by accident and stayed – started walking the streets, riding the public transportation, “and the experience was very, very extraordinarily negative – I was in shock.”

And this was in what she called the richest and most powerful country in the world.

“I couldn’t believe it,” she said, so she did a little research at public meetings and talked to people.

“I knew that the only way that things could change is by doing it ourself,” she said. “Somebody

told me once ‘if you don’t like how things are done, do it yourself.’”

Cabrera said she understands that those in city government have done their best.

“They try and that’s what we have,” she said, adding that she sees more potential.

Ramirez told viewers that just seven minutes before the candidates’ forum labor activist Dolores Huerta, who he called his “personal mentor,” called him to wish him support.

“(She) taught me about how to make a difference,” he said. “I’m really excited about that phone call.”

“This is a tough job – I have assumed the position of mayor already, and right now as we speak there are four people in my property in Pomona that are disabled and elderly and homeless and ill at this second,” he said.

“There are a couple of people also who have just graduated from the pilot program that I started – it’s not accredited yet – but it’s called World Peace Now University, where we take people that have been in gangs and we teach them about . . . anti-violence,” he added. “And now they are peace and social justice activists.”

District 1

Pomona City Councilmember John Nolte told viewers he came to Pomona 20 years ago after graduating from UCLA law school “and we never left.”

“I was elected to city council in 2020 and I got right to work

with tenants during the pandemic – my first priority was to work on passing a rent stabilization ordinance to protect tenants and to keep people in their homes,” he said. “With my colleagues on the council we greenlighted hundreds of units of affordable housing. I led the effort to obtain a \$5.2 million state grant for gun violence prevention (and) we created the first office of violence prevention in city hall that has a mission to quickly and dramatically reduce gun violence using research based street outreach to intervene before violence happens.”

And he said he played a key role in bringing \$22 million in a transformative climate communities grant to help establish green jobs in the solar industry, make electric vehicles more affordable for people, allow them to install solar panels.

Nolte said he worked with local organizations to establish a Pomona jobs project connecting unemployed and underemployed residents to good jobs.

“I intend to keep working, I want to continue to build and preserve affordable housing and address homelessness,” he added. “I want to expand my work on regional economic development and wellbeing, and ensure that the projects that we’ve already started continue . . . and continue to work with my colleagues to make Pomona a better place.”

Realtor Luis Cano, who emphasized the importance of home ownership and called himself the

“voice of business,” said he has lived in Pomona since 1997. He said he worked for a union before becoming a real estate agent.

Now, he said, he is working to help people become homeowners rather than becoming full-time tenants.

“To me, home ownership brings a lot of stuff in regards to bringing wealth to their family,” Cano said. “When I became a homeowner, we built equity on our property and you get wealth. And I’m trying to educate more people in regards to that. And I think that’s something that we want to do over here.”

Cano said both his wife and daughter are registered nurses and his son graduated from Cal Poly this year and is a teacher.

“I love living in Pomona,” he

said. “I just think we need to do a bit more things just to make it a better place.”

John Mendoza said he started his political involvement in Pomona working with Norma Torres when she was running for city council.

He said he worked with her again when she ran for assembly and then state senate, and in 2008 launched his own campaign for water board and city council and was elected to the Three Valleys Municipal Water District board, where he served two terms.

He said he also worked on the city’s redistricting commission to draw the district boundaries in effect today.

And former Pomona City Councilmember Debra Martin, who

Council candidates... pg. 19

La Nueva Voz

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and go to page 2 for La Nueva Voz.

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OPINION

Pomona's Foothill Transit store needs to be reopened due to noncompliance with federal guidelines, rider complaints

A story on page one in our January issue focused on Foothill Transit's closure of their transit store in the Pomona Transit Center after 25 years and without formal board action, sending 22,000 customers a year to West Covina for service – something that Foothill's own analysis concedes is in noncompliance with federal guidelines.

The bus company's Title VI analysis, required by the Federal Transit Administration because federal funds are involved, is designed to prevent service changes from placing a burden on low-income riders and those who identify as Black, Indigenous or people of color (BIPOC).

Title VI is part of the original Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in programs that receive federal financial assistance.

But in this instance, Foothill found a way around the problem – the analysis claimed the impact would be mitigated by adding weekend hours of operation at the West Covina store. (On closer inspection of Foothill's public documents, West Covina really will only be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the first and last Saturday of the month with no Sunday hours.)

We're thinking that's not much of a mitigation since it does not address how those 22,000 customers are going to get to West Covina to buy a bus ticket if they don't have a bus ticket to get there.

On top of that, the West Covina transit store is 11.8 miles away by freeway from the now-closed Pomona store according to Google Maps, making it a significant inconvenience for a lot of customers who likely have no access to the internet or credit cards to buy passes.

And with only a four-hour Saturday window in West Covina, if the bus is late, they'll all have to do it all over again.

Plus, for those who drive, Foothill's public documents concede there's already a huge parking problem at the West Covina location (100 S. Vincent Avenue just south of the San Bernardino Freeway).

And then there's that troubling question of why close Pomona in the first place since, in the most

recent numbers available logged, West Covina (conveniently located in the same building as the corporate headquarters for Foothill Transit) had less than half the number of walk-ins as Pomona.

In addition, the closure – according to Foothill's documents – would only save \$40,000 a year – really not a lot of money in an agency with a \$230 million budget.

Like the guy says on the television ads, "But wait, there's more!"

One of our volunteer researchers went online and found that Foothill also last year closed the Puente Hills transit store which served the La Puente and Bassett area. Again, they acknowledged a little problem with meeting federal guidelines for poor people and people of color.

Noncompliance? No problem – Foothill simply claimed they would send those customers to West Covina and (would you even think to guess this?) to Pomona, which they knew at the time they said it was planned for closure at the end of last year.

Also, with Puente Hills now closed and going to the West Covina transit store, the lines there are going to be long.

Our researcher also learned there's this other little issue with line cuts – the whole frequency of buses on specific routes with some lines eliminated, some combined and shortened into one, and several stops eliminated – which are being made in the Pomona and Puente Hills area.

But services are being increased in places like West Covina and Arcadia.

Is anybody else starting to see a "pattern and practice" here (as they say in civil rights court cases) that suggests Foothill is shifting away from serving poor people and people of color – who the bus company was created to serve and who need the service the most – and instead going after higher rent neighborhoods and more riders who might better afford higher priced services like the Silver Streak bus (really two buses in one) which costs three times as much?

Then there's this whole conversation about how these decisions get made in the first place. Foothill is really only a little agency

with that \$230 million annual budget operating out of a board room upstairs in a bank building in West Covina.

By comparison, Metro (Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority) has a \$9 billion budget for the 2024 fiscal year.

And when Foothill holds those meetings in that bank building is another issue – it looks like most of their board meetings are held at 8:30 a.m. on Fridays with few guests if any in the audience and often with no speakers appearing on issues on the agenda.

No wonder! Those riders Foothill is charged by the feds with serving are either on a bus on their way to work or already there, making it a real challenge to appear in opposition to a service reduction – and that's assuming they saw the public notice in the legal ads in their local newspaper in the first place.

So the result, as would be expected, generally apparently is the board simply rubber stamping staff recommendations and getting the meeting over with so they can get back to being local city councilmembers (the board president is Cory Moss, mayor of the City of Industry, for example – she didn't respond to a La Nueva Voz request for comment in last month's story).

We can't make this stuff up, folks. As in "Alice in Wonderland," it just gets "curiouser and curiouser."

For example, our researcher learned that Foothill's chief executive officer received a \$10,000 bonus last year on top of his \$439,000 salary (plus a \$96,000 retirement and health contribution) – more than any other Southern California transit agency CEO including Orange County, a much larger operation – at a time the agency was coming out of a pandemic when bus ridership, based on their own figures, took a serious dip.

(That \$439,000 is even a bit more than the \$428,000 salary for the CEO of Metro with that \$9 billion budget we mentioned.)

As another example, La Nueva Voz reached out to Pomona City Councilmember Victor Preciado, who represents Pomona on Foothill's joint powers authority board made up of representatives of 22 cities (members each year elect

representatives to the five-member executive board).

Preciado was aware of the closure – as was staff in Pomona City Hall, since they had several Zoom meetings with Foothill over the issue (and they agreed to take over the sale of passes for Metrolink and Get About right there in City Hall, but no Foothill passes).

He told us in an e-mail that "fixing, repairing, and updating the transit center can best be done by first closing all operations within the building."

"The plan is to bring that area up to date," Preciado said. "During the process, the store conversion will continue and hopefully once the update is done the store can return."

While that's a great response, his plan appears to differ from the official documents at Foothill. Nobody else at Foothill is talking about reopening in any of the official documents or elsewhere that we could find, and the notices announcing the Pomona store was closing Dec. 29 specifically said it was a permanent closure.

Pomona City Councilmember

John Nolte, Preciado's alternate on the Foothill joint powers authority board, agreed in an e-mail that the development is "certainly concerning, and I plan to investigate."

We know this is a matter of great concern to many Pomona residents. La Nueva Voz initially was informed about the closure – also on Dec. 29, as a matter of fact – by a Pomona senior citizen at the Palomares Park senior lunch program who was grappling with the fact that he now would have to go to West Covina to deal with Foothill.

A Parks and Recreation Department employee, also at Palomares, said there were others there with similar concerns.

Even a La Nueva Voz friend at a local credit union said a customer there was complaining she could no longer use her "TAP" card at the Pomona transit store.

(And while we're on the subject, if you or anyone you know are impacted by the closures or line reductions, give us a call or an e-mail and let us know.)

We're just sayin' – Pomona con-

Foothill Transit... pg. 18

ANUNCIO PAGADO

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Candidate's forum... from pg. 4

District, told employees of Cal Poly in the room that he stands with them in their fight for livable wages and better benefits.

“My decision to run for the California State Assembly is based upon my love for our community and the opportunity to build upon my work to ensure we are all provided resources for a good life,” Goytia said. “We cannot afford to be further burdened by a government choosing to side with corporate wealth at the expense of our livelihoods.”

“Addressing these challenges have been ignored far too long as those in positions of power would choose to listen to the voices of a few special interest groups voting on issues dividing us rather than seeking common sense solutions that address the roots of these challenges,” he added.

He asked voters to ask themselves if their next assemblymember will favor nepotism over placing the needs of the community first.

Javier Hernandez, who said he has spent his career in the Inland Empire as an organizer, advocate and non-profit executive director, said he immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico with his family at the age of six months in search of a better life. He grew up in Pomona, Montclair and Ontario and attended local schools in Pomona and Montclair.

He told the audience he began working at the age of 15 to help provide for his family after his father was deported. He said his mother, who worked as a housekeeper, food vendor and even in construction, instilled in him a work ethic of fighting to provide for the family but also the community, causing him to learn early on that social activism and community organizing is necessary for survival.

“So, I got to work,” he said. “I co-founded the Inland Empire Immigrant Youth Collective and was a member of the National Immigrant Youth Alliance. One of my proudest accomplishments was working with other young organizers to mount a national effort to urge President Obama to provide legal protection to ‘DREAMers’ like myself.”

He said they took their message to the Obama reelection campaign office and Obama signed what is



Dr. Soraya Coley



Carlos Goytia



Javier Hernandez



Michelle Rodriguez

now known as DACA.

“This work led me to the Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice in 2015, the non-profit for which I have been the executive director for nearly a decade” where he has emphasized the importance of collective justice, he said.

“During this time, I’ve put in the work to deliver real results that benefit working families,” he added, including organizing to push back against developers who “exploit our labor while polluting our neighborhoods.”

He also organized local tenants to call on city councils to pass protections for renters, and he secured \$20 million in funds for small businesses and low-income families. And he was a leader in the successful efforts that expanded access to healthcare to all income-eligible Californians.

“Now I’m running for state assembly to bring our movement for progressive change to Sacramento, and as your assemblymember I promise to fight for you and stand up against the special interests that seek to put their profits over working people like you and me,” he said.

He added he will fight for affordable housing, universal healthcare, good paying sustainable jobs, public safety “and a more equitable and prosperous California for all.”

Pomona City Councilmember Robert Torres told the audience he is the father of two boys and is an employee at the City of Fontana, adding that he works two jobs to pay for gas and keep food on the table and a roof over his family’s heads.

“I am running for assembly because California is heading in the wrong direction,” Torres said. “The cost of living is too high and wages are too low, and there’s not

enough housing and mental health programs for our communities.”

“On the city council I have dedicated my career to fighting for better wages, building more housing, and fighting to ensure that your tax dollars are being spent wisely,” he said. “I introduced the first ordinance in the nation (calling for raising) wages for hospital workers at Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center.”

“I took on the L.A. County Board of Supervisors and the Fairplex when they killed two girls and had 250 drug-related arrests,” he said, adding that the incident overburdened the region’s trauma centers (Los Angeles County coroner’s office reports at the time indicated the deaths nine years ago involved suspected drug overdoses at a music festival).

He said he is endorsed by the California Democratic Party, the California Labor Federation, and a bi-partisan coalition of mayors, councilmembers and local elected officials who are dedicated to working together to move the Inland Empire forward.

And candidate Nick Wilson told the audience he’s a husband, a father and a member of the community who never intended to get into politics.

He said he was a police officer and detective for 13 years, working to disrupt and dismantle large-scale organized crime groups to protect local communities.

And he called members of the law enforcement communities “heroes” and said they need to be supported.

“California is in crisis because of failed policies, and it is as simple as that,” Wilson said, adding that there is too much division, and “this does not represent the fact of who we are.”



Robert Torres



Nick Wilson

“We need change – California needs to be saved,” he said, adding that it won’t be saved by politicians but by everyday citizens.

“It doesn’t matter your background or your religious belief,” he said, “this is about what’s doing right at the right time, the most important moment in our history is at stake.”

“We have to restore California, we have to save our communities,” he said. “I’m running on parental rights because nothing is more important than our children.”

And he said he is also running on overreaching government and homelessness.

“While we have the resources to fix it, we’ve only made it worse,” he said.

On the economy, “I don’t know one person who’s not struggling right now,” he said. “And we need to allow the economy to expand on capitalism which is what our whole system represents – not socialism but equality of opportunity.”

Most of the questions appeared to have been provided to the candidates before the forum, resulting in most of the candidates reading their previously prepared responses. Wilson pointed out that he was the only candidate speaking without notes.

In comments submitted after the event to La Nueva Voz, candidate Michelle Rodriguez called the Inland Empire “home” and said she is “proud to be a working class mother who understands our community through the lens of a life-long resident of the area.”

She said she was born and raised in Ontario and raised her family in Pomona.

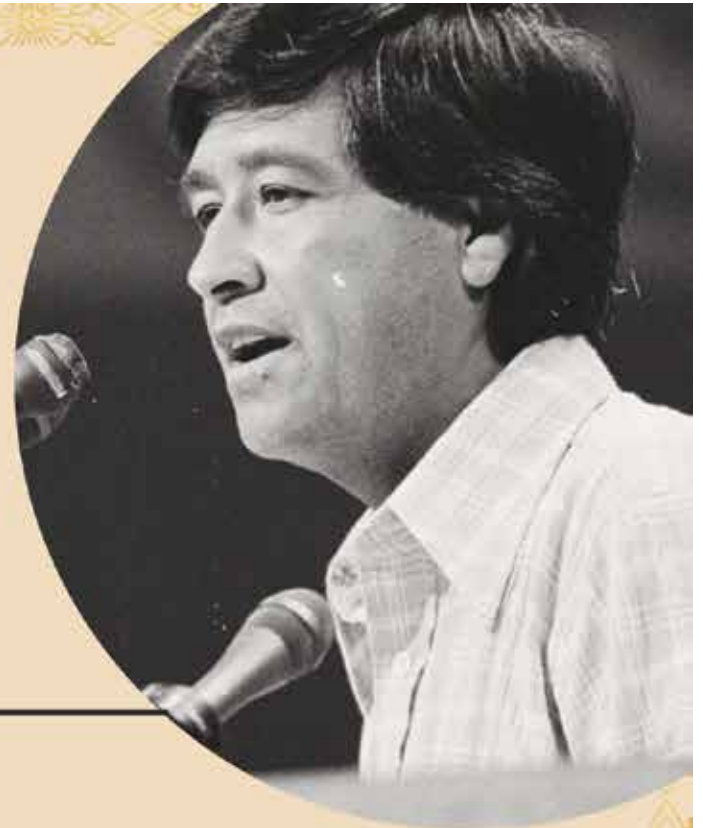
“I’ve spent decades advocating for safer and healthier neighborhoods and schools, from leadership in local sports leagues to my time as a school safety worker, involvement with a young mothers’ program, and a Neighborhood Watch founder,” she said. “A safe community is the foundation for a better life.”

“As a survivor of gun violence, I’ve dedicated my career to safety and service not only for my children and my grandchildren but for everyone’s children to have the right to a cleaner and safer neighborhood,” she added.

She was appointed to the California Police Officer Standards and Training Commission, which sets policy for law enforcement across California, setting training standards for California law enforcement officers.

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Photo by Renee Barbee

STARBUCKS CLOSING -- The Starbucks in Downtown Pomona at Mission Boulevard and Garey Avenue, right across from City Hall, closed this month amid rumors the company plans to build two new, updated stores in Pomona -- one on North Garey and another on South Garey. Here's one last look, taken early this month, for the sentimental types.

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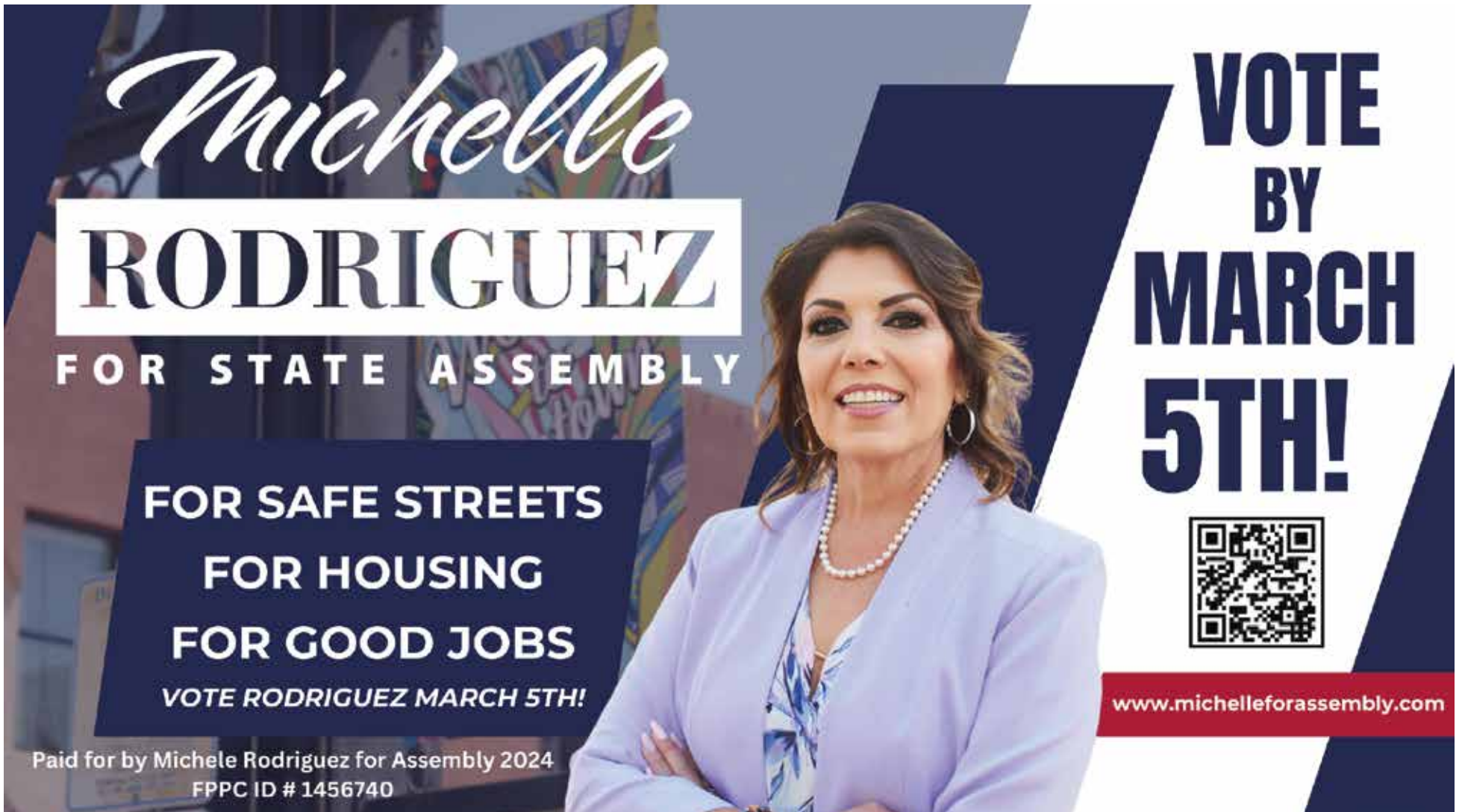
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POMONA LIONS BINGO -- Three Seal Beach Lions attended the Pomona Host Lions Club bingo fundraiser this month at Pomona's First Christian Church, including former Pomona Lions member and president Denny Mosier making a rare appearance back in town. Included were lunch, bingo cards, raffle prizes and cash prizes for the bingo winners. Pictured (standing) is Mosier with Sylvia and John Schroeder, a past District Governor of Lions District 4-L4, which includes more than 30 clubs in Orange County and the foothills from Pomona to Rancho Cucamonga. Current District Gov. Drew Sasser was also at the event with about 120 guests in attendance.



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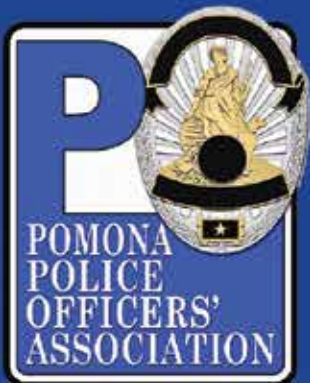
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Community returns to Pomona schools for ‘principal for a day’ and a look at ‘wonderful things’ happening

A total of 30 elected officials, school district and government officials, business leaders, political candidates and others spent their morning this month as “principal for a day” by “shadowing” the “real” principals throughout Pomona Unified School District to get a pretty good hands-on look at what is really happening in education today.

And, in many cases, some even learned how they can continue to help the schools throughout the year.

The program, sponsored by the Pomona Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with the school district, was held for the first time this month after missing four years due to the COVID hiatus.

“I really appreciate the Chamber of Commerce because through the partnership with (Chamber President and CEO Monique



Participants in this year’s Pomona Chamber of Commerce “Principal for a Day” pose for the traditional group shot at the end of the half day event at the Village at Indian Hill conference center.

tary School in Phillips Ranch. “There’s some wonderful things happening in Pomona Unified School District and we need ambassadors to help tell the story.”

Decker Principal Rebecca Norwood agreed.

“It’s an exciting time to connect with people in the community and

Norwood added that the school has a large special education population due to several programs based there.

“One of I think the really special things about Decker is that we are inclusive, we do a lot of mainstreaming (combining special education students in the general student population) and kids learn about their differences with their peers,” she said.

The school also offers a program called “Hey Buddy” in which fifth and sixth grade students can apply to be a part of the program to help with foundational reading strategies.

“They go into the lower grade classrooms . . . and do some flash cards, sight words, letter naming, recognition and even in the special ed program teach kids how to play,” she said, explaining that some special ed kids with disabilities have difficulty interacting so they teach them how to play.

Principal for a day Lorraine Canales, a retired educator, spent most of her career at the high school level but enjoyed the opportunity to spend the day at an elementary school.

“I always wanted (to participate)

at a different school than where I worked, so this opportunity is allowing me to see the students here at Decker where I’ve never worked with this age group and so I wanted to see what it was like,” Canales said.

Andy Quinones, executive director of the Southern California



Supt. Darren Knowles



“Principals for a Day” Norma Arguello, at left, and Lisha Lett, along with the “real” principal at Pomona’s Harrison Elementary School, Maria Martinez (at right), chat with second grader Leslie Hernandez in her classroom.

Robles) and all the work they do, bringing people into the community to see our schools and see our kids, it helps spread the perception about what’s going on in our schools,” said Pomona Unified Supt. Darren Knowles.

“So they become messengers for us . . . to help us tell our story,” he told La Nueva Voz on a stop at Pomona’s Decker Elemen-

just to show off the good stuff we’re doing here at Decker,” she told La Nueva Voz.

Some of that “good stuff” includes always working to improve test scores, working on the Dr. Martin Luther King “Realize the Dream” campaign for community service projects, and generally learning to connect with the community.

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Paid of by Luis Cano for City Council 2024
ID # 1462393



Luis is running for Pomona City Council District 1 because he believes our neighborhoods need to be safe. Homeownership is a pathway to stronger communities. Our District must be a clean place to live and operate business.

Vote March 5th

Through his volunteering and community organizing, Luis has become an advocate for working families, home ownership and a safe Pomona. He is active in Pomona Beautiful, an organization where he has learned to roll up his sleeves and literally clean up the City, neighborhood by neighborhood. Luis is very engaged in Federal and State policy issues. He will make it a priority that Pomona bring in more businesses to increase employment.



Luis Cano knows what it's like to work hard to support a family. Luis is a homeowner and Realtor in Pomona where he and his wife raised three children. He knows the importance of homeownership, not just the pride of ownership but that it leads to generational wealth that is lacking in our community. Luis will work hard to find funding to help more residents become homeowners.



www.cano4council.com

Local icon Ignacio Lopez to be honored at Lopez Urban Farm

“Ignacio Lopez Day” will be celebrated on Saturday, March 16, at Pomona’s Lopez Urban Farm in honor of the “enduring legacy of Pomona’s hometown hero, Ignacio Lopez.”

The event, on the theme “Cultivating sustainable communities,” will include the unveiling of a mural by Thundr One “capturing the essence of Ignacio Lopez’ enduring impact” speeches highlighting the need for sustainable communities.

It will be held from 10 a.m. to noon at the farm, located at 1034 W. Mission Blvd., Pomona.

Lopez was known for his civil rights activism, his contributions to justice and his founding of the Spanish-language community newspaper El Espectador in 1933 – all of which “left an enduring impact on our community,” according to a news release.

Lopez published the newspaper until 1960. It eventually was replaced by the old La Voz, which published from 1981 to 2009, when La Nueva Voz was formed.

Please visit our web site at

www.lanuevavoz.net
to see the latest issue
of La Nueva Voz,
past issues and more!



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Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center (PVHMC) has earned the nation’s top distinction for patient safety with an “A” grade from the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade. The “A” recognizes our high standards in patient safety. This honor belongs to every one of our 3,700 Associates and 700 Physicians, who work every day to provide exceptional health care for our patients.



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Which power wheelchair is right for you?

Kathryn San Martino, PT, NCS, MSCS, ATP/SMS, CLT-LANA
 Outpatient Neuro Clinical Program Manager
 Casa Colina Hospital and Centers for Healthcare

If you use a wheelchair, you know how important it is that it fits your lifestyle. But finding the right type and working with insurance can be difficult. For those who require power mobility, these wheelchairs can range from simple to complex, each with pros and cons. The good news is, with experienced help, you can find the right chair and customize your options for comfort, function, and mobility.

There are many features to consider, including size/footprint, backrests and seat cushions, power seating options, transport capability, control mechanisms, as well as features to meet your other medical needs beyond mobility. It is important to understand your insurance coverage during this process. An experienced ATP (Assistive Technology Professional) can help.

One common power mobility option is the scooter, which may be ideal for those who can only walk short distances. Unfortunately, scooters don't always offer a small footprint for home use. They can

disassemble for car transport, but this can prove difficult for some users without assistance. Scooters provide limited trunk support and no suspension for navigating uneven terrain. Also, some manufacturers do not accept insurances and are cash-only.

A second type is the standard power wheelchair. These provide more supportive seat backs and are maneuverable with joystick navigation. A wide variety of styles exists, including power-tilt options if your insurance provider deems it medically necessary.

Finally, there are complex power wheelchairs. These are often highly sophisticated in terms of electronic capabilities, with power seating, power tilt/recline, elevating leg rests, and cushion/backrest options. Power-elevating seat and power-standing options are also available but have limited or no insurance coverage.

All-terrain power wheelchairs are great for those who are active

in the outdoors. On the downside, they aren't covered by insurance and have too large a footprint for indoor use. However, there is a new exciting power mobility option called the iBot. The iBot's all-terrain navigation lets users traverse curbs, stairs, sand, snow, gravel, and more, indoors and outdoors. The iBot can raise the user to eye level using its patented balance technology. Its footprint is comparable to other power options, and it is functional for in-home use.

Editor's Note: If you have questions, the Wheelchair & Seating Clinic at Casa Colina can help. Casa Colina has many power mobility options available for trial, including iBot. Led by Physical Therapists who are certified Assistive Technology Professionals, the program offers safe and seamless wheelchair evaluations, with knowledgeable staff who can help you with equipment insurance approvals. For more information, call 909/596-7733, ext. 3500.



Kathryn San Martino

Compassion difficult... from pg. 5

demonstrated a notably shallow understanding of the current situation.

It is difficult for people to think compassionately when seeing through the lens of trauma, so a resolution to this conflict is extremely complicated and challenging. People who live in constant fear of attack live their lives in "fight or flight" mode; the amygdala of the brain in constant high gear. The reasoning, calm, pre-frontal cortex never has a chance. So what is the answer? My heart bleeds for both sides, so I don't know...but certainly neither does the Pomona City Council.

Perhaps the city's energies would be better spent looking for innovative solutions to the number of our youth who are literally dying in the streets in our own city. Where is the resolution for a ceasefire in Pomona?

Many who care about and long for peace in the region are proposing a third narrative – not simply pro-Palestinian or pro-Israeli, but instead pro-humanity, pro-compassion for all who suffer – Israelis, Palestinians, Arabs, Jews – pro-compassion for all who long to live

in safety, in peace, and to have the blessing of a normal life.

Fortunately, there is a way toward a brighter future. We in Pomona can ensure that our youth are given the tools to evaluate all sides of complicated issues and identify the inaccuracies of ill-informed rhetoric. And we can teach them to speak up to such rhetoric through the lens of compassion.

My hope for our children is that we can teach them how compassion and kindness are the basis for resolution of conflict, whether personal or collective. We need to help them to understand that trauma clouds the brain and the heart and can be the fuel that keeps the flame of blame burning.

Compassion is indeed difficult business, but if we teach our children one lesson, let it be that if we each take responsibility for our part and we come from a place of love and compassion, all sides win. The difficult business of compassion is well worth the effort.

Editor's Note: See original story on Pomona City Council action in January 2024 La Nueva Voz, page 21, at www.lanuevavoz.net.

The Pomona Optimist Club will be hosting

**TEA FOR THE SOUL
 SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON**

**We are celebrating the young women
 of Pomona who will be attending college.**

**Teatime and Lunch
 Friday, March 29, 2024 • 11:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.**

**Ebell Club House
 585 E. Holt Ave., Pomona, CA 91767**

**The luncheon cost is \$40.
 RSVP by March 18, 2024.**

**Please confirm your participation or donation on
 Venmo @pomonaoptimistclub (Fernando Meza)
 Contact Lorraine Canales (213) 509-4980 for more
 information. We are in search of successful women to sit
 at the table with the female students to share their
 experience on how they became successful.**



POMONA ROTARY SPEECH CONTEST -- Members of the Pomona Rotary Club hosted a speech contest for students based on the Rotary Four-Way Test with the theme of creating hope in the world. The test is based on the four key principles of the things people think, say or do -- is it the truth, is it fair, will it build goodwill and will it be beneficial to all concerned. A total of five students participated with speeches from six to eight minutes long. The first place winner, Joaquin Resendez, will go on to compete in the regional level against a student from Diamond Bar Rotary Club. Pictured, from left, are Edwin Davila of Village Academy High School; second place winner Melissa Jimenez of Village Academy High School; Christian Perez of Ganesha High School; Joaquin Resendez of Ganesha High School; and third place winner Breanna Rangel from Ganesha High School.

Principal for a day... from pg. 15

Service Corps, another principal for a day, called the one-day event “a wonderful opportunity to connect with the community, to hopefully have an impact with some of the young people that I meet today, and to build relationships.”

“I’ve done this for a few years now,” he added. “I think it’s one of the great programs that the Chamber of Commerce offers to the network partners.”

On a second stop over at Pomona’s Harrison Elementary School, La Nueva Voz met Principal Maria Martinez who said she’s in her third year at Harrison but, because of the COVID years, her first time welcoming Principal for a Day participants.

“Most especially this year, we are what we call a community school, so it’s always so important in learning more and more about the connections, so important to work together as a team and learn from each other,” Martinez said, “what are those messages that we can give to our students on the availability of the resources in our community.”

“I’ve spent some time talking with Lisha (Lett) and Norma (Arguello) and we’ve learned so many resources about what our community offers,” she added, “and to be able to help our families make those connections and connect them and how to work together to best prepare our youth.”

“It’s very important and imperative to be a part of the community and even just to see the difference between when my boys were going to school and I was PTA President,” said principal for a day Lisha Lett, “and the things we have to observe and be concerned about with our young people today with counseling, education, what’s going on at home, even their mental status.”

“All these things are important about our young people today in the community,” Lett said.

“I like (how) Mrs. Martinez communicates with kids with her simple, solid and sophisticated answer and to get the kids to gradually communicate better with her,” Lett said. “And communicating better with her helps them communicate better with their peers and their teachers and others.”

Principal Martinez, who has been with the district for 31 years,

served as a teacher for 20 years and as an assistant principal and dean at Palomares Academy before coming to Harrison as principal.

Lett’s co-principal for a day Norma Arguello, a real estate agent with Simple Real Estate in Rancho Cucamonga, said she is not yet a chamber member but thinking about it.

“I have three little ones in elementary so I’m involved at the schools in seeing how they do things here and through learning something I can take back and hopefully through our conversations I’m able to say something . . . about how we do things,” Arguello said.

“I think it’s important for the schools and communities to learn from each other,” she added. “That’s how we can grow and get better.”

She said she was particularly impressed with the school district’s on-line program getting information out to the parents.

“So the communication’s there and I like seeing that because, as a parent, especially a parent with kids in different grades . . . it’s really good to have that communication between the school and the parents for the specific grades,” she said.

Back at the Village at Indian Hill conference room, the participants assembled for lunch, comments and a group photo.

“Today, you guys got to go and see the reality that is happening in our schools,” Knowles told the group of “real” principals and principals for a day. “It wasn’t a dog and pony, it wasn’t ‘let’s spruce up the place,’ you guys got to see what was happening at the schools, you got to see the smiling faces.”

“There are some phenomenal things going on here,” he added, citing an after school program that took 1,400 kids before the Thanksgiving break to Knott’s Berry Farm, the Science Center and the Los Angeles Zoo – all in a three-day period.

He added that 200 staff members chose to work those three days to make sure the kids had that opportunity.

And he told the group not to wait for next year’s Principal for a Day if they want to visit a school.

“Come and see us . . . we’ll be



Pictured at “Principal for a Day” activities in a sixth grade class at Pomona’s Decker Elementary School are, from left, Pomona Unified School District Supt. Darren Knowles, Deputy Supt. Lilia Fuentes, Board member Dr. Roberta Perlman, “Principal for a Day” Lorraine Canales, Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz, the District’s “Sky Breathing” consultant Peter Higginson, “Principal for a Day” Andy Quinones, and Decker’s “real” principal, Rebecca Norwood.

glad to do that . . . because, again, there’s some phenomenal things happening,” he said.

Even Mt. San Antonio College President Dr. Martha Garcia was principal for a day at Pomona’s Park West High School, calling it a special opportunity to meet with students who will be future students at Mt. SAC.

She added that most of her students come from Pomona Unified School District.

“These students are our future,” she said. “What’s most important about our contribution is really helping students and reminding them that they are . . . the future of the community, they are contributors to economic prosperity, and the community college is a great opportunity for an education.”

Pomona Unified Board President Arturo Jimenez called on participants to help promote the schools.

continues to be a good ridership base for Foothill, their own numbers continue to show that, and besides, Foothill has an obligation to continue levels of service in Pomona if for no other reason because of the federal requirements under Title VI.

Preciado’s idea is a good one –



Pomona Unified School District Board President Arturo Jimenez speaks to participants in this year’s “Principal for a Day” during the comments period after lunch as Board member Dr. Roberta Perlman looks on.

“Now that you’ve learned how awesome the schools are . . . I’d like to challenge the chamber . . . that you are going to make a promise to help us at the school district to do a better job of telling the people outside how awesome the people are inside the schools,” he said.

And Pomona Unified Board member Dr. Roberta Perlman thanked the group for coming “to see the wonderful work” and thanked the principals and staff members who are “amazing.”

The Principal for a Day concept

Foothill Transit... from pg. 7

even though the closure might be inconvenient for a while, in our view (although they could easily place a small office trailer on the sidewalk during construction), it is important to get that transit store in Pomona open again after the remodeling is complete. In fact, Preciado would be the perfect rep-



Dr. Martha Garcia, President of Mt. SAC, also a “Principal for a Day” this year, addresses the group during comments at the end of the event in the Village at Indian Hill conference center.

had its beginnings in 1985 as a program launched by the California Department of Education and the California Chamber of Commerce for schools to share information with their communities.

The program expanded and took on the Principal for a Day name in 1991. Retired Pomona Unified educator and administrator Frank Garcia, who served after his retirement as executive director of the Pomona Chamber of Commerce, was credited with launching the program in Pomona.

representative to begin advocating for just that – and maybe even for the restoration of line service while he’s at it.

But to make it happen, the conversation with staff and board at Foothill – and an official statement that they are looking at it – needs to begin now.

Council candidates... from pg. 6

was unable to attend the forum but submitted her statement at the request of La Nueva Voz, said she is a lifelong Pomona resident.

“As your current library commissioner, Pomona business owner and former city councilmember, I have the experience, knowledge, and dedication to help Pomona grow,” she said. “I support business, good jobs and a better quality of life for everyone.”

“As your representative, I’ll hold city hall accountable, strive for transparency, work with our first responders to tackle critical issues like community violence and crime,” Martin said. “I’ll collaborate with state and county leaders to bring in additional revenue for the unhoused.”

She also said she would work to repair city streets and alleys, revitalize the parks, and collaborate with the Pomona Unified School District board to develop additional youth programs and promote a park ranger program to help families feel safe.

“I will continue to be accessible and responsive to your calls and e-mails – it’s important to me that your voice is heard and that the decisions I make will be in the best interests of everyone,” she added.

“I love Pomona and together we’ll make a more safe, beautiful and vibrant community,” she said.

District 4

Over in District 4, two challengers are hard at work trying to defeat the incumbent, City Councilmember Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole.

Private sector human resources executive Guillermo Gonzalez told viewers he grew up in East Los Angeles in a working class family and was the first in his family to go to college. He attended UC Davis, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in political science.

And he earned a master’s degree in public administration at Cal State University Los Angeles.

“I am running because I believe we need new leadership in this city,” Gonzalez said. “I think that with my unique experience I can bring a different perspective to the city council.”

“I have been an elected union representative, I have worked in government and it’s this experience that I’m going to draw from

that I think would make me effective, it would allow me to leverage that experience and I’m looking forward to this conversation with the other candidates,” he added.

Chara Swodeck, who called herself a community organizer and consultant, said she is a community member working to build and raise a family and do business in the City of Pomona.

She said she is running to represent the district for a variety of reasons, many of them revolving around “making sure that everyone’s voice is counted – advocacy for voters’ rights, advocacy for all of our community members, and really finding equity in city hall, and I’ve always been that person.”

Swodeck has served the city as a volunteer for the past 20 years.

“That’s what I’ve been about – it’s been about advocacy, it’s been about finding everyone’s voice, and not just going there to hear and talk to people but really listen,” she said. “That is my absolute when it comes to making sure that our community is thriving.”

She said she hopes to put into words everything she’s done for the last 20 years so she can represent the district and Pomona as a whole.

And Councilmember Cole said she has worked as a nurse for 25 years and, through her work with Pomona Unified School District, has met many families.

“I am ready again for a third term,” she said, pointing out that she defeated a 25-year incumbent when she was first elected.

“I am running again because there are still more things to be done in the City of Pomona that I have been focusing on for quite some time,” she said, “and let me say that when you have a vision for your home town, I was born and raised here, went to school here, have properties here, raised my family here, there are so many things that I have looked at over the years,” she said.

“And this is a continuation of what I want to do for the City of Pomona,” Cole added. “When I have such strong ties to a city that has been affected by many, many things including human trafficking, homelessness and unaffordable housing, we have a problem, so I am extending my vision and hopefully I will succeed in my campaign.”

District 6

In District 6, retired counselor and teacher Lorraine Canales, commissioner and labor representative Glenda Barillas and teacher Miranda Sheffield are running for an open seat that is vacant because Councilmember Robert Torres is running for the state assembly’s 53rd district seat.

State law prevents Torres for seeking both offices at the same time.

Canales told viewers she has served for more than 30 years as a high school counselor and teacher, working closely with many families and gaining many valuable insights into community needs.

“I grew up in East Los Angeles with my parents and five siblings,” she said. “My parents instilled in me the value of community and the importance of giving back and hard work.”

“They emphasized that hard work will always win,” she added.

Canales said she moved to Pomona 24 years ago, purchased a home and raised her two children – a daughter who is a staff sergeant in the U.S. Marine Corps and a son who is a jazz musician and college student.

She attended Cal State University Los Angeles, where she earned a degree in early childhood education, a teaching credential and a counseling credential.

“I have been an active member within various organizations committed to making a positive impact,” she said.

Those organizations include her work as president of the Optimist Club of Pomona, Rotary, the Assistance League of Pomona Valley, the Eagles and Delta Kappa Gamma, a professional society for women educators.

“I will collaborate with local state leaders and work on improving revenue to improve city services and ensure responsible use of our tax

dollars,” she said. “I will work closely with our police and fire and tackle community violence and crime and increase safety in our community.”

She said other critical issues she will address include the maintenance of infrastructure, fair wages, jobs and trades, and education.

“I will be a responsible representative who will hold city hall accountable and be transparent to the residents of Pomona,” she added. “Our community deserves clean, safe neighborhoods.”

Sheffield, a resident of Pomona for the last 23 years and a graduate of Pomona High School, is a professor at Cal State University Los Angeles.

“The way that I came to Pomona was via the foster care system,” she said. “I came here at the age of 15 and this was after bouncing around a lot of different foster homes.”

She said she had moved around at least 10 foster homes before Pomona “became my forever home.”

“I am excited to run because Pomona provided me stability, and I want to be a part of the future of its own stability,” Sheffield said.

She is a mother, her daughter was born at Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center, and she raised her now-college student daughter here.

Sheffield is a board member

of Pomona United for Stabilized Housing, is a former cultural arts commissioner and a former commissioner for the first-ever created police oversight commission in Pomona.

Barillas told viewers she was born in East Los Angeles of immigrant parents, where she received her work ethic “and my drive to better my situation in life, to share that with my siblings.”

“Like my parents, who often had to move around in order to find work opportunities to find stable affordable housing for us, I carried that on as an adult and always looking for a way to make a change in my life that would set me up for success,” she said, adding that she put herself through school at Chaffey College and, after struggling to find steady work, bounced around in the “gig” economy.

And she said she wants to give back to Pomona because of the support she has received from the community.

“I am running because people in Pomona deserve opportunities and deserve to preserve the community that they have right now and to make it better,” she said. “So I’m running to fix our roads, I’m running to bring economic development to the area, and I’m also running to make sure that we have safe green spaces and parks for the residents of Pomona to enjoy.”

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Candidate's forum... from pg. 8

“We must improve the systems we have rather than dismantle for untested ideas,” she said. “(Officers) put their lives on the line to keep us safe so we can all move toward progress.”

“That is why I openly oppose defunding the police, but rather advocate reinvesting and reimagining.”

Rodriguez said her supporters include small businesses and public safety professionals, including organizations representing firefighters, police officers, deputy sheriffs and California Highway Patrol officers.

She added that she and her husband led by example in their family, and her husband served as an emergency medical technician before being elected to the assembly.

“Our children believe in serving our community and successfully pursued careers as professionals in healthcare, law enforcement, business and firefighting,” she said.

But she added there are many other issues that need to be addressed including homelessness, where she is dedicated to addressing the root causes including an expansion of mental health care and drug treatment and an increase in the supply of homes working families can afford.

She has been endorsed by numerous women’s organizations in-

cluding the California Democratic Legislative Women’s Caucus, Women’s Political Committee, and Fund Her.

“I am an advocate for women to make their own choices, to be free and safe from domestic violence, and to have the autonomy over their bodies for themselves and their families,” she said, adding she is rated “100 percent” by Planned Parenthood.

Nearly 100 guests were in the audience at the event that was hosted by Cal Poly, the Pomona Chamber, the NAACP of Pomona Valley and the Latino / Latina Roundtable.

Cal Poly President Dr. Soraya Coley welcomed the group to the campus, reminding members of the audience that she grew up in North Carolina when segregation was the law of the land and the color of her skin determined where

she could live, where she could go to school, where she could eat with her family and where she could sit on a bus.

And she said she remembers walking door to door with her grandmother who was registering Black Americans to vote after the passage of the voting rights act of 1965 and was threatened because of her activism.

Coley said while the country continues to strive for equal rights for all, “I understand the power of voting – I understand the power of a community joining together.”

“And I understand we still have a long way to go on the road to equality,” she added. “Thank you for making the time to learn more about this important election.”

The 53rd Assembly District race is for an open seat as longtime Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez is terming out.



CELEBRATION OF LIFE -- Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez presented a special certificate and a flag that flew over the state Capitol in Sacramento to Larry Egan's daughters during a celebration of life this month at the Fox Theater in Downtown Pomona with more than 100 guests in attendance. Pictured, from left, are daughters Sally Egan Perdomo, Shannon Manns and Rodriguez. Egan, a native of Oklahoma City, died in December at the age of 80. He served in the U.S. Navy, had a career in business and became executive director of the Downtown Pomona Owners Association in 2007 and served there until his retirement in 2020. (See complete obituary in January La Nueva Voz under "past issues" at <http://www.lanuevavoz.net>.)


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www.agriscapes.cpp.edu
4102 S. University Drive, Pomona (next to the Farm Store)

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Photo by Renee Barbee

COOKIE TIME IN POMONA! -- Get your six bucks ready and go down to Stater Bros. in Pomona for your Girl Scout cookies. Pictured are some of Pomona's own Girl Scouts (and one Daisy) hard at work outside the grocery store. (Their scout troop, by the way, was pictured in the La Nueva Voz Christmas Parade special section in our December issue.) La Nueva Voz went for the "adventurefuls," a brownie-inspired cookie with caramel flavored creme and a hint of sea salt. And they are very good, too! The cookies are only on sale through March 5, so hurry on down and support the girls.

Developmental Disability Awareness event set

Pomona's "Healed Women Heal" non-profit will present a Developmental Disability Awareness Month event next month to explore how to better serve and support the intellectual and developmental disability community.

Scheduled for 4 to 7 p.m. Thursday, March 28, it will include resources, talks and information. It will be held at 436 W. 4th Street, Suite 225, Pomona.

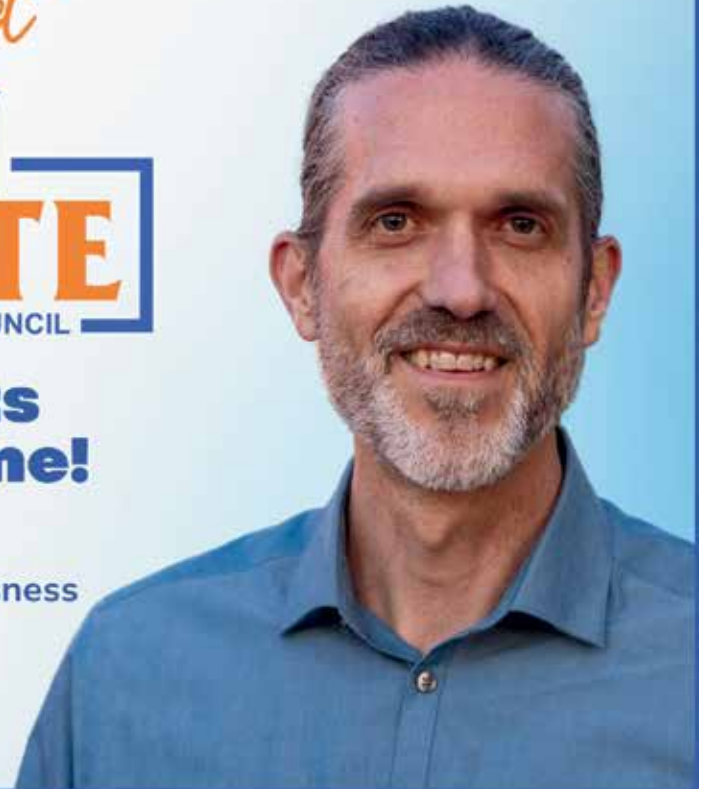
For information, contact tracy@healedwomenheal.org.

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State Farm
Bloomington, IL

ALPV's 25th Annual Tea Party

Celebrating the Luck O' the Irish

A fundraiser benefitting Assistance League® of Pomona Valley

Saturday, March 16, 2024

Doors open at 12:30 p.m.

Historic Ebell Club

585 E. Holt Ave., Pomona, CA 91767

\$60 per guest for tickets purchased by March 8
\$75 per guest for tickets purchased after March 8

For tickets or to make a donation, please mail checks to
ALPV or to purchase online visit www.ALPV.org
655 N. Palomares St., Pomona, CA 91767
For questions, please email fundraisers@ALPV.org or call
Liza Frazier at (909) 268-5742



GET YOUR TAXES DONE FOR FREE!

The College of Business Administration Accounting Department's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program offers free income tax preparation/assistance to taxpayers whose gross income is \$60,000 or less.



WALK-IN TAX PREPARATION AVAILABLE:

Baldwin Park Library
4181 Baldwin Park Blvd.
Baldwin Park, CA 91706
10 am - 1 pm
3/16/24, 4/06/24

El Monte Library
1301 Buena Vista St.
Duarte, CA 91010
10 am - 1 pm
3/2/24

Duarte Library
1301 Buena Vista St.
Duarte, CA 91010
10 am - 1 pm
3/23/24, 4/13/24

Pomona Public Library
625 S. Garey Ave.
Pomona, CA 91766
11 am - 4 pm
2/24/24, 3/2/24, 3/9/24,
3/16/24, 3/23/24, 3/30/24,
4/6/24, 4/13/24

Sunkist Library
840 Puente Ave.
La Puente, CA 91746
10 am - 1 pm
2/24/24, 3/9/24, 3/30/24

WHAT IS NEEDED:

- Proof of identification for you and/or your spouse
 - Both spouses must be present during the identity verification process of the tax return
 - For International Students, you will also need your Visa and I-9
- Social Security cards or ITIN cards/letters for you, your spouse, and/or dependents
 - You may substitute this with a 1099-SSA, IRS transcript, or your prior year tax return done by CPP VITA
- Wage and income forms such as:
 - W-2 or W-2G Gambling Winnings
 - 1099-MISC and a list of business expenses relevant to self-employment work
 - 1099-B, DIV, or INT
 - 1099-G Unemployment Compensation
 - Cash
- Information for other income
- Form 1098-T Tuition Statement and any other educational expenses
- Information for deductions
 - IRA contributions
 - 1098-E Student Loan interest
 - 1098 Mortgage Interest
 - Real estate taxes
 - Charitable contributions/deductions
- Amount paid to daycare provider and their tax ID number
- Forms 1095-A, B, or C for health coverage
- Copy of last year's tax return, if possible
 - For returning clients, let us know what location you visited
- Bank routing and account number for direct deposit or debit



Photos by Renee Barbee
Kids in the "Kids Zone" were making their own Chinese dragons this month during Lunar New Year's activities at the Pomona Public Library. They had a little help -- from their parents and from library staff -- for another successful event.



NEW HOME FOR PROJECT RESILIENCE -- Members of the Pomona Chamber of Commerce and officials of Pomona's Project Resilience and their friends cut the ribbon and opened the doors of the new offices of Project Resilience in a grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony last week. The organization, founded a year ago on the theme "Recover, Rebuild, Support, Empower," is a non-profit formed by CEO Stephanie Sepeda with the support of her church, Total Restoration Ministries of Pomona. The group is working to join forces with others in the community to get young women and men off the street and rid Pomona of human trafficking and sex workers. Sepeda herself was a victim of molestation at home who went out on the street. Pictured, from left, are Pomona Chamber President and CEO Monique Robles, Chamber Executive Board member Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz, and, with the small scissors, Sepeda. At right is Tracy Evanson-Norwood of the group Healed Women Heal. The new offices are located at 101 W. Mission Blvd., Suite 219, Pomona.



COALITION RECOGNITION AT P3 -- A special "coalition" recognition event for those who have worked with Pomona's P3 (Partnership for a Positive Pomona) was held this month at the El Cotorreo Community Center in Pomona, thanking everyone for their dedication and support. Even Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz was asked to be in the photo because of her work through the years with the organization which is a community coalition working to reduce and prevent youth substance use and abuse. Back row, from left, are Ryan Avila, Domonic Moran, Monica Mercado, Daniel Fong, Joseph McLellan, Maya Duarte, Jose Moto-Venegas, Evelyn Gonzalez, Marcos Molina and Alfredo Camacho. Front row, from left, are Anne Henderson, Nicole Centeno, Renee Barbee, Monica Montanez and Erika Gonzalez, project coordinator for P3.



SUPER BOWL AND STICKER SHOCK GO TOGETHER! -- Here's some breaking news -- it was Super Bowl time in Pomona, and that means on the three days before the game, members of Pomona's P3 went to work reminding liquor stores and their customers that it is against the law in California to sell alcohol to anyone under 21. So P3 members, employees and volunteers went to work in those three days and affixed stickers to coolers and multi-packs in a total of 15 stores in Pomona, placing a grand total of 1,875 stickers. It was the 12th year of this highly successful program that always gets the attention of parents, their children and the store owners and their customers. Pictured, from left, outside La Fiesta Market in Pomona, are Tina Phan, Jenifer Phan, Ivanka Rivera, Ruth Reyes-Rios, Stacie Reyes-Rios and Taylor Dang. P3 is a coalition of organizations dedicated to promoting drug-free communities.

MONDAY, APRIL 22 - EARTH DAY.

How do you plan on celebrating Earth Day 2024?

Locally, there are lots of ways to participate in Earth Day events, but remember, ***SAVING WATER should be an EVERY DAY activity.*** We have had some good snowpack and rain this year, but we will always have drought. We still have a long way to go!

To learn more about events or things you can do, visit: www.earthday.org

To learn about water conservation and rebates visit: www.bewaterwise.com



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Boy Scouts of America-Firestone Reservation, California State Polytechnic University-Pomona, Covina, Covina Irrigating Co., Glendora, Golden State Water Co., La Verne, Mount San Antonio College, Pomona, Rowland Water District, Suburban Water Systems, Valencia Heights Water Co., Walnut Valley Water District

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