St. Mary celebrates 100 years

By Tess Kazenoff

Long Beach was one of the fastest growing communities in the country when St. Mary Medical Center first opened its doors 100 years ago. It was 1923, and in St. Mary’s place was not a clinical hospital, but instead a “medical spa” that was constructed around 1904. The owner at the time, Dr. Truman Boyd, sold the building to the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word for $160,000. The 70-bed facility officially opened its doors on August 26, 1923. “St. Mary will make Long Beach a better place for all,” said the leader, Mother Placidus, at the time, according to Michael Neils, president and CPO of the St. Mary Medical Center Foundation.

That has been the lasting legacy of the hospital ever since, Neils said. “It’s our ongoing commitment,” Neils said. “We will provide services for you, regardless of your ability to pay or not. If you are in need, we’re here for you. And we really do make Long Beach a better place.”

A decade after the hospital opened, a 6.4-magnitude earthquake shook Long Beach, destroying St. Mary in its entirety—including the hospital, convent and chapel. Over 70 people were in the hospital that day, but nobody was injured.

With the help of William Reid, the chairman of Hancock Oil, St. Mary was rebuilt, reopening to the public in 1937.

Decades of growth
Over the following decades, St. Mary continued to expand.

After World War II, with the help of hotel mogul Conrad Hilton, St. Mary more than doubled its capacity, from 100 beds to 253 beds.

Then in 1970, officials broke ground on the construction of a $10 million, 10-story project, which was supported with a $4.3 million gift from Modestus and Evalyn Bauer, an expansion which included private patient rooms, a larger emergency department, a new intensive care unit and heart care unit, and maternal child health services.

In its long history, St. Mary has celebrated numerous firsts, Neils said. Last month, “we had an event for some people from the Rotary Club of Long Beach, and one of the men there was visiting, had the first open heart surgery in Long Beach in 1955 as a kid,” Neils said.

Today, St. Mary employs more than 1,500 people and has an operating budget of over $400 million a year. St. Mary is part of the CommonSpirit Health hospital system, which includes 142 hospitals across the country.

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Over time, the focus has shifted more toward the needs of the immediate ZIP code, although the hospital cares for the entire city, Neils said.

In 2022 alone, St. Mary provided in-house services to over 58,000 people, accounting for nearly 13% of...
Proposed land swap between port, city would provide $12M for Queen Mary over 3 years

By Alicia Robinson & Brandon Richardson

The city will be able to pump at least $42 million into fixing the historic Queen Mary over the next several years, under a proposed land swap with the Port of Long Beach announced on April 24—but the ship will need a far larger investment to stay afloat in the years to come.

The deal would transfer control of nearly 14 acres of city land to the port, which would lease out the property to third parties and split any net revenue with the city equally. The land in question is a collection of smaller parcels (the largest is 6 acres) scattered around the west side of the port, most of which contain inactive oil operations.

“This partnership will provide investment for the Queen Mary while in turn strengthening Long Beach industry sectors: tourism and hospitality, transportation and logistics,” Mayor Rex Richardson said.

It’s not a long-term solution. The $12 million the port will give the city as part of the deal is billed as a loan that will carry 5% interest, to be repaid from the city’s share of lease revenue, and the ship needs an unknown—but undoubtedly large and costly—amount of maintenance.

Richardson said the $12 million “will be used to fund the Queen Mary’s many re-purposing amenities and activities, ongoing restoration projects and infrastructure needed at the site. This is going to help expedite the Queen Mary’s return to profitability.”

Richardson and City Manager Tom Modica declined to provide details on what specific projects the money would be used for, though Modica noted that investing in future development of the area could be on the table.

“So you’re also standing on about 25 acres of open land, 45 where you include the Carnival (cruse ship terminal),” Modica said. “This is a huge development opportunity to do something real special over here. So part of it is starting to invest in that process.”

The history of what’s been done to fix the ocean liner, which first sailed from the West Coast to East and back down in March after unemployment ticked up 30% within a year

The history of what’s been done to fix the ocean liner, which first sailed from the West Coast to East and back down in March after unemployment ticked up 30% within a year
El Dorado Frontier could close permanently due to ongoing safety concerns: owner says

“‘It’s really important for people to understand that this isn’t about money,’” said Patrick Wolovich, owner of El Dorado Frontier. “‘If we have no support and no safety, then what’s the point?’

The potential closure was first reported by the Press-Telegram.

Ever since he was a kid, Wolovich dreamed of creating his own theme park. In 2018, that dream became a reality when he opened El Dorado Frontier. “I’m not hopeful it will make a good impact and that people will feel safer going into a park that’s clean and maintained,” said department spokesperson Jane Gribby.

Over the years, the situation has only worsened, according to Wolovich, who says city officials have continued to ignore concerns and suggestions to invest in the park range program as a way to improve safety for park-goers.

To Wolovich’s disappointment, Long Beach officials have instead proposed to eliminate the ‘park ranger’ classification altogether, which would involve moving hundreds of thousands of dollars from the Long Beach Police Department budget to the Parks, Recreation and Marine Department for the Park Safety Ambassador program.

The new program, which is expected to roll out by early May, will send workers to clean and maintain bathrooms several times a day and lock them at night. Parks workers already clean and open restrooms in the mornings and check them again later in the day. However, the additional staffing will allow the city’s maintenance team to tend to park bathrooms—which are sometimes vandalized or used for illicit activities—multiple times a day to make sure they are being used for only what’s intended, according to the city.

“I’m not hopeful it will make a difference—I’m confident it will make a difference,” said project manager Brandon Richardson.

The potential closure was first reported by the Press-Telegram.

Closed will be determined, Hildreth said it was important to his team to have Long Beach Ocean League operators take over the front end of the family’s first restaurant, which his parents ran at the corner of Fourth and Pons Avenue when he was a child. The name is an acronym for his family’s three children, Michelle, Abel and Ziboney.

“In all honesty, I’m ready for it,” Salazar said of the fresh start. “It’s like turning a page to a new chapter, you can’t stay in that chapter for the rest of your life.”

While the second tenant is still to be determined, Hildreth said it was important to his team to have Long Beach Ocean League operators take over the front end of the family’s first restaurant, which his parents ran at the corner of Fourth and Pons Avenue when he was a child. The name is an acronym for his family’s three children, Michelle, Abel and Ziboney.

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operators, since May of last year. The previous contract expired on July 1, 2022. The association first accused the union of delaying the standard authorization cards are calling for a petition on April 17 to form a union including clerical workers, student employees—researchers, teacher assistants and more—on the Long Beach Post by CSU. At Cal State Long Beach, there were 1,355 students working on campus without union representation last fall. During the same time, 348 academic student employees—researchers, teacher assistants and more—on the Long Beach campus were represented by the United Auto Workers, according to a 2012 employee report provided to the Long Beach Post by CSU.

Thousands of undergraduate Cal State University workers filed a petition on April 17 to form a union that would represent more than 30,000 students across the state’s largest public university system. The campaign has been dubbed the largest non-academic organizing effort in U.S. history, and it would offer working conditions for those who fall into non-academic positions, including clerical workers, student media, library assistants and more to the system’s 23 campuses. The union organizers and counting who have signed union authorization cards are calling for a health care plan, high wages, paid sick time, holiday time and more work hours. At Cal State Long Beach, there were 1,355 students working on campus without union representation last fall. During the same time, 348 academic student employees—researchers, teacher assistants and more—on the Long Beach campus were represented by the United Auto Workers, according to a 2012 employee report provided to the Long Beach Post by CSU.

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Vinyl records aren’t for everyone. After all, it’s an expensive hobby. As collections grow—and as my modest and completely reasonably sized collection of over 1,600 records does—it can be hard to find space for them all. Plus, compared to streaming, they require more effort and equipment than the phone you can simply pull out of your pocket.

But there’s a lot to love about the medium: enlarged, and sometimes expanded, album art, easier to read lyrics sheets, not to mention the wild and crazy colors and designs the records themselves now come in. Some also argue that the sound of vinyl is warmer than those digitized and compressed files.

Walking into this shop is like stepping into another world on just a little bit of acid. I mean, come on, you walk through a head door to enter the store. Top to bottom, the walls are covered in band posters, flags, stickers, flair and quite the eclectic mix of tchotchkes. Owner Dizzy opened the shop in 1999 and heavily features classic rock, ’70s soul and funk, ’80s psychedelic rock and classic metal. All of the store’s stock is sound, mostly brought in by folk and sold to the store, but also from swap meets and other avenues. Dizzy also likes to host live local band performances in his small shop. He records every performance on tape and then burns it onto a CD for the bands.

"Vinyl ain’t dead!" at this traditional record store that has been selling wax in Long Beach since 1977, making it the oldest record shop in the city. The storefront specializes in vintage vinyl from the 1930s through the ’70s, according to owner Steve Mintz, and features all genres and eras among its thousands of new and used records, collectible CDs, cassette tapes, 8-track tapes, DVDs, Blu-rays and other collectibles. The vinyl covers all genres, including some more aggressive stuff for all you metalheads and punks. But what really sets Fingerprints apart is the live, in-store performances owner Rand Foster is able to bring in. Past appearances include Foo Fighters, Brian Wilson, Jack Johnson, Taking Back Sunday, Charli XCX, The 1975, Dazed, Boz and dozens more.

This shop is easy to miss. For almost 20 years, it has operated inside other Long Beach stores, according to owner John Karan, who said he spent nearly a decade inside Inretrospect on Fourth Street. He moved to his current home inside Urban Amoeba where it opened in 2019. His inventory consists exclusively of used vintage records, mostly from the ’60s through the ’80s. Karan’s current stock is heavy on classic rock but he also has a healthy selection of jazz, classical, country and other genres.

The newest vinyl shop in Long Beach, Record Box first opened its doors three years ago, but will celebrate its one-year anniversary at its current location in June. The small shop, which shares a space with plant shop Vida, carries a little bit of everything: but it is heavy on hip-hop, jazz, soul, and even has a Filipina section, according to owner Jose Judas.

The second youngest record shop in the city, Twelves opened in October 2019. Our Associate Editor at the Post DJs on the side and speaks highly of the selection of singles and other desirable discs for the job. In addition to supplying DJs with the goods, Twelves specializes in hard-to-find first pressings and carries a wide selection of pairs, jazz, rock, soul, and other music genres. Due to its connections to the DJ and other music scenes, the shop also gets rare and limited releases from active artists other stores don’t.

The storefront specializes in vintage vinyl from the 1930s through the ’70s, according to owner Andy George, and features all genres and eras among its thousands of new and used records, collectible CDs, cassette tapes, 8-track tapes, DVDs, Blu-rays and other collectibles. The vinyl covers all genres, including some more aggressive stuff for all you metalheads and punks. But what really sets Fingerprints apart is the live, in-store performances owner Rand Foster is able to bring in. Past appearances include Foo Fighters, Brian Wilson, Jack Johnson, Taking Back Sunday, Charli XCX, The 1975, Dazed, Boz and dozens more.

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**We Don’t Just Develop Buildings—We Build Relationships**

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— Sue Chen, Founder, CEO

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**Wrigley-area office building designed by Killingsworth could get historic designation**

By Jason Ruiz

A 1961 office building in the Wrigley neighborhood that was designed by famed architect Edward Killingsworth could be designated as a historic landmark by the City Council after the city’s Cultural Heritage Commission recommended it on April 25.

The building at 822 W. Willow Street was built as an office space for Wallace G. Berg, who ran an accounting practice out of it until moving to another building, which he also commissioned Killingsworth to help design. It’s known as the “Berg Office.”

It was one of the earliest works of Killingsworth’s firm, KBS, and includes some of the hallmarks of its design features like an elongated entry door that gives the impression that the door is much larger than it is, vertical windows and an enclosed planter in the building’s entryway.

Katie Rispoli Keaotamai, a consultant hired by the building’s owner for the landmark designation process, said the building would be the first midcentury building in the Wrigley Neighborhood to be designated, and if it is, it would help raise awareness of Killingsworth’s work across the city instead of just in the areas where it’s concentrated, such as Naples and Bixby Knolls, where his old office is.

Rispoli Keaotamai said the owner, Keiro Koga, also owns the Opdahl House in Naples, a home designed by Killingsworth and built in 1957, which is already designated as a historic landmark. The office building on Willow is currently a nail salon, but Koga intends to use it for his import and export business.

Killingsworth and his firm worked on a few commercial projects before transitioning into hotel projects in the 1960s, but there are several local examples of his work. He helped design the student union building on the campus of Cal State Long Beach and worked on the old Long Beach Civic Center, which was demolished after the city moved into the current City Hall campus on the corner of Magnolia Avenue and Ocean Boulevard.

Under the city’s rules for historic designation, the Berg Office qualifies under two criteria, according to city staff. It’s associated with the life of a person important to the city’s past and it embodies distinctive characteristics of a period or method of construction or “represents the work of a master.”

In order to be eligible for landmark designation, a building needs to meet at least one of the four criteria included in the city’s cultural heritage ordinance, which also includes buildings “associated with events that made a significant contribution to broad patterns of city history” and sites that “have yielded or had the potential to yield information important in prehistory or history.”

The designation of the building as a historic site will now be forwarded to the City Council after the commission voted unanimously to recommend that the council approve its historic status. •

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of New York and New Jersey was the second-busiest container seaport in the U.S., a rank held for decades by Long Beach.

In February, New York-New Jersey outperformed both Long Beach and Los Angeles—the No. 1 port in the nation. The East Coast port moved 835,378 TEUs in February, nearly 41% more than Long Beach and over 53% more than LA.

Last month, LA moved about 29,200 more TEUs than Long Beach, a significant bump from February when it trailed Long Beach by over 50,000 TEUs.

Year-to-date, Long Beach has moved 1,273,593 TEUs, compared to LA’s 1,170,139 TEUs. Long Beach’s four-quarter figure marks a 30% decrease from February when it trailed Long Beach and over 51% more than LA.

In March, New York-New Jersey dockworkers and terminal operators moved 524,542 TEUs, down over 33% compared to the same month last year. While the West Coast Port moved more cargo than Long Beach and LA last that month, it continues to track ahead of both in terms of total movement this year, at 1,243,238 TEUs. It’s possible New York-New Jersey will continue to outperform through the twin ports as negotiations continued behind-closed doors and under a media blackout. In the last two months, however, union members have taken actions that could be construed as “wildcat strikes”—work stoppages without the consent of union representatives, which require official member votes to authorize a strike.

Earlier this month, 11 of the 13 container terminals at the ports of Long Beach and LA shut down for a full day due to not having enough workers on site. Non-unionized workers who showed up for work were sent home.

While the PMA claims these were “a few workers” who were sending a message amid contract negotiations, union leaders stated workers first attended a union meeting on April 15 to witness newly elected President Gary Herrera being sworn in and then were observing Good Friday the following day, which they said explains the mass absence from terminals. When asked why other meetings, which are held monthly, and previous Good Fridays and other holidays have not shut down the ports, union leaders did not respond.

In March, the employers’ association accused workers of using their lunch breaks to cause disruptions, claiming they used to be staggered to ensure work was continuous for a reason. Herrera, however, recently told the Business Journal that workers realized they were not being paid when they worked through their lunch hours, so they have opted to take them in full.

In mid-April, the PMA accused the ILWU of delaying the standard dispute process, which does show the start of port operations in the morning. The ILWU did not respond to requests for comment regarding the situation.

Union members have cited record profits that have been raked in by ocean carriers. In October, Drybulk Supply Chain Advisors forecasted that ocean carriers would make $270 billion in profits in 2022—$80 billion more than 2021 and live times what they made in 2020.

The ports, for their part, have borne no part in the labor negotiations but are merely landlords with terminal operators in their districts. Despite the turmoil between the union and employers, the ports continue to push toward the future.

“We continue to invest in our infrastructure projects and look for ways to efficiently and sustainably move cargo so our customers, new and old, are reminded why we are the Port of Choice,” Long Beach Harbor Commission President Sharon Wray said in a statement.

“We will be ready when cargo volumes are on the rise again.” - Mario Cordero, Port of Long Beach Executive Director

Every year, we graduate thousands of Space Beach-ready professionals prepared to reshape the aerospace workforce.

CARGO VOLUMES
Continued from page 3

COLUMNIST: TIM GROBATY
Bachus in town: A pair of new builds on the Peninsula, same size, same price

Two homes sit next to one another on an offshore corner of Ocean Boulevard and Balboa near the western end of the Peninsula. Pick one. It’s a difficult decision. There’s little difference between the two. Both are 4-bed, 4-bath, 3,105 square feet, and they’re even identically priced at a not-insignificant cut of $3,588,888.

The one on Ocean is three stories with glimpses of Alamitos Bay to the north and of the Pacific Ocean to the south—not full-on views, but fairly sufficient; you would not be lying or even exaggerating to say that there are water views from either place, especially from their third-floor deck and patio, but the views don’t smack you in the face like the IMAX panorama you get from the houses along the sand.

And if you’re in the market for a brand-new home, these two are right off the lot, currently the only new builds in the city, according to listing agent Andy Dane Carter. That makes the houses turkey-paced; you can even hang with the stager to keep all of some of the furnishings. “Buy it furnished for a second home or a summer place and all you’ve gotta do is show up with a suitcase and a toothbrush,” says Carter.

To visit one of the homes, both built on the site of a former and long-vacant triplex, is pretty much the only new builds in the city, according to listing agent Andy Dane Carter. That makes the houses turkey-paced; you can even hang with the stager to keep all of some of the furnishings. “Buy it furnished for a second home or a summer place and all you’ve gotta do is show up with a suitcase and a toothbrush,” says Carter.

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Two newly built homes at Ocean Boulevard and Balboa Place are near twins at the same price and same layout. From the balcony off the primary bedroom you get a view of the Pacific Ocean.
The Long Beach Business List, an industry-specific directory of local businesses, is a feature exclusive to the print edition of the Long Beach Business Journal. Subscribe today to get 26 issues a year delivered to your home or office, plus unlimited digital access to the local business news you can’t find anywhere else.

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The Long Beach Business Journal makes every effort to verify the information included in the list above, but we also rely on the accuracy of the information provided by the employers and organizations represented.
Isabel Patterson Child Development Center at CSULB could receive $3.5M in critical funding

By Toyia KassaPP

The Isabel Patterson Child Development Center on the Cal State Long Beach campus could be getting a substantial boost in federal funding in the next fiscal budget year.

The child care center, which has primarily served children of enrolled CSULB students for the past 30 years, is eligible for potentially $3.5 million in funding.

The funds would go toward the necessary maintenance at the center.

For the facility, which includes four individual buildings and several play yards throughout, and offers toddler, preschool, and school-age programs, its deferred maintenance costs currently amount to around $8 million, said Miles Nevin, executive director of Associated Students Inc., a CSULB nonprofit that runs a variety of services including the Isabel Patterson Child Development Center.

The potential funding “would tackle the most immediate needs, and about half of the needs,” Nevin said.

According to Nevin, “the plumbing and renovation that underpins the land is failing and doesn’t drain properly, which becomes problematic, particularly when it rains.”

Additionally, the funds would support the replacement of the main electrical panel and all of the related circuits, which has become a risk-management issue, Nevin said. It will also replace all of the flooring, heating, ventilation and air conditioning units across the center.

While it varies when each item has last been replaced, most are either original or haven’t been replaced since the ‘80s. “It’s all very old and needs to be replaced immediately,” Nevin said.

All runs a variety of facilities and programs across the organization, and there just isn’t enough funding to address everything, including deferred maintenance. Nevin said.

While state and federal grants are utilized for the operating budget, “this capital budget is not really addressed anywhere,” Nevin said.

“That’s one of those items that tends to get pushed to the lower end of the priority list when we’re doing our budgets. While some items get addressed each year, it’s never to the level needed. Nevin said. In the current year, for example, $100,000 was budgeted for deferred maintenance items.

Obviously $100,000 per year, it’s just not going to each up to $8 million ever,” Nevin said.

However, the potential $3.5 million will not only address deferred maintenance and make the play environments safer, but it will be utilized to modernize the center and make it a “contemporary space” for the children, he said.

The improvements will also decrease the center’s annual utility and overall budget costs, allowing the center to invest more resources into program materials and into staff, which includes hiring more student employees, rather than thinking about investing in capital outlay, Nevin added.

The funding is part of Rep. Garcia’s recent Community Project Funding submission to the House Committee on Appropriations.

As an alumnus of Cal State Long Beach, and as the former ASI student body president, Garcia is familiar with the organization and has remained connected since graduating, Nevin said.

“He was proactive in coming to us and further discussing these issues,” Nevin said. “So we collaborated with his office on this application, and really worked in partnership with him and his staff to get the proposal.”

Garcia, for his part, said the need for the funding was clear.

“As an education major, I know supporting more accessible child care makes a world of difference for parents of any age to work and achieve their educational goals,” Garcia said in a statement. “The Isabel Patterson Center at CSULB provides critical child care education to our community and I’m grateful to submit this important funding request.”

Following approval from Congress, more requirements lie ahead before the funding can be put to use, such as conducting an environmental review and working with campus professionals to plan out a detailed project and timeline, Nevin said.

The funding will then be issued as a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant in fiscal year 2024, although, at this time, it is unclear when exactly the funds would be dispersed, Nevin said.

While the funding has not yet been guaranteed, “it’s for urgent facility needs at a large child care center on a public university campus—it’s important for early care and education. It’s important for our local workforce development concerns,” Nevin said. “So I’m actually very confident and hopeful.”

While the center is already an attractive space that operates at capacity, the improvements will further garner trust and goodwill in the community and across the university, Nevin said.

“Child care is one of the great barriers to our students, not only here, but across the country,” Nevin said.

“When you have a student child, that’s serving 800 families and doing it in a very high quality environment, it’s an important component of getting an education here.”

“Just being able to provide early care and education, being able to be part of the workforce development ecosystem in our region, where we are taking care of children so that people can work and go to school—that is super critical,” Nevin said.

Wrigley gets woody: The Wicked Wolf cocktail lounge hopes to be a home for artists

Dangling vines, cocktails like the “Gingerella,” velvet sofas and a portrait of the wicked wolf herself—the team behind the Wrigley neighborhood’s first themed bar has been working to bring a living room in the forest to Long Beach.

By Kat Schuster

This Mercouffer has never been a drinker, yet she is preparing to open her first bar in Long Beach. She has worked as a documentary filmmaker and explored numerous art mediums throughout her life. Now, she’s using 2332 Pacific Ave. as her canvas. Mercouffer and her husband George Wolfe have spent months working with campus manager Christian Warren to open the doors to The Wicked Wolf, which will hold its grand opening on April 28.

Wrigley’s first themed bar has invoked some well-deserved rubbernecking from those passing through the neighborhood.

“We’re going for a romantic living room in the forest,” Mercouffer told the Post.

Once Chimbas Sports Bar, the space has been wholly transformed from its former aesthetic. When Mercouffer, who calls herself a “real estate forrest mission,” first entered property, she immediately suspected there may be some magic lurking beneath its dray dot.

“To me it looked like a cottage in the woods, like Hansel and Gretel,” she said. “We just thought of fairy tales.”

After coming across an illustration of a fantastical wolf by storyboard artist Angeline “Spike” Ricards, the story around the wolf of Wrigley started to unfold. That whimsical concept isn’t likely to be lost on those who wander in to see dangling vines above velvet Victorian sofas and a large illustration of the wolf herself above the bar.

Ricard’s wolf isn’t the only villain to Long Beach. The Three Little Pigs, instead, the illustration presented a “feminine twist”.

Continued on page 25

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Continued on page 25
Long Beach, LA County unemployment ticked back down in March after two months of increases

The recent Virgin Orbit layoffs are expected to push the city’s unemployment rate up, officials said, but not significantly.

By Brendan Richardson

The unemployment rate across Los Angeles County, including Long Beach, ticked back down in March after two consecutive months of increases, according to data from the California Employment Development Department.

The rate in both Long Beach and across the county reached a recent low of 4.1% in December, but it crept back up to 4.3% and 4.4%, respectively, by the end of February.

“We love their patience, their kindness, they go way out of their way. And that’s a great thing to be able to hear. And I hear it every week from people,” said St. Mary Medical Center President and CEO Carolyn Caldwell

The future of St. Mary

Just as St. Mary has evolved over the years, it will continue to do so into the future.

For instance, to combat the disproportionately low percentage of African American physicians, St. Mary has partnered with the historically Black, all-black Medical House of Monrovia and Communitygirl. Each contributing $100,000 to getting more Black students admitted to medical school, St. Mary hopes to have an opportunity to complete their residences at one of California’s 144 hospitals, in conjunction, said Caldwell, its health care organization will be highly beneficial, Caldwell said.

“We never ran out of anything, even if we got low on supplies, our wonderful supply chain could look across our system,” said Caldwell. Improving communication, reacting quickly, and collaborating with other health care organizations within the community, city officials, as well as state government, were “remarkable,” Caldwell said.

“Health care just doesn’t happen in the four walls of the hospital.”

— Carolyn Caldwell, St. Mary Medical Center President and CEO

Since last fall, CSVU has backed student organizers in their efforts to unionize all California State University employees.

To submit a petition to form a union, students had to affirm their showing of interest to California’s Public Employment Rights Board, which handles collective bargaining statutes across the state. The filing allows the university system to opt for a vote, as well as make an agreement to an outside entity to do the work on their behalf.

“Nowadays, there are a number of collective bargaining statutes across the country,” said Justine Tennon, CSVU’s executive director. “And we’re ready to help them handle that, to move forward and work with the union.”

CSVU Union

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CSVU Union

CSVU Union

Workers break down grandstands Downtown following the 48th annual Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach race weekend. The company announced on March 30 that it would lay off 675 employees, or 8.5% of its workforce, effective two days later in early April.

On April 4, the Richard Bramson Corporation, parent to CSUEB, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. While a small increase is likely, the layoffs are not expected to cause further job losses.
Blue Shield to open Long Beach office

About 1,000 Blue Shield of California employees will be coming to Long Beach this summer, when the company opens an office on the Aero Long Beach campus.

Some employees may even end up wanting to relocate to Long Beach, Seelig added.

Plus, according to Seelig, Blue Shield of California is a company that loves to give back and volunteer. “Long Beach is definitely going to benefit in that capacity as well,” Seelig said. “Our employees are really, really strategic about looking at the landscape and finding spaces where we can make improvements that help underserved communities, residents — and to make a big difference.”

Seelig said the company is planning an open house in early July to introduce community partners and introduce Blue Shield to Long Beach.

“We want to be good neighbors,” said Seelig. “We’re not just here to take up space and to be a big company.”

Seelig’s first week with the company, Blue Shield moved into its Oakland headquarters office, and immediately donated $1 million to a local nonprofit that served high school students from underprivileged communities, he said.

“It’s part of our culture,” Seelig said. Along with establishing its new office, in an effort to further serve the Long Beach community, Blue Shield recently opened a community resource center located at 5995 Atlantic Ave., with a grand opening planned for June.

The community resource center will serve individuals from Long Beach as well as surrounding communities such as Lakewood and Signal Hill, through a variety of services and classes ranging from monthly food pantries, seasonal flu clinics, family cooking classes, exercise classes and homework assistance to K-12 students. Blue Shield Promote staff will be available to offer support to all individuals who come into the center, which is open to all community members.

“It’s an opportunity for underserved communities to come in and get top-notch services and clinical help,” Seelig said.

The Long Beach resource center is the 37th location of its kind, and it follows the opening of a similar space in Norwalk in March. Both centers are part of L.A. Care’s and Blue Shield Promote’s $4.6 million commitment to operate 14 community resource centers in Los Angeles County.

“We’re super excited about this building and moving in,” Seelig said of the new Long Beach office. “Long Beach wins, Blue Shield wins, our members win because we’re excited to be doing more great work in the community.”

Unemployment

Continued on page 13

A substantial rise in unemployment when April data is released next month, according to Nick Schultz, executive director of Pacific Gateway, the city’s workforce development arm.

“It’s tough to say,” Schultz said, noting that there are many factors at play. “But I don’t expect a big shift. Maybe around two tenths.”

Shortly after the Virgin Orbit announcement, Pacific Gateway went to work on outreach to assist those who were laid off. The organization has held multiple in-person and virtual sessions to provide information and help connect people to new job opportunities.

On April 28, the agency hosted an aerospace job fair at the Convention Center, which will include representatives from over 30 aerospace companies. Over 200 former Virgin Orbit employees had signed up as of April 25, Schultz said.

Back at the county level, the overall region followed the same trends as Long Beach, with the labor force dropping by 8,000 jobs to 1,050,200. The number of employed county residents increased by 5,510 to 4,375,900, while the number of unemployed residents decreased by 14,000 to 259,000.

Only one-third of L.A. County’s cities and designated areas have higher unemployment rates than Long Beach, data shows. Across the county, 7.8% of all cities and areas have lower unemployment rates than Long Beach.

Seven areas — Charter Oak, Cudahy, East L.A., Huntington Park, Pico Rivera and Rolling Hills — have the same unemployment rate as Long Beach.

Leisure and hospitality led the county in month-over-month gains, adding 7,500 jobs, the EDD stated. Accommodation and food services recorded 3,780 additions, which was offset by arts, entertainment and recreation losing 600 jobs.

Other sectors that saw job increases were government (4,400), information (4,500), private education and health services (3,500), manufacturing (2,500) and other services (2,100).

Several sectors contracted month-over-month, including construction (1,800), financial activities (1,500), and professional and business services (1,200).

Mining and logging remained stagnant month-over-month, with 200 jobs recorded in the county.

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During the first quarter, passenger volumes were up 1.1% compared to the same period in 2019.

By Brandon Richardson

After a turbulent three years, Long Beach Airport reported passenger volumes above pre-pandemic levels for the first time since the coronavirus outbreak, according to data released April 24. In March, 206,619 passengers traveled through the small, municipal airport—up 3% from the same month in 2019. In March 2020, the coronavirus effectively shut down airports nationwide, which have struggled to recover since.

Last month’s figure marks increases of 12.6% and 14.5% over March 2020 and 2021, respectively. The volume is 9.8% over March of last year.

“Long Beach Airport continues to see signs of recovery and strong travel demand as passenger numbers trend upward,” Airport Director Cynthia Guidry said in a statement. “We’re pleased travelers make LGB their airport of choice.”

Passenger volumes nationwide, meanwhile, remained nearly 22.9% below 2019 levels in March, according to U.S. Transportation Security Administration data.

Back in Long Beach, the airport continues tracking ahead of last year in terms of passenger volumes for the second month in a row. During the first quarter, 825,322 travelers passed through the facility, a 1.4% increase from the same period in 2019.

The figures are a big boost for the facility, especially after closing out the year with a Southwest Airlines meltdown that caused passenger volumes to dip sharply. In the fallout, January traffic fell 8% short of January 2019 levels.

The data shows that more passengers flew out of Long Beach than flew into it in March. A total of 246,654 passengers boarded a plane in the city, compared to the 149,235 who landed here. Year-to-date, however, more people have arrived (409,550) in Long Beach than flown out of it (406,773).

Despite its major issues at the end of last year as well as its recent, but brief, nationwide grounding, Southwest is making the biggest move of its recovery. The airline is the leading carrier at the airport, holding 49.9% of daily flight slots. As it continues to pick up additional slots, Southwest announces new destinations.

Since June of last year, the company has announced routing to routes to Nashville, New Orleans, Salt Lake City, Orlando, and Kansas City—all of which are now in service. This summer, the airline will begin flights to Colorado Springs, El Paso and Albuquerque.

And in March, Southwest announced its most recent additions: The airline will offer weekly flights to Portland and Boise beginning this fall.

Between Southwest, Delta Air Lines and Hawaiian Airlines, travelers can reach 24 destinations with non-stop service out of Long Beach—more than at any time in the airport’s nearly 100-year history.

Remembered being homeless after losing their house in 2019 because of the collapse of the housing market.

The family slept in the storage room on concrete floors with blankets and considered closing the restaurant as the economy struggled to recover. Then they put a large sign propped up on the back of an old, red Ford F-150 advertising 99-cent pupusas and business began to fail

“I am the Prospector is shutting down; it will always be in our hearts, but it’s a great opportunity for us to be in that new location.” — Abel Salazar, Co-Owner of La Ceiba

Salazar said he hopes that MAZ will be the future of the restaurant, and the family will have to close La Ceiba, something that he expects will happen by September.

“I made a name for myself, but it’s always nice to have people come in and say ‘we came here and we want to be in our hearts, but it’s a great opportunity for us to be in that new location.” — Abel Salazar, Co-Owner of La Ceiba

“Long Beach couple opens well-traveled charcuterie shop within The Hangar at LBX

By Kit Schuster

Whether they were traveling through the colorful coastline of Oaxaca or traveling to quaint artisan shops of Paris, the Alvarengas always made it a point to stop and taste the cheese.

But Connie Alvarenga says it’s hard to credit any one destination for inspiring For Di Latte, a specialty charcuterie shop that she and her husband Steven opened within The Hangar dining hall at Long Beach Exchange on Saturday, April 29.

Connie and Steven, both Long Beach locals, met when they were 17. “We’re actually high school sweethearts,” she said.

Over the years, the pair explored several different countries together, though their favorite memories—flavors—belong to Italy. And now, that’s where the name of their first business together.

“It’s an Italian word that means ‘flower of milk,’” Connie said. “The flower kind of symbolizes the end product after the milk is stretched and mixed. So to us, we wanted to incorporate it within our store to represent our process from beginning to end.”

For Di Latte is also a semi-soft cow’s milk cheese that is similar to mozzarella cheese.

Just this past weekend, for those who don’t know, charcuterie is a French term for cured meat, and while ‘charcuterie boards’ were assembled as far back as 15th century France, the meat and cheese-choked platters became a social media sensation during the pandemic. During the long first few months of lockdown, the Alvarengas, no longer able to travel, bunched down in their home and started thinking of what they could do to make a living and how they could share their well-traveled cheese obsession with Long Beach. But before they settled on the idea of a charcuterie venture, they started renting out their vintage Airstream trailer to locals.

“But then, as time progressed, we continued to think about new ways to bring new experiences to Long Beach,” Connie said. “And so that’s when we started thinking about opening up a cheese/ charcuterie store.”

While she doesn’t want the shop to be thought of primarily as a cheese shop, Alvarenga says the site will offer luxury artisan cheeses from up and down the state—from espresso bean-faced El Caliente to the stout-infused craft beer cheddar. Other selections will come from Texas, Wisconsin and beyond.

Primarily, they will showcase their unique take on charcuterie, which will be pre-assembled in boxes that BSU guests can grab on the go or share with a group right in the dining hall. Boxes are 85, 140 and 265 and all include cured meats, artisan cheeses as well as an assortment of nuts, crackers, fresh and dried fruit and other finger food goodies.

Eventually, they will add children’s box as well as a vegan box.

“So, there’s going to be a little bit for everyone.” said Connie.

For Di Latte will be open within The Hangar Food Hall at Long Beach Exchange, 4150 McGowen St., Sundays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from noon to 7 p.m., and Fridays and Saturdays from noon to 7 p.m.”

One of the doorways to The Prospector restaurant

Fior Di Latte, which opened April 29, offers several different specialty charcuterie boxes, including cured meats, artisan cheese and other snacks.

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Eventually, they will add children’s box as well as a vegan box.

“So, there’s going to be a little bit for everyone.” she said.

For Di Latte will be open within The Hangar Food Hall at Long Beach Exchange, 4150 McGowen St., Sundays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from noon to 7 p.m., and Fridays and Saturdays from noon to 7 p.m.”

One of the doorways to The Prospector restaurant

Fior Di Latte, which opened April 29, offers several different specialty charcuterie boxes, including cured meats, artisan cheese and other snacks.
Long Beach to cut cannabis taxes for equity businesses, explore broader industry-wide reductions later this year

By Jason Ruiz

The Long Beach City Council voted Tuesday to grant tax relief to cannabis operators in the city who are less wealthy than other cannabis operators or are generally less successful, in an effort to help provide an even playing field for new operators and make cannabis more affordable for customers.

Councilmember Joni Ricks-Oddie, who introduced the item, said she believes that, with a measured approach, the tax reductions could have a host of benefits including increased sales and a larger tax base for the city, as well as the potential to bring in new operators to the city.

Before cannabis sales were legalized in Long Beach in 2016, there was reluctance among council members at the time to welcome the industry, as some said an increased consumption tax could mean the city would lose money or “break even” at best.

Cannabis operators have been forced to charge high prices to fund the tax cuts, but Ricks-Oddie’s amendment asks the city attorney to bring back an ordinance that would amend the current tax rate to help cannabis operators in the city. The amendment calls for a tax rate of 4% on adult use sales, 3.5% on medicinal sales and a 1% excise tax on cannabis sales and a zeroing out of medicinal cannabis taxes, but it’s unclear how long this rate will be presented with.

Rick-Oddie’s request included Santa Ana’s recent cannabis tax reductions as an example. That city reduced its taxes by 25% across the board.

While this is the case, the city has said it can only allow eight additional dispensary licenses to be reserved for equity applicants. However, the newly named cannabis equity applicants are required to put up $25,000 in exchange for the licenses.

The tax changes that will be in the requested ordinance will have to be voted on by the council twice before the mayor can sign the requested ordinance will have to be voted on by the council twice before the mayor can sign the item.

Local businesses, however, will not see a cut to their tax rate. The city has said it can only allow an additional six tax relief licenses for equity applicants who have been approved by the city.

Long Beach officials had hoped to come to an agreement to take over responsibility for the Queen Mary and all the needed repairs, but that proposal doesn’t appear to have progressed, Reed said.

At some point, though, city leaders will face a big decision.

Can they find an operator who will step in to oversee the vessel and its operations? Or should the city commission their own survey of its condition that should be done in a timely manner?

This is a huge development opportunity to do something really special over here. So part of it is starting to invest in that process. - Tom Modica, City Manager

Hotel and restaurant operations are expected to resume next month. Other projects the city has slated will be completed ahead of that next month. Other smaller projects include upgrades to the ship’s main boarding entrance, elevator and restroom facilities, kitchen and restaurant improvements, as well as painting, lighting and other enhancements.

Long term, the ship’s regular maintenance will include work like painting, cleaning and maintenance of the ship’s hull and decks, engine and hull, and all systems in both the engine room and the ship’s interior.

In late December, the city responded the ship after two and half years to guided tours, but only offered a few to limited areas of the ship. Public tours began more broadly earlier this month.

Most recently, the city spent $1 million on safety features such as new buoys and heat exchangers, which provide hot water throughout the ship, a renovation for the port, restaurant and bar operations, and another $5 million on things like carpentry work and new windows to improve the guest experience.

“Demand for real estate at the port is so high that the company will typically lease land to can make use of virtually any configuration or condition it is,” Harbor Department Interim Director Dave Hacegaba said.

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into the declining ship through a land swap.

Mayor Rex Richardson said in a tweet that day that the plan ‘brings closure to the question of whether or not the Queen Mary will be transferred to the Port of Long Beach. The ship will remain with the City of Long Beach. The Port will be a partner.’

Richardson loaded the proposed land swap, which was slated to be voted on by the City Council in early May, saying the partnership will fund repairs and restoration projects as well as strengthen the city’s economy.

City Manager Tom Modica told the Post that the city is open to restarting communications with the port about transferring the ship in the future. J.3 added that he is enthusiastic about the prospect of the city overseeing and investing in the Queen.

Port officials also see the plan as beneficial.

“The port welcomes the city’s proposal to continue to manage the Queen Mary,” Deputy Executive Director Yael Horesh said on April 23. “As always, we stand ready to work together with the city team on measures that benefit tourism, trade and transportation in Long Beach.”

The port, for its part, commissioned a study of the ship in June of last year to determine its potential fiscal obligations, should the ship be transferred. The report is expected to be completed in the next three to four months. spokesperson Lee Petronz said in an email on April 24.

The initial idea of transferring the ship came after Urban Commons, the vessel’s previous landlord, went bankrupt in 2021.

The city was left holding the bag for the deteriorating ship, which likely needs hundreds of millions of dollars in repairs and deferred maintenance. So in September of that year, Councilmember Cindy-Allen, whose district at the time included the ship, brought an item to the council to open negotiations between the city and the Harbor Department, which oversees the Port of Long Beach.

The item passed unanimously, with Modica stating negotiations could take up to a year.

The proposal was controversial, with Harbor Commissioners voicing their concerns over the effect the transfer could have on the port’s numerous crucial—and expensive—capital improvement projects. “Not to be on the negative side of this, but I’m hoping that our City Council really understands that we have to be careful with what we get ourselves involved with and how do we financially make this work,” Harbor Commissioner and former City Councilmember Frank Colonna said at the time. “We can’t magically create new money to deal with what hasn’t been dealt with in the past.”

The plan also received pushback from port stakeholders, including the Pacific Merchant Shipping Association, and the California State Lands Commission, all of whom pointed to potential impacts the move could have on port operations due to the financial strain that would be brought on by footing the bill to repair and restore the ship.

The findings of the report were presented on April 25 that the association ‘passed’ the transfer of the Queen Mary. He did, however, note that there is still concern over an ongoing partnership between the city and port when it comes to the iconic ship. “According to a (2016) marine survey, the ship needs $35 million to restore its structural integrity,” McLaurin told the Post in an email. “With cargo volumes dropping, port competitiveness intensifying and in order to meet the strictest environmental standards for the nation, the Port of Long Beach is not in a position to fund the many needs of the ill-fated Queen Mary.”

While repairs and restoration to bring the Queen back to its former glory are costly, there are other options for handling the vessel, according to a 2021 report from engineering firm Mollett & Nichol. The city-commissioned report examined various ways the city could deal with the ship—from fixing it up to scrapping it.

The findings of the report were:
- The city does not want to pay the price tag, which will be large.
- Dry docking the ship was the most expensive option, at $60-$90 million. Turning the ship into an artificial reef would run between $30-$60 million.
- The cheapest option, which the city had opted for, is preserving the vessel with a one-time cost of $5-$50 million, with ongoing costs of $5 million annually for more than 25 years.

A City Council staff report states that states that, prior to the coronavirus pandemic, the Queen Mary generated upward of $57 million gross revenue annually, which the city hopes to generate once again for reinvestment into the ship. “In the end,” the staff report states, “the city and port concluded the best option for the Queen Mary to support itself was through an investment in the ship… to give her every possible chance to generate revenue that would then be dedicated to the significant operational and maintenance costs to preserve the ship in the future. ”
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