

SERVICE



PHOTOS: BILL ALKOFE — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

World War II veteran Jerry Keller, 94, of Garden Grove is honored Tuesday with a party at Calvary Chapel Pacific Coast in Westminster.

HOSPICE PROGRAM HONORS WWII VET

Celebration of life a wish come true for Garden Grove resident

By Jonathan Winslow
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WESTMINSTER » Sitting in his wheelchair, wrapped in a blanket decorated with the American flag, Gerald Keller received a standing ovation as he was presented with a pin honoring his service in World War II.

The Fellowship Hall at Calvary Chapel Pacific Coast in Westminster was filled with Keller's fellow

veterans, friends, family and his favorite food, tacos, for his celebration of life party on Tuesday, a wish from the 94-year-old Garden Grove resident.

Keller, now in the end stage of renal disease, ran a supply line deep behind enemy lines for Merrill's Marauders, a special operations Army unit responsible for raids against the Japanese.

At Keller's request, two of his

VETERAN » PAGE 8



Hospice volunteer veteran Richard Bergquist puts a pin on World War II Navy vet Bob Meyer, 98, who was honored during a celebration of life party at Calvary Chapel Pacific Coast.

COURTS

Chiseled: Sculptor finds work copied all over O.C.

Donald Wakefield wins suit against developer, but his detective work is not done, he says

By Penny Arévalo
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Donald Wakefield remembers the first time he got a close look at one of his sculptures displayed by a prominent if controversial Newport Beach developer.

It was 2008, and he hadn't seen the work he created in collaboration with a colleague in 1992 — unceremoniously titled "Untitled" — in 16 years. It was originally given as a gift to the colleague's son in Illinois, and Wakefield thought to himself, maybe the recipient had sold it or died.

There it was, in Newport Beach, 50 miles from Wakefield's hometown of Rancho Cucamonga, 2,000 miles from Chicago.

Fast forward a couple of years, and the local friend who alerted him to the Newport Beach sighting spotted the piece again — this time in Irvine.

Again, Wakefield made the

ARTIST » PAGE 10

BOATING



MARK RIGHTMIRE — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The crowd gathers as kayaks are auctioned off at the boat auction conducted by the city of Newport Beach on Friday morning at the Orange County Sheriff's Harbor Patrol office.

Bargains sail in with boat auction

Deals on kayaks, paddleboards and more at Newport event

By Laylan Connelly
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Kate Eastman couldn't help but do a little happy dance.

The Newport resident had her eye on an 11-foot Hobie stand-up paddleboard, a light blue beauty that she was dreaming of cruising around the harbor on later in the afternoon. Other hopefuls shot

their hands up and the price inched higher, but she wasn't going to be outbid.

"I'm so jazzed," she said after the auctioneer yelled "sold" following her bid of \$320, a steal for the Hobie board that some whispered was worth closer to \$1,000.

Eastman came away a winner from the boat auction, Friday morning, at the Orange County Sheriff's Harbor Pa-

trol headquarters on the glistening Newport Harbor.

Auction participants with pockets full of cash came looking for deals ranging from SUPs and kayaks to small boats. Some of the vessels were in decent condition; others were falling apart. Most items up for bid were from the Harbor Patrol impound, boats found aban-

AUCTION » PAGE 5

COURTS

Placentia ex-official gets 25 years in fiscal case

Michael Minh Nguyen embezzled more than \$5 million

By Sean Emery
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SANTA ANA » A former city of Placentia financial-services manager was sentenced Friday to 25 years in prison for embezzling more than \$5 million from the financially strapped municipality.

Michael Minh Nguyen accepted a court offer requiring that he admit to dozens of felonies, including those for em-

bezzlement and money laundering, and agree to pay about \$10 million in fines and \$2.6 million in restitution.

"You understand you owe the city of Placentia this money?" Orange County Superior Court Judge Gary S. Paer asked Nguyen about the restitution, noting that the accord would be "set in stone."

"Yes," Nguyen answered.

Deputy District Attorney Marc Labreche has helped the city recover around \$3 million of the embezzled money. Insurance at one point was expected to bring in \$1 million more.

The prosecutor noted that Nguyen, 34, had taken advantage of a time of turnover in Placentia's financial-services department, which he was running on an interim basis. He was arrested in April.

Placentia City Administrator
NGUYEN » PAGE 10

CLAIM FILED

Teen seeks damages in scuffle in which cop fired gun

Anaheim police failed to investigate properly, family alleges

By Kelly Puente
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KellyPuenteOC on Twitter

ANAHEIM » The city is facing possible litigation from a 13-year-old boy and his parents who say Anaheim police failed to help him and wrongfully detained him after his scuffle with an off-duty Los Angeles policeman last month.

The teenager and his parents, Alma Jimenez and John Dorscht, have each filed personal-injury claims against the city alleging that the boy was attacked Feb. 21 by Kevin Ferguson during which the off-duty officer fired his gun downward.

In the claims against the city, the family says Anaheim police failed to properly investigate and consider witness statements from at least 17 other students.

Police quickly handcuffed the boy and detained him without reading him his rights and then failed to provide any details of any injuries to his worried parents, the claim says.

The boy was released from juvenile hall the next day after the Orange County District Attorney's Office declined to file charges at that time.

The claim says the teen was the "victim of the brutal attack and shooting of Ferguson," and then "became the victim" of the Anaheim Police Department.

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Veteran

FROM PAGE 1

friends, also World War II veterans, were honored with him at the ceremony, though only one was able to attend.

Making sure Keller and other aging veterans know their sacrifices will be remembered is one of the ways the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization's We Honor Veterans program addresses the special needs military men and women may have as they reach their final days.

Mental and emotional scars carried in silence for decades can painfully bubble to the surface as veterans enter hospice, making the experience even more overwhelming, said Michelle Wulfestieg, executive director of the Southern California Hospice Foundation, which planned Tuesday's party.

"Veterans are very stoic. They do not want to show when they're in pain. They put up this front, which makes it challenging at times to provide the comfort that they need," said Pam Punzalan, administrator of Companion Hospice Orange.

The We Honor Veterans program, founded in 2010 in collaboration with the Department of Veteran Affairs, arranges training for hospice caretakers on these unique challenges and provides services, such as Keller's party, that ensure hospice is as comfortable



BILL ALKOEFER — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Jerry Keller's daughter says the party "was his one time that all his friends, family and relatives were able to be together for a last hello and goodbye."

as possible for veterans.

"The party was a blessing," Keller's daughter, Nancy Hoyt, said. "That was his one time that all his friends, family and relatives were able to be together for a last hello and goodbye."

Keller's health has declined in the days following the party.

"To have that compan-

ionship was tremendously important to him," Hoyt said of the party. "He's seen a lot of the world and had an amazing life. It's one to be celebrated."

The party was held during the usual meeting of Calvary Chapel Pacific Coast's At Ease Ministry. Keller has been a member of the ministry since

its founding about seven years ago, scarcely missing a Tuesday meeting since.

Jerry Pugh, leader of the ministry, said he has seen all kinds of veterans over the years, but Keller is a textbook example of what "the greatest generation" looks like.

"They've seen it all, and they won't talk to you about

what they've experienced," Pugh said. "But they know what you've experienced, and they know how to comfort you."

Tuesday was a celebration of Keller's life, but it was also the start of a farewell. Pugh said he'll miss Keller's gentle presence — though he has slowed down recently, Keller still has a

way of making everyone feel welcome, even without saying anything, Pugh said.

"These guys sacrificed everything to give us what we've got, and you can't be sorry for that," Pugh said. "I would never trade all the time I've had to spend with that man. He's a great man."

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Teen

FROM PAGE 1

A claim is required before a lawsuit can be filed against a city. The boy and his parents have a pending lawsuit against Ferguson and have said the suit will be amended to add the cities of Anaheim and Los Angeles if those cities reject claims.

It's unclear if such a claim has been filed with the city of Los Angeles.

The parents and son are seeking an unspecified amount in damages. Their attorney, Elena Medina Torres, could not be reached for comment.

"We have received the claims and are reviewing them," Anaheim spokesman Mike Lyster said in a statement Friday. "We need to do our own review of the incident and await input from the Orange County district attorney before coming to any determination."

The family says the boy was walking home from school with other students when Ferguson, standing outside of his home drinking a beer, became irate after a girl walked on his lawn.

Ferguson allegedly yelled at the girl, prompting the boy to say to the officer he should "ask the student in a nicer manner," the family alleges. The incident escalated into a scuffle captured on video that drew national attention.

In the video, Ferguson, in plain clothes, can be seen struggling to hold on to the teen as other boys rush at the off-duty officer. At one point, Ferguson reaches into his waistband, pulls out a handgun and fires a shot.

Ferguson's lawyer, Larry Hanna, has said the officer feared for his safety and believed that the boy might have a weapon.

Two other teens involved in the incident also have pending personal-injury claims against the city.

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