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TEMESCAL VALLEY

Murder trial starts in deaths of 3 boys

Prosecutor: Defendant ‘used his car as a weapon’ in 2020 crash that left 3 other teenagers injured

By Brian Rokos
brokos@scng.com

Anurag Chandra, incensed at being the victim of a teenage prank, was not content to run his agitators’ car off the road, a prosecutor said.

Instead, after briefly forcing the boys to stop, Chandra made a U-turn and tailed the six close

friends at speeds up to 99 mph before ramming their car at 88 mph on Temescal Canyon Road in Temescal Valley on Jan. 19, 2020, County Deputy District Attorney Kevin Beecham told jurors Tuesday during his opening statement in Chandra’s murder trial.

Their car careened into a tree and pole, killing Daniel Hawkins, 16, of Corona; Drake Ruiz, 16, of

Corona; and Jacob Ivascu, 16, of Riverside. The three others — Sergio Campusano, 18, Joshua Hawkins, 13, and Joshua Ivascu, 14 — suffered broken bones and other injuries.

“The kids didn’t have a chance,” Beecham said in Superior Court in Riverside, where family members of the boys attended the trial.

Chandra has pleaded not guilty to three counts of murder, three counts of attempted murder and sentencing enhancements of

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Anurag Chandra of Temescal Valley looks back toward members of the public as his trial begins in Riverside on Tuesday. Prosecutors say he killed three Corona teenagers by running them off the road in January 2020.

ANJALI SHARIF-PAUL
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

DEMOGRAPHICS

“The big picture is that Southern California’s growth is changing. While some of what we’ve seen during the past two years is on track with what we’ve seen over 20 years or so, COVID changed that.”

— Darin Chidsey, chief operating officer for the Southern California Association of Governments



WATCHARA PHOMICINDA — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

New figures from the Census Bureau show the population in Riverside County increased 2.3% from April 2020 to July 2022. Above, Logan Cruz, 3, sits on the shoulders of his dad, Eric Cruz, at the Southern California Railway Museum in Perris in 2021.

POPULATION TOTALS TAKE HIT

Pandemic sparked dramatic shifts in Southern California that amplified long-running trends. Still, long-term growth is forecast.

By Andre Mouchard
amouchard@scng.com

Los Angeles County lost more people during the height of the pandemic — residents who moved or died of COVID-19 — than any big county in the country, according to a new report from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Though some neighboring areas fared better, the sharp decline in the nation’s most populous county led to a regional population collapse last seen in Southern California during the aerospace crash of the early 1990s.

In all, the head count in Los Angeles County shrunk 2.9% during a 27-month window, from slightly more than 10 million on April 1, 2020, about the time the first wave of COVID-19 deaths were making news, to a population of just over 9.7 million on July 1, 2022, when the pandemic was less dire.

While some people who moved may have landed nearby, as the census shows county populations in the Inland Empire grew or held steady, the pandemic-era flight from Los Angeles, and a smaller drop-off in

SHIFTS » PAGE 6

SOCAL POPULATION SHIFTS

	4/1/20	7/1/21	7/1/22	CHANGE
L.A. COUNTY	10,014,042	9,811,842	9,721,138	- 2.9%
ORANGE COUNTY	3,186,979	3,161,005	3,151,184	- 1.1%
RIVERSIDE COUNTY	2,418,177	2,453,178	2,473,902	+ 2.3%
SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY	2,181,662	2,192,882	2,193,656	+0.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

DEFAMATION CASE

Deal is reached in Fox lawsuit

Network and voting company Dominion reach \$787 million settlement over election claims

By David Bauder, Randall Chase and Geoff Mulvihill
The Associated Press

WILMINGTON, DEL. » Fox News agreed Tuesday to pay Dominion Voting Systems nearly \$800 million to avert a trial in the voting machine company’s lawsuit that would have exposed how the network promoted lies about the 2020 presidential election.

The stunning settlement emerged just as opening statements were supposed to begin, abruptly ending a case that had embarrassed Fox News over several months and raised the possibility that network founder Rupert Murdoch and stars such as Tucker Carlson and Sean Hannity would have to testify publicly.

“The truth matters. Lies have consequences,” Dominion lawyer Justin Nelson told reporters
FOX » PAGE 6

U.S. SENATE

Republicans object to replacing Feinstein on Judiciary panel

By Mary Clare Jalonick
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON » Republicans blocked a Democratic request to temporarily replace California Sen. Dianne Feinstein on the Senate Judiciary Committee Tuesday, leaving Democrats with few options for moving some of President Joe Biden’s stalled judicial nominees.

South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, the top Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee, objected to a resolution offered by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer that would have allowed another senator to take Feinstein’s place
FEINSTEIN » PAGE 5

SANTA ANA

Trial begins for man accused of igniting massive Holy fire in 2018

By Sean Emery
semery@scng.com

A long-running dispute between two neighbors among the rustic cabins of Holy Jim Canyon led one of the men to intentionally ignite what became the massive Holy fire that burned

through more than 23,000 acres in Orange and Riverside counties, a prosecutor told jurors Tuesday.

Alleged threats made by Forrest Clark toward his neighbor, along with potentially self-incriminating comments a raving Clark made to investigators who

were looking into the source of the wildfire, are at the center of an arson trial that began Tuesday in an Orange County Superior Court-house in Santa Ana.

Deputy District Attorney Dominic Bello told jurors that Clark threatened his

CLARK » PAGE 9



Forrest Clark, right, and his attorney, Alternate Defender Jason Phlaum, listen to the prosecution’s opening statement in Clark’s arson trial in Santa Ana on Tuesday. Clark is accused of igniting the 2018 Holy fire.

MINDY SCHAUER
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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