

Fire academy recruits train for live fire techniques

Costa Mesa Fire and Rescue recruits continue to progress in their academy training. Recently, the academy cadre was led by Captain Joe Noceti and the recruits trained with live fire. Recruits learned about fire behavior, fire attack principles and the dangers of attacking a fire.

Some of the recruits had eyes as wide as saucers as this was their first time attacking a fire in a controlled environment.

New restaurant facility being planned for former Souplantation site at Mesa Verde Shopping Center

The former Souplantation at 1555 Adams, in the Mesa Verde Shopping Center, will be demolished and replaced by a new, three to four restaurant tenant building.

The building will face the south and will be located at the end of a new walkway to connect this building with the rest of the shopping center as well as the Azulon Apartments.

As required by the California Environmental Quality Act, an Initial Study and Negative Declaration have been prepared for the project and is available for review and comment from through April 17, 2017 either online or at City Hall or the city's two public libraries.

Please contact the Planning Division at 714-754-5245 if you need any information.

‘Even when you are stagnant, you got to go forward’

Even the times Elmore McBride found himself homeless, he remained a very meticulous man who preferred things neat and orderly.

Still there was something holding him back that wasn't so orderly – his lack of teeth.

“I was afraid to smile,” he said.

But that was about to change. The 62-year-old McBride was in a transitional program at the Lighthouse Church in Westside Costa Mesa when he met Muriel Ullman, Costa Mesa's housing consultant who works to help the city's homeless residents and Stacy Bowler, one of the city's Community Outreach Workers.

He mentioned to Ullman that he wanted new teeth.

“She and Stacy are just two awesome people,” McBride said. “I wanted to get my teeth fixed and I told Muriel. Three days later, Stacy gave me a number to call for SOS and I was home free.”

McBride is very thankful for SOS, which stands for Share Our Selves, a local nonprofit that provides dental services for those who are not insured or have emergency need for care.

He also is most thankful to Pastor Phil Eyskens at the Lighthouse Church, who assisted him when he most needed it and

while he was attending school at Orange Coast College.

“The type of person I am I would have succeeded eventually,” McBride said. “But it happened a lot faster because of the Lighthouse.”

Eyskens is a key member of Costa Mesa’s Network for Homeless Solutions, which is made up of representatives from the City Manager, City Attorney, Police, Fire, Planning and Code Enforcement offices, as well as clergy, those from non-profit agencies and community volunteers.

The Network for Homeless Solutions implements a range of strategies, including law enforcement, street outreach, prevention, rehabilitation, housing assistance and volunteer coordination. Since its inception in 2013, the Network for Homeless Solutions housed and/or reconnected 269 people as of December 2016. Of the 269, 70 were reconnected to their community of origin or to a place of their choice to end their homelessness.

After four years of assisting McBride through tough times, Pastor Eyskens said he left the Lighthouse and Costa Mesa for a short time, but recently returned and started attending church services again.

“He came to a church service and he had new teeth looking like a million bucks,” Eyskens said. “I’m so proud of him. He is just a real success story. What a perfect example. You got to hope for the best for this guy because you never know what the day is going to bring you.”

For McBride, the days have been getting much better. He now works for the County of Orange In-Home Supportive Services and really enjoys his job. The Boston native is also glad to be living in Costa Mesa, a place he has called home for about 11 years.

“I like the laid-back atmosphere here,” said McBride who is

now living in an apartment in the city. “The people are awesome. The police are like the Beverly Hills police. They are so friendly.”

McBride’s advice for those who are struggling financially or homeless is pretty simple.

“You can’t give up,” he said. “You have to keep plugging. The time I was there at the Lighthouse I talked to a lot of homeless people and I always said keep walking forward. Even when you are stagnant, you got to go forward.”

For more information about the Network for Homeless Solutions visit the website [here](#) or the Facebook page [here](#) or call the Network for Homeless Solutions hotline at (714) 754-5346.

Fire and Rescue teams to take part in the Emergency Operations Exercise at John Wayne Airport

On Friday, April 14, John Wayne Airport will be conducting a Triennial Emergency Operations Exercise from the hours of 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. This full-scale exercise is mandated by the FAA and is designed to evaluate the operational capability of the emergency management system in a stressful environment.

The Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Department will be an active

participant with a number of other agencies in this drill since we share a border with the John Wayne Airport and routinely respond to emergencies on the airport campus.

The public should be aware that Airway Avenue will be shut down from Baker to Paularino from approximately 8 a.m. to 12 noon to accommodate the exercise. Also, the CMPD Helipad will be used during the exercise.

This is an excellent readiness exercise for the airport and CMF&R is a proud participant. It will increase interagency operations and communication between all the public and private resources. Most importantly it will enhance the safety and security for the tenants and passengers using the airport.

New medians coming to Placentia Avenue

The City Council approved moving forward with the Placentia Avenue Median Improvement Project. Public services was able to secure a grant in the amount of \$738,400 from the Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program to begin construction on the project.

The project will result in new landscaped medians on Placentia Avenue between Wilson Street and Adams Avenue. This project will improve the streetscape and also the traffic operations along this corridor. Due to the wide nature of Placentia Avenue, there have been numerous accidents as a result of high vehicle speeds.

Implementation of medians will provide a narrow feel for the

street and minimize high-risk accidents.

Costa Mesa restaurants once again top the 75 Best Places to Eat in Orange County

Costa Mesa once again proves that when it comes to the best restaurants in Orange County, we are the leaders of the pack.

The Orange County Register just published its annual 75 Best Places to Eat by food critic Brad A. Johnson and the top four restaurants are also Costa Mesa eateries.

Topping the list at No. 1, again, is Taco Maria located in the SoCo center. South Coast Plaza's Vaca is No. 2 followed by Hana re and Arc at Nos. 3 and 4.

The 75 Best includes 10 more Costa Mesa restaurants, including Mastro's Steakhouse, Restaurant Marin, The Capital Grille, Shunka Sushi, Water Grill, Din Tai Fung, Manpuku Tokyo BBQ, Filomena's Italian Kitchen and Rance's Chicago Pizza.

Congrats to all those winners and we know that those restaurants just scratch the surface of all the great places to eat in Costa Mesa.

Endangered Riverside fairy shrimp discovered by city officials in Fairview Park

Costa Mesa City officials conducting extensive surveys of vernal pools in Fairview Park this winter announced they have discovered a new, endangered species of fairy shrimp.

As expected, city staffers found the endangered San Diego fairy shrimp in a number of vernal pools that emerged after the heavy rains in December and January, but what they didn't anticipate was the discovery of the Riverside fairy shrimp.

"It is likely that the Riverside fairy shrimp, which is a warm-water species, has been present but went undetected because of very low numbers and because they typically emerge after the San Diego fairy shrimp, which prefer the cold water of December and January, are finished for the season," said Tony Bomkamp, a biologist who consults with the city on Fairview Park.

The Riverside fairy shrimp was named for Riverside County where it was originally found and thought to occur in only a few pools there. Later it was found in San Diego County in many pools including on Camp Pendleton.

In the late 1990s, Riverside fairy shrimp were found in a number of pools in Orange County and a large vernal pool in Ventura County. Unlike the cold-water relatives of the San Diego fairy shrimp, which evolved in colder climates, the Riverside fairy shrimp's distant relatives derive from Africa.

Fairy shrimp have been around in the fossil record for over 300 million years making them one of the oldest crustaceans on the planet.

In addition, while San Diego fairy shrimp were found and confirmed in the expected vernal pools, the crustaceans were also discovered for the first time in what the city calls Vernal Pool C, which is located on the eastside of Placentia Avenue.

The unexpected heavy rains this winter provided an opportunity to conduct a census of the fairy shrimp in the vernal pools at Fairview Park.

The survey effort was the first formal surveys since San Diego fairy shrimp were first detected in Vernal Pool 5 in 1996 and Vernal Pool 1 in 1997. Other "one-time" surveys found San Diego fairy shrimp in Vernal Pools 4 and 6, but were not season-long surveys like those done this year.

The vernal pools and the respective watersheds are off limits to the general public to protect the habitats and have been temporarily delineated based on historical maps.

Additional delineation will be added to protect expanded areas of the vernal pool basins as soon as the ground is hard and dry.

City Manager Hatch presents Leadership Award to Robindale Shepherd

City Manager Tom Hatch presented Finance Department Accounting Specialist Robindale Shepherd with the March City Manager Leadership Award at the monthly employee Meet and Greet Thursday March 23.

“Robindale has served Costa Mesa for 25 years now and works tirelessly to improve our accounts payable operations and a variety of other Finance Department functions,” Hatch said. “Congratulations to her on this wonderful achievement.”

Shepherd joined the City of Costa Mesa in May of 1992 as an Accounting Specialist II. During that time, she has been responsible for multiple assignments, including payroll, payments of essential services and processing vendor documentation.

She worked on several big projects including payments to the San Joaquin Transportation Corridor Agency and Newport Mesa Unified School District developer fees. She assisted with the development of a desk manual for Accounts Payable and improved the storage of Accounts Payable documents through a new labeling system.

Prior to working at Costa Mesa City Hall, Shepherd served the country in the U.S. Air Force. While she was stationed in Germany she met her husband of 31 years.

Shepherd has a Bachelor of Science degree from Vanguard University, and on an interesting side note, for three years from 2006 to 2009, she worked part-time at Starbucks as a barista while still employed with the City.

In addition to honoring Shepherd, City Manager Hatch welcomed several new employees including Tammy Arrington, a new Office Specialist in the City Clerk’s office, Jasmine Vega, the Finance Department’s new Accounting Specialist II, Aracelli Guillen, the Parks & Community Services Department new Recreation Leader II and Nuvia Sandoval-Nava a new Recreation Leader III in the Parks & Community Services Department

He also congratulated Mike Fuentes on his promotion to Buyer for the Finance Department.

Mayor's Award goes to SOS founder Jean Forbath

Costa Mesa Mayor Katrina Foley presented Jean Forbath, a longtime charity leader and advocate for Costa Mesa's low-income communities, with the Mayor's Award at the Tuesday March 21 City Council meeting.

"It's caring people like Jean who are willing to sacrifice and share their selves that make our community so much stronger," Mayor Foley said. "For your tireless dedication in service to others, and for the amazing impact you have had on the lives of so many here in Costa Mesa, it is my honor and privilege to present you with the Mayor's Award."

In 1970, Forbath and her husband Frank founded Share Our Selves to care for those living in poverty in Orange County. SOS has since grown to become a model nonprofit organization providing the highest quality safety net services to the homeless and low-income populations in Orange County.

Forbath was also a founding board member of Save our Youth, or SOY and served as executive director and treasurer during her 22 years on the board.

"The time I have spent with SOS and Costa Mesa has been very rewarding," Forbath said. "Without the help of the city, it would be difficult to do what we do. I very thankful and honored to get this award."

Costa Mesa's Jack Hammett Sports Complex will be new home to Chargers Summer Training Camp

The Costa Mesa City Council gave unanimous approval Tuesday night March, 21 to enter into a 10-year use agreement with the Los Angeles Chargers to practice at the Jack Hammett Sports Complex during the NFL team's training camp this summer.

"We are pleased to have reached an agreement that will benefit both the Chargers and the Costa Mesa community at large while addressing the concerns of the neighbors," Mayor Pro tem Sandra Genis said. "Along with other fans, I'm looking forward to watching the Chargers in action on our fields."

The Chargers announced in January that the team is moving from San Diego to Los Angeles and also announced that it was moving its headquarters into the Hive office complex in Costa Mesa.

Chargers owner Dean Spanos spoke to the City Council and thanked City Manager Tom Hatch and the Costa Mesa staff for working hard to make this agreement happen. Spanos invited the community to come to the camp to meet the football players.

"We are very proud and very honored to be a part of Costa Mesa and call this our home," Spanos said. "This camp is an opportunity for everyone in Costa Mesa to come out and see what it's all about. I hope the whole city comes out."

Because the Jack Hammett Sports Complex fields are refurbished during the summer months, no youth sports teams will be displaced during the time the team will use the fields. Starting around mid-July, the team will hold its camp on

fields No. 3 and 4 and bring the turf on those fields up to NFL standards. Training camp will take place from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and will finish about mid August.

As part of this training camp agreement, the team will provide Costa Mesa with \$150,000 a year to use the site for a potential \$1.5 million over 10 years.

In addition, the Chargers will give the city \$50,000 to be used for a recently approved Mobile Recreation Program. Also, because field refurbishments need to happen as early as April, the Chargers have agreed to give the AYSO soccer organization a one-time payment of \$10,000 to assist with finding field space.

The city and the Chargers plan to work closely together to ensure there are minimal disruptions to the nearby homes and neighborhoods. Because the training camp will coincide with the annual OC Fair, the city and the team will also develop a comprehensive plan for managing parking and traffic in the area.

OCTA official gives update on 405 expansion project

Nicollete La Piana, a Community Relations Specialist from OCTA, discussed the details of the upcoming Interstate 405 Improvement Project at the Costa Mesa Chamber of Commerce's monthly Breakfast Boost on Thursday March 16.

[Click here to see her presentation.](#)

Of particular interest to Costa Mesa residents is the reconstruction of the Fairview Road overcrossing at the 405 Freeway, which will take place mid to late 2018. That work will result in the closure of some lanes in both directions as well as closures to freeway onramps. Costa Mesa Public Services will be working closely with OCTA to address those issues.

OCTA in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is widening the San Diego Freeway (I-405) between State Route 73 (SR-73) and Interstate 605 (I-605). The project will improve 16 miles of I-405 between the SR-73 freeway in Costa Mesa and I-605 near the L.A. County line.

The project includes adding one regular lane in each direction from Euclid Street to I-605 and making improvements to freeway entrances, exits, and bridges. It also will construct 405 Express Lanes, two lanes in each direction from SR-73 to I-605.

The new express lanes – incorporating the existing carpool lanes and connectors that opened in 2014 – will give solo drives the choice to speed up their commute for a toll, and carpoolers may ride in the lanes for free. Transportation improvements to freeways keep commuters and goods moving within Orange County and to destinations beyond.

With Orange County's population projected to increase dramatically by 2040, change is needed today to ensure tomorrow's mobility. Currently, the **405 Improvement Project** is one of OCTA's premiere projects.

As a part of the project, OCTA is conducting a robust community outreach program which includes sending email alerts, offering civic and community presentations and posting information on our website and social media platforms.

The OCTA team has also developed an extensive business

outreach program.

As the project moves into the construction phase in late 2017, OCTA wants to partner with businesses and employers within the project corridor.

The agency is continuously looking for opportunities to expand its efforts to those who are interested in receiving project updates.

OCTA offers one-on-one or brown-bag briefings/presentations, and can tailor materials for internal newsletters or other useful communication mediums.

The OCTA team does whatever it can to minimize the impacts to residents, businesses, as well as motorists. Please contact OCTA if you have any questions or special requests by emailing 405project@octa.net or calling 888.400.8994.

Website: www.octa.net/405Improvement

Follow on Facebook: www.facebook.com/405Improvement

Follow on Twitter: [@405Improvement](https://twitter.com/@405Improvement)

Parks and Recreation Commissioners get an update on master plan for open space in city

On Wednesday March 15, the Costa Mesa Parks and Recreation Commission was given an update on the city's proposed Open

Space Master Plan of Parks and Recreation.

The plan considers the following:

- Purpose and Process
- Existing Recreation Resources
- Needs Assessment
- Facility Recommendations
- Core Services and Pricing

To see the full report, [click here](#) for the presentation.