

SPECIAL ISSUE: IMMIGRATION



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CRUEL SUMMER

Community protests
show support for
undocumented residents

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BEHIND THE COVER



People in cars were equally involved in the protests with drivers honking their horns while passengers were hanging out of the windows with flags and signs

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el Don is produced by Santa Ana College students enrolled in Journalism and Media Studies courses. Its purpose is to provide the campus and community with a quality, reliable news source, and to provide instruction in multimedia news production. For more information visit sac.edu/JAMS

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REPORTING IS AN ACT OF RESISTANCE

After grabbing lunch with a close friend, we headed to the June 11 protest against the raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement on Fourth Street. We drove past City Hall and saw armored vehicles posted around barricades and police officers in tactical gear hanging on the side of a police SUV.

When we eventually made our way through the crowd of picket signs, flags and chanting, I picked up my camera from around my neck and looked through the viewfinder. Instead of focusing on the breakfast restaurants and bars that I've been to with my friends, I focused on a National Guard Humvee. Faster than my camera could focus, I thought, "This shit is real."

As the realization began to set in, I felt my face get hot. Not because of the tear gas or pepper balls the Santa Ana Police Department had used against protesters a few days prior, but because these armed soldiers and masked agents were here uninvited in the city I call home.

Since ICE showed up in our city four months ago, residents have been helping those who have been targeted in any way they can. With nearly a quarter of the population being noncitizens, the act of reporting feels like an act of resistance during this time.

From coffee carts raising funds for mutual aid



groups to people celebrating their culture and heritage through events like the Chicano Moratorium and Fiestas Patrias, the stories in this issue show how the community responded to the federal presence in our city.

That's what sets local newsrooms like ours apart from mainstream outlets and social media accounts that post emotionally driven clickbait.

For the entirety of the summer, our city's stories were told through viral social media clips seen around the country that don't tell the whole story. The best and most impactful reporting comes from those who are on the ground as history is happening.

We are still here when the dust settles, and because we live, learn and spend our money here, we can do what other news outlets can't.

We can humanize heavy topics like immigration. We can give faces and names to the statistics, and in these pages, you'll get to meet the people.

el Don will continue to tell our community's stories because they are our stories to tell. And if we don't, no one else will.

Geovanni Esparza
Editor-In-Cheif

NEWS

A FEDERAL PRESENCE

The National Guard arrived in Santa Ana on June 10 to protect the two federal buildings in the city. Troops are seen here in front of the Ronald Reagan Federal Building on June 11.



BY THE NUMBERS: SANTA ANA

A new federal presence

As a response to the protests against immigration raids, the **National Guard** was stationed in Downtown Santa Ana, in front of the two federal buildings on June 10. By mid July, the National Guard had left the city, but troops continue to be deployed across the country.

Supreme Court ruled last month that immigration agents are allowed to stop people based on:

- Apparent race or ethnicity
- Type of work
- Speaking Spanish or English with an accent
- Being spotted at certain locations



42%

Percentage of Santa Ana residents born outside the U.S.

The arrest that went viral

Narciso Barranco, a 48-year-old Tustin landscaper and father of three U.S. Marines was violently arrested and detained by immigration agents in front of an IHOP on Edinger Avenue in Santa Ana. A viral video showed Barranco being beaten by the agents.

CAR WASHES TARGETED



In Santa Ana and neighboring cities, day laborers in front of Home Depots and car wash employees have been targeted by immigration agents.

An immigration raid at **Bristol Car Wash** on South Bristol Street on Sept. 14 resulted in **two employees** being detained.

Around **250** car wash workers were detained in L.A. and OC in June according to **CLEAN Carwash Worker Center**.

ICE agents continued to be seen conducting targeted and non-targeted enforcement around Santa Ana with community volunteers providing rapid response.

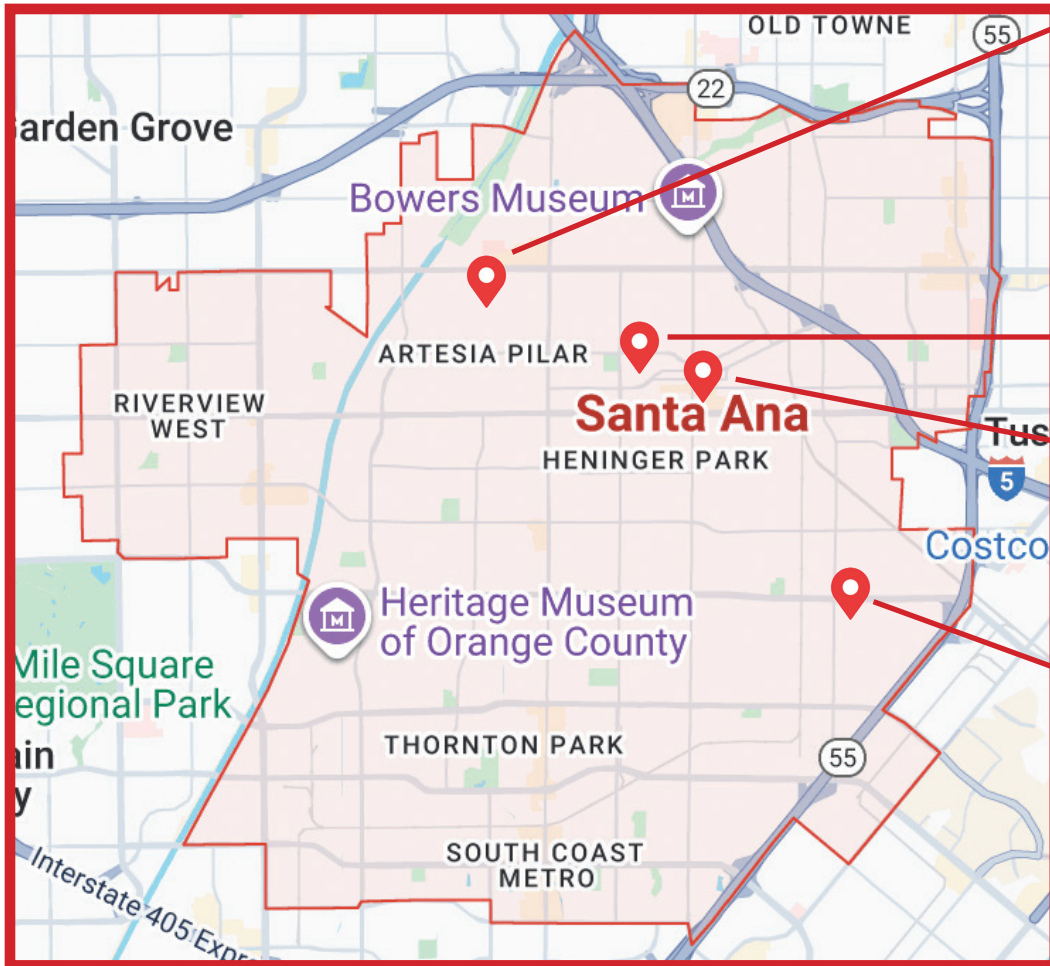
COMMUNITY SERVICE

Santa Ana College's **Legal Studies Department** hosts legal clinics with the Community Legal Information, Resource and Referral Clinic.

2

Federal buildings in Santa Ana's Civic Center include a courthouse and an office building for Department of Homeland Security.

Map of Santa Ana



Santa Ana College hosted a **Community Defense Conference** and legal aid clinics

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, ICE Field Office & Ronald Reagan Federal Building and United States Courthouse

Downtown Santa Ana where the anti-ICE protests took place

IHOP on Edinger Avenue where **Narciso Barranco** was arrested

DO YOU FEEL SAFE ON CAMPUS?



At the start of the 2025 fall semester, *el Don* reporters asked students if they were impacted by the federal presence in their community, if it impacted their decision to come to SAC and if they feel safe on campus.

Student Voices

I was really anxious about going to college overall but also with everything going on it was really terrifying.

— Alex Salgado
Teaching

[My] friends with parents who are also immigrants they've been in a lot of stress and a lot of horror.

— Andrew Hernandez
Fine Arts

The heritage of where Santa Ana is and how heavy it is with the community. I think it's a great place. And I've seen emails [from SAC] that I've gotten where they say if you need help or anything that we're here.

— Andre Rubalcaba
Fire Tech



ACTIVISM MEETS EDUCATION

Community organizers discuss and provide ICE defense resources

Words and Photos by Ash Mojica

A room full of organizers, leaders and active community members listened intently and engaged in important dialogue about how to defend themselves and their neighbors against U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Santa Ana City Councilmember Johnathan Hernandez organized the ICE Community Defense Conference at Santa Ana College Aug. 22 in direct response to the high presence of ICE agents in the city and its neighboring communities.

The conference included workshops led by community organizers, a “know your rights” presentation and a panel of community leaders, including city councilmembers. The event saw a strong turnout, with the community defense panel extending the conference by an extra hour. “There

needs to be buy-in from the community that immigrants are welcome and that they’re going to be protected and fought for,” said Hernandez. “Santa Ana College has been a great partner in wanting to open their doors to us.”

While no official partnership was outlined between the college and Hernandez, SAC’s public information officer, Ethereal Reyes, shared via email that holding events like the conference and hosting legal clinics helps keep students informed.

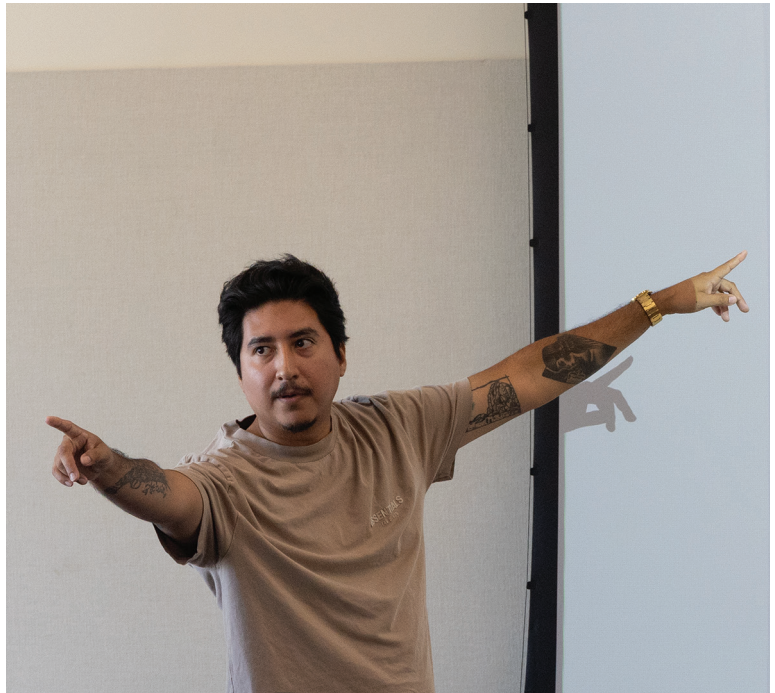
“We must recognize that we build the culture of our college, and that is a big responsibility,” said Reyes.

The college has acted as a resource for the immigrant community for years through other resources, mainly

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Workshops

Sessions held by local Orange County leaders included one on public records by The Southlander, digital organizing by Sana Sana Santa Ana and mental health and wellness by Latinx Parenting.



▲ Investigative journalist Ben Camacho from The Southlander hosted a workshop on how to access public records.



◀ Leslie Priscilla from Latinx Parenting hosted a mental health and wellness workshop.

“My office felt that institutions like Santa Ana College should be places where community discussions are happening regularly. Santa Ana College is the heart of education for us.”

— *Councilmember Johnathan Hernandez*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

those provided through the Legal Studies Department’s legal clinics.

“We’re more in the business of empowerment,” said associate professor of legal studies Kim Smith. “Let’s connect with groups like OC Rapid Response, Legal Aid Society, CAIR and the Public Law Center, and with those groups help our students find legal resources.”

Smith noticed that in the last two years, the demand for social justice legal work has skyrocketed. The Community Legal Information, Resource and Referral Clinic at SAC facilitates community-based legal clinics for students and the community. The student-led legal clinics bring in service providers and supply legal resources and information.

“SAC’s mission statement mentions empowerment, and especially on a campus like Santa Ana College, we’re all about empowering community members,” said Smith.

Community Defense Panel

- ***Carlos Perea from The Harbor Institute***
- ***Community organizer Tsui Vasquez***
- ***Councilmember Benjamin Vazquez***
- ***Councilmember Johnathan Hernandez***
- ***Ray Christopher Diaz from Francisco Torres Center***
- ***Sandra De Anda from OC Rapid Response Network***
- ***Vice president of Santa Ana Unified School District Katelyn Brazer Acevez***

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a brown jacket over a grey t-shirt, is pointing her right index finger towards a camera operator. The camera operator is a woman with dark hair, wearing a white top and a blue cable, is focused on a professional video camera mounted on a tripod. The background is dark and out of focus, showing other people in a dimly lit room. The entire image is framed by a thick red border.

FEATURES

FILM FEST

Santa Ana College Student Trustee Cecilia Lorenzo is a film and TV major. Her movie *The Hearts Mirage* was shown at SAC's Student Film Festival Sept. 26.



How spiritual Santaneros are using curanderia to cope with ICE raids

By Talan Garcia

A City Under Watch

In Santa Ana the people's fear of ICE has materialized. Undocumented Santaneros have been seen being racially profiled and detained while waiting for the bus, buying groceries and walking out of immigration court. The pain in the city fills the air.

In a time where it's unsure what waits outside, many Latinos are relying on personal curanderia practices to protect themselves from the agents haunting the streets.

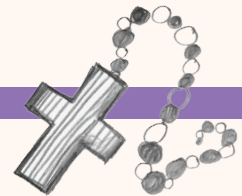
What is Curanderismo?

Curanderismo is a holistic practice that mixes a variety of indigenous, Catholic and African healing and spirituality. Passed down generations—by mostly Mexican women—it treats the body, mind or spirit, since they are all believed to be connected.



Physical healing with herbs, teas, massages (sobadas) and remedios caseros (home remedies).

Emotional healing through prayer, ritual and comforting the heart during grief, fear or anxiety.



Spiritual healing by cleansing negative energy, lighting candles, offering protection and connecting with ancestors or the divine.

The energy in Santa Ana's streets feels heavier than ever. Taking matters into their own hands, 30 bike riders, a rollerskater and a bright blue Dodge Challenger packed tight with moms and their babies rode through Civic Center under the full moon, working to cleanse both the immigration courthouse and federal building with loads of burning sage.

The sea of yellow-vested riders stopped at each building, wafting smoke and praying for all those affected. In the eyes of many locals, this is more than local politics, but the face of a spiritual war. The fight between good versus evil is believed to be never ending, just wearing different masks. It's a battle that the curanderas will fight forever.

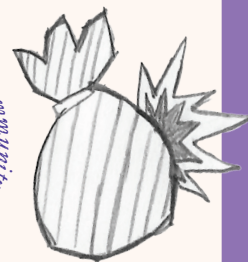


"That fight has always been about conquering and genocide. Now it's gotten into our politics. Demonic entities use people by giving them power. Most wars and atrocities have happened because of the misinterpretation of religion. This is supposed to be Christ nation, but seriously, find something Christian about this administration. Because at the end of the day who killed Jesus? It was the state."

—Perla Dionicio

Rosa Celestino Bernal, SAC Librarian and community organizer

Lately I've carried a medicine bag with me so that I feel some sort of protection because I think that there is darker energy around... It's hard to disconnect from that but I'm manifesting what I wanna see.

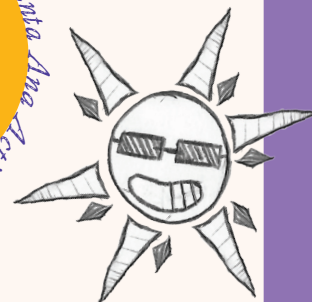


Perla Dionicio, local activist

For a racing mind, walk around and look at the sky. Acknowledge that you're alive and don't let yourself be consumed by it. Carry your tobacco and pray to the land... Go to the beach and watch the waves. It reminds you that everything that starts will eventually end.

Adriana Alvarez, Co-founder of Santa Ana Active Streets

Since this is a spiritual war, you need to reconnect with the elements. For me that means doing my yoga, sunbathing and just absorbing nature's energy. Oh, and see God everywhere.



Kiss the Revolution

Local market stages punk show against ICE

Words by Tonali Un
Design by Brandon Rowley



Once a month in downtown Santa Ana, amidst the seemingly quiet streets, the Punk Rock Market appears. The Punk Rock Market is an event that features local bands, djs, handmade vendors and more. You can find anything

from clothing to press on nails to patches displaying iconic punk figures. The market has become a staple for punks from all walks of life to connect over the culture, chat about the music and just have a good time.

However, this past month the market was different. Instead of the usual laid back atmosphere, feelings of determination, purpose and lastly anger took the main stage. Many of the stands were leading fundraisers or protests, in direct response to the recent ICE raids that turned Santa Ana's lively and fast-paced community to empty streets that feel both terrified and full of rage.

The raids began approximately 5 months after President Donald J. Trump took office and have truly shaken Santaneros to a level of severity never seen before.

"What we are seeing is the erosion of people's civil

protections, the people who our federal government sees as disposable," said Sandra De Anda, the director of policy for the Orange County Rapid Response Network. The Orange County Rapid Response Network, also known as OCRRN, is a community defense project led by local members to resist ICE enforcement.

They have received over 4,000 calls reporting ICE activity since Trump's inauguration and often work alongside Orange County officials, including Santa Ana city councilmembers Jessie Lopez and Benjamin Vasquez.

Following these dehumanizing and violent raids, many members of the Orange County punk scene felt as if it was their duty to do something. Punk is often defined as a loud, fast-moving and aggressive form of rock music but in reality, punk is a counterculture. It is a counter culture rooted in anti establishment fundamentals, a do-it-yourself approach and has a long history of revolting against oppressors. Many members of the SoCal punk scene found themselves in punk because these ethos related to them, creating a safe space within their adolescent years.

"I want to do something about ICE enforcements in what you can say a punk manner because the community is very forward with our ideologies. Seeing families torn apart in such violent ways upsets me, its personal to me.

I have dealt with ICE and the Corrupt Government from a young age and now as an adult, at 19 years old, I have this feeling of responsibility to stand up for those who can't," said Manny, a member of the scene in Orange County.

Greg Chacon, an educator of the Santa Ana Unified School District and member of the bands Castillo, Repeat Offender and Artificial Joy, has considered himself a member of the scene since he was 14. "I feel like I've always had these things in my mind but it showed me that there was a community of like-minded people and when there is a community of like-minded people, it is easier to formulate your thoughts. Not in an echo chamber way but in an enlightening way. Politics and punk go hand in hand," said Chacon. Along with providing a sense of community, punk has repeatedly shown that it can also make a difference, most recently in aiding affected and at-risk locals of the ICE actions. Benefit shows, vendor buyouts, protests and grocery drop offs are a few.

Lizz, an organizer of the Punk Rock Market and of the Really Really Free Market in Anaheim, has done multiple vendor buyouts and grocery drop offs over the past few weeks with collected funds. She decided to use the Punk Rock Market social media accounts to share and fundraise instead of her

personal accounts to help give people direction in ways they could help. The punk community not only sticks to aid but also shows up on the frontlines. Many members of the scene found themselves at protests to send a clear message condemning the terrorization and unlawful deportations of community members. "In L.A. there are thousands and thousands of people at those protests and every two seconds, there was someone from the punk scene I knew," said Chacon.

Santa Ana was one of the many cities across the nation to make headlines due to the protests which began shortly after the president's inauguration but were in full force over a span of two weeks since ICE activity began in the city. There were families and people of all ages with an overwhelming number of the attendants being youth. "Going to these protests isn't only a must but it's a way for us to express solidarity with communities like these and fight against systemic oppression," said Sam, a teenager who has participated in recent protests.

"Punk has always and will always be about standing up for what's right and that's what we have been doing and will continue to do so."



Coffee without ICE

**How community
coffee businesses supported
immigrants navigating ICE activity**

By Ash Mojica



Impacted by the presence of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, residents of Santa Ana and other neighboring cities looked to one another for support. Early June 2025 marked the beginning of ICE activity, sparking panic and fear from the streets to homes. Within a week, community members organized protests and workshops to stand up in solidarity with immigrants. While some marched, others, like business owners, used their platforms to share critical information and help the cause. Not everyone had the ability to take to the streets and protest. Coffee businesses like carts, pop-ups and mobile shops have taken the lead in using their businesses to lend a hand to those affected by ongoing ICE activity. Small business owners found ways to serve and support their community.

CAFÉ CORDOVA

A line stretched out in front of a coffee cart as people grabbed their morning coffee and posted to their social media. Over the summer, Café Cordova hosted Sip in Solidarity, an event in which the coffee cart donated a portion of its sales to the OC Rapid Response Network, a non-profit and grassroots organization that works to respond to immigration enforcement in Orange County. Café Cordova works toward being a safe space to support immigrant families.

Driven to give back to the community, team member Clarissa Cordova stated, "Other small businesses will join us in prioritizing the well-being of our communities. I challenge the community to hold us and other businesses accountable...see who stands tall for their community and isn't just profiting off our culture without giving back."

The event drew in a big crowd with Santa Ana Councilmember Benjamin Vazquez also attending.

"I saw a big line at the Cordova Café. People are open to give. People are donating to buy out street vendors so they could go home and not be on the street," said Vasquez.

"Small businesses like ours can play a vital role in helping the community by staying true to their roots and values. For us, that means honoring our Mexican heritage and standing in solidarity with our community."

— Clarissa Cordova

"[The community] is supporting. They want to make sure you know that we all stay intact and our families stay together. It affects one. It affects us all. We feel it."

— Councilmember Benjamin Vazquez

Spin Boy Coffee

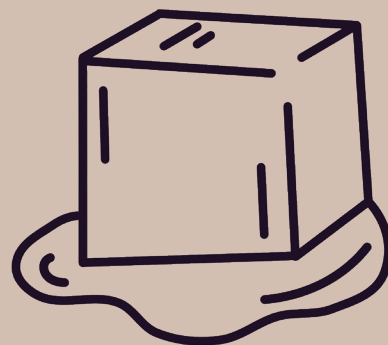
ICE didn't only impact Santa Ana neighborhoods. Spin Boy Coffee helped its community in West Anaheim. The family-run business started as an idea by Rogelio Gonzalez, who runs the shop with the help of his mom and sister. The business has a large menu focusing on Mexican specialties. This summer, it helped the immigrant community by donating a share of its profits to multiple organizations.

"It didn't feel right selling stuff when all this stuff was going on. But, I did want to help out in a way. We just wanted to give a voice because, as individuals, we don't really have a voice, but through Spin Boy, we do," said Gonzalez.

They donated 100% of their schmear sales of one week to CHIRLA, 100% of banana bread sales another week to Border Angels and 10% of every sale another week to buy out a street vendor's merchandise in Anaheim.

"A lot of these people who come are a majority Latino. They're being affected. They're the ones that are supporting us. It's good for us to support each other through all this."

— Rogelio Gonzalez



Hasta Mañana Coffee and Brewers Coffee

On June 13, two small coffee businesses, Hasta Mañana Coffee and Brewers Coffee, set up a coffee and baked goods sale at Good Daze Tattoo in Downtown Santa Ana. The proceeds of the sale went to GoFundMe accounts of families impacted by ICE. The total money raised was \$1,828. Brewers Coffee made the coffee, while Hasta Mañana Coffee made the baked goods.

"Brewers Coffee Co. and I have been super active with everything going on with ICE and how families were being affected. But we wanted to help more, so we teamed up to do a sale ourselves," said Brianna Briseño of Hasta Mañana Coffee. "We did a lot better than we expected and were so grateful to be given the opportunity to give back to our community."

IN THE STREET

FREE SPEECH

Protestors gathered on the corner of Harbor and Katella in Anaheim Sept. 21 to protest Disney following its suspension of Jimmy Kimmel. They faced pushback from Disney-goers offended by the protestors.



STANDING UP FOR THE CITY

Hundreds marched, danced and protested within days of federal immigration raids



BY GEOVANNI ESPARZA

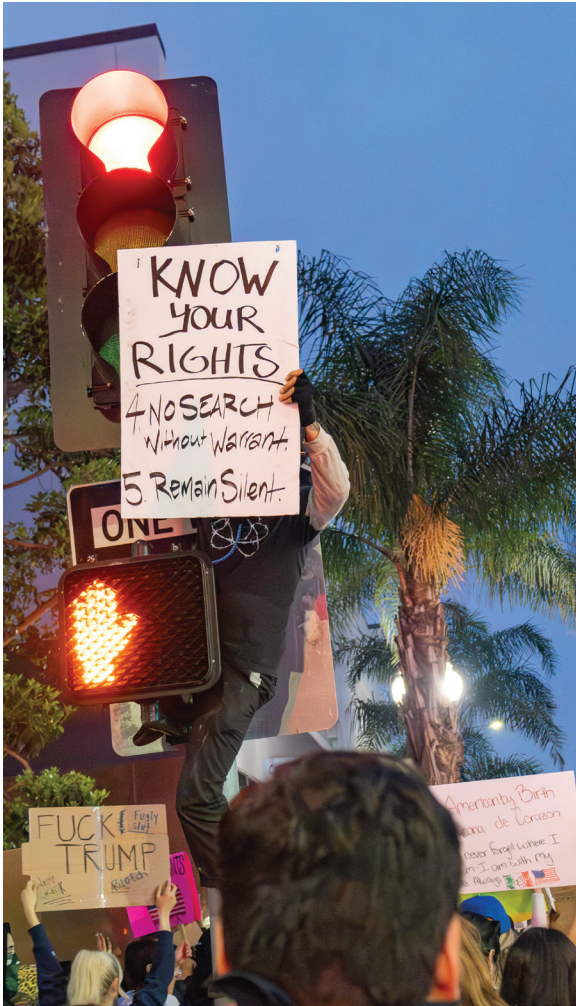
A sea of Mexican and United States flags waved back and forth, with picket signs and middle fingers held high as people chanted “ICE out of OC” and “ICE out of Santa Ana” over quinceañera music in Downtown Santa Ana on June 11.

In the early evening, several hundred people took to the streets to peacefully protest the ICE raids targeting members of their communities.

Protesters shouted anecdotes about sacrifices made by family members, along with voicing frustrations with the current administration.

The crowd walked through DTSA, stopped at the Old Orange County Courthouse, and then marched through the surrounding streets late into the night.

By 12:30 a.m., the remaining protesters were lingering at the intersection of Main Street and Fourth Street, where Santa Ana Police Department fired rubber bullets without warning to disperse the crowd.



After the protesters left the Old Orange County Courthouse, they began to march down the major streets in the area.

Photo by Geovanni Esparza



People showed their support from parking garages, homes and high-rise apartments along the routes the protesters marched.

Photo by Lizeth Martinez



People wore protective gear in case police used tear gas and rubber bullets.

Photo by Lizeth Martinez





▲ In the evening, the march moved out of Downtown into the surrounding neighborhoods.
Photo by Giovanni Esparza



The line of people marching down Main Street was over a mile long.
Photo by Giovanni Esparza

The protest moved from Fourth Street to the old Orange County Courthouse, where people chanted, danced and played music.
Photo by Talan Garcia



CHICANO MORATORIUM

THE FIGHT CONTINUES FIFTY-FIVE YEARS LATER

Words and Photos
by Ash Mojica

In the lot of El Centro Cultural De México, dancers drew in a crowd.



Thousands of people marched through East L.A. and demanded justice for the Latino troops drafted and killed during the Vietnam War at the Chicano Moratorium 55 years ago.

On Aug. 30, the Community Service Organization Orange County held its own Chicano Moratorium.

Members of the community watched original music, poetry and dance performances at El Centro Cultural De México. Organizers also hosted a march that led attendees to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Santa Ana Field Office.

This year marked the first time the organization put on a larger-scale event.

Active members of their community and best friends, Michelle Sanchez and Bianca DiVerde, attended the event.

"It's something to find community," said Sanchez. "Especially in little places like this, where it may not be as uplifted as in big news media [or] big influencers talking about it, but this is where you find the most genuine opportunities to learn."

Although the Chicano Moratorium happened almost 60 years ago, CSO OC members see parallels between past and present struggles. "It is important to commemorate that legacy of Chicano struggle and the same things that they were fighting for and advocating for, we see the parallels today," said co-chair of the Immigration Community in CSO OC Rain Mendoza.

The organization issued a list of demands as part of their Chicano Moratorium. Some demands included ICE out of Santa Ana and ending U.S. aid to Israel.

Mendoza emphasized the importance of hosting the event in Santa Ana, a city where 42% of the residents are foreign-born and 77% are Hispanic or Latino.

Poet Gustavo Hernandez, a Santa Ana author, saw the event as a good way to unify the community's voice.

Hernandez and fellow Santa Ana author Iuri M. Lara read from their poetry collection. The crowd listened intently as both authors delivered passionate readings of their work.

Santa Ana musician Francis Co. performed a song titled "ICE out of Santa Ana." The musician said, "It was important for me to play it here in the city that I live in, and work in and love because it is a shared experience we are all having right now."

Alongside the musician,

the hip-hop duo Kozmik Force performed songs that represented the Chicano and Indigenous struggle. Their songs synchronized attendees into chants of "Long live Gaza."

Jag Arreola, who makes up half of Kozmik Force alongside Native Threat, used his voice to speak

"A lot of [the demands] are very similar. It's still anti-war, still anti-police brutality and still pro-immigrant."

—Rain Mendoza

up for issues affecting Palestine and Yemen. "It's all related," said Arreola.

In the middle of the event's performances, organizers gathered attendees to march to the USCIS Santa Ana Field Office. People held up signs condemning ICE, demanding

police accountability and justice for Noe Rodriguez, who was killed by two Santa Ana police officers in 2024.

In front of the office, organizers led chants against the Santa Ana Police Department and ICE. Speakers also grabbed their microphones to speak up for their community.

Saturday's event ended with vibrant dances and loud music that invited community members and organizers to the dance floor.

According to DiVerde, these events are also great ways for the community to engage with politics.

"It's a really good mixture of what it is to have a healthy engagement with politics, without it always being so heavy, because it gets really draining," said DiVerde. "It's getting the information but also being able to recharge at the same time."

One of the final performances of the event included ballet folklórico. ▶

“For me, Santa Ana has been at the center of so much activism that we need to make ourselves visible and show that there’s power here in the city, these spaces and the community.”

—Gustavo Hernandez

Orange County Poet Laureate Gustavo Hernandez read a handful of original poems inspired by Santa Ana. ▶



¡Estamos Aquí!

**Despite fears of ICE raids,
Fiestas Patrias remains a
colorful celebration.**

Words by Gia Santolalla
Design by Kaitlyn Han

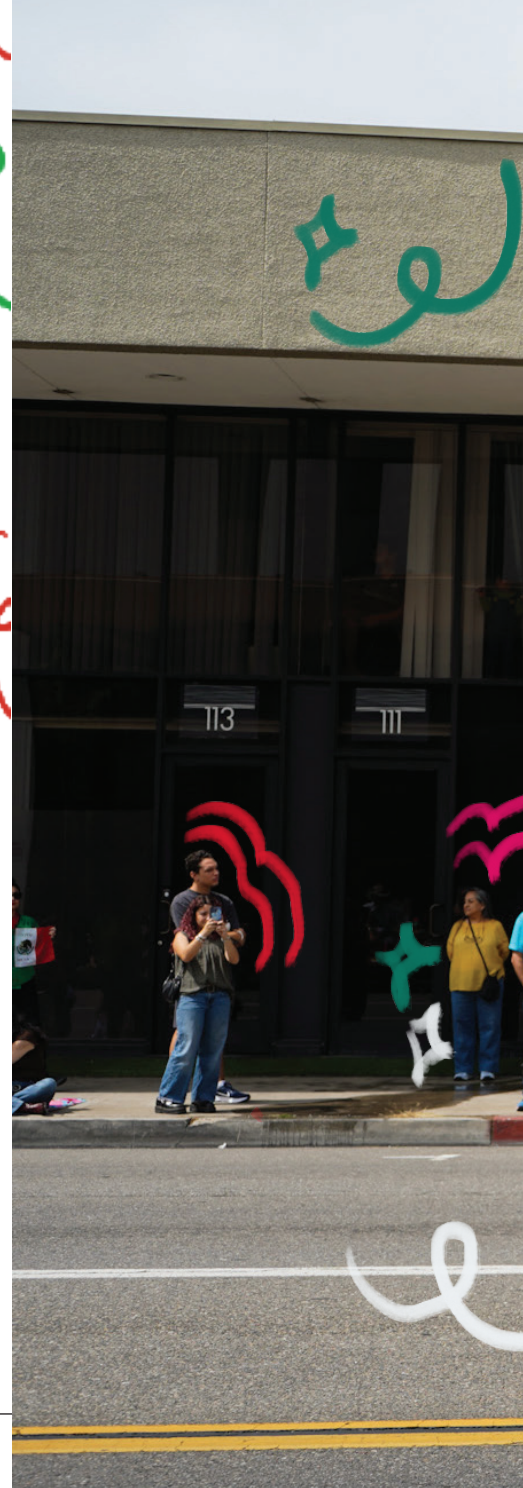




Photo by Alex Helguero

A range of Latino communities from Guatemala, to El Salvador to Mexico, crowded together at Fiesta Patrias to celebrate Mexican Independence Day and Hispanic culture through tasty pupusas, bailes folklórico and escaramuza dresses. According to the city of Santa Ana's public affairs information officer, Paul Eskins, over 80,000 attendees packed into the downtown Santa Ana area for two days, which allowed a wave of cultural identity to ripple through Fourth Street.

Orange County Supervisor Vincente Sarmiento wore a shirt reading "Know Your Rights" to raise awareness of and stand as an ally to the targeted immigrant community. "This year, it's special because it's not just a celebration, but it's also a moment to resist," said Sarmiento. "Being out here under these increased ICE raids gives the people hope that they're not alone, that they can still celebrate their culture, but do it in a way that they're going to

be protected. We just saw a lot less people turn out because the fear is real."

As the streets started to become more crowded and lively, a wave of vibrant colors of blue, pink and yellow caught the eyes of every attendee. The colors and design mark the traditional folklórico dresses that a group of women were wearing. They strutted along the street wearing satin ribbons in their braided hair.

"Color is life. For Mexico, it's always the patriotic colors,



Photo by Alex Helguero

green, white and red. It's what represents our roots and ethnicity. Culture is tradition, this dress is from Jalisco, we come to represent Jalisco," said attendee Angelica Ruelas, who has been a participant of Fiesta Patrias for the last two years. On Sunday, a live painting session was on display for passersbys to watch as Michelle Guerrero, an LA-based artist, painted "Chucho" a character of her design.

"I've created this whole cultural world of characters. My main character, Chucho, his whole story is about a piñata that gets broken, but instead of letting his cracks define him, he ends up self-discovering himself. It's like a story about resiliency," said Guerrero.

Small crowds of all ages came into the booth to stand and observe her work, as she painted



Photo by Kaitlyn Han



Photo by Ciara Dortch

Chucho sitting on a green hill, cheerfully smiling as his stubby paw carefully played the string of a guitar.

At another corner of the event, dancers sweep the grounds and touch the skies with their folklorico dresses.

"My parents are from Guatemala, so we are actually not from Mexico, but we do like to carry the Mexican culture.

So I think it connects to me, because it lets me show my culture to the other people, and then I get to see the culture of others too," said Julieta Vasquez, a folklorico performer at Fiestas Patrias, whose last performance at the festival was 10 years ago.



Photo by Brandon Rowley

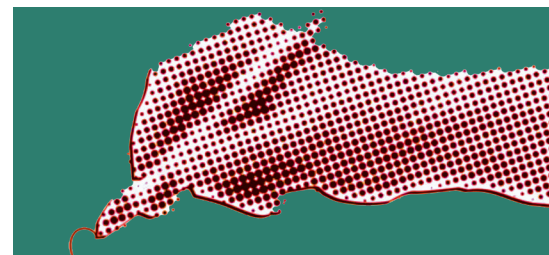
VIEWS



ICED OUT

el Don journalism students have been shut down and discouraged from speaking up in their community at a time when voices should be uplifted.

Staff Editorial



Talk to Us! We're Community Reporters

Reporting on sensitive issues is always a struggle. There are a lot of ethical questions that need to be addressed.

el Don's staff has struggled to properly document historical moments happening in Santa Ana and neighboring cities. While we have tried our best to keep up-to-date with city protests, festivals and college events, there are issues affecting the immigrant community we haven't been able to cover.

It doesn't help that the people who should be providing us with answers don't. This chilling effect is nothing new for us. Fortunately, there is no effective way to chill-out journalists who care because we will keep looking for ways to deliver

the news. Problems start with pushback from sources not wanting to comment on what is happening, either out of fear for their safety or the institutions they serve. The fear of commenting also comes from people not wanting to be in the news. It is a scary time to have your name on the record. It doesn't help that major news outlets report on immigration through a negative lens.

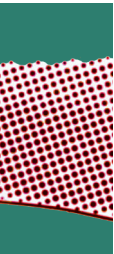
College administrators give us the run-around when we ask questions or remain silent. This draws out the distribution of news or even stops it completely. This is especially bad when the community looks to us for answers.

There are stories that need to be told. First-person accounts are important to share. Here at *el Don*, we want to tell these stories. But we can't be the newsmakers.

It is a false perception that our staff doesn't have the interests of the people in mind when reporting.

In class, we discuss ethics. The editorial board and staff have made decisions to protect sources and not share potentially harmful personal information. We understand

**If nobody talks, then
no record will exist.**



To effectively cover issues affecting the
immigrant community, we need to be
comfortable with the uncomfortable.


the importance of minimizing harm, a principle included in the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics. The code states that an ethical journalist will treat sources and members of the public as "human beings deserving of respect." When talking to undocumented students, we do not share faces or names. We quote anonymously. And, when told that we cannot share sensitive information in order to keep students and programs safe, our publication has held off covering.

At Fiestas Patrias, some people didn't want to be interviewed. They were not put on camera or directly quoted, but checking in with these community members remains essential to our reporting.

Our staff has questioned what information we should share. One thing we know for certain is that the news needs to be effectively delivered with care.

We won't be chilled out from reporting on community stories. We will be there, documenting, asking questions and seeking answers.





Santa Ana is changing for the worse

Instead of highlighting the city's individuality, public officials
are giving in and commercializing the city.

By Lizett Gallo

Photo by Brandon Rowley

In the last decade, the ongoing redevelopment of the downtown area has led to changes that have turned this city into something I no longer recognize. The city has always had updates, but lately, instead of making space for the old and new, they displace and replace.

As a child, walking down La Cuatro filled me with joy. On Sunday afternoons after church, my family and I would hit up La Cuatro to do a little shopping. I'd always make my dad buy me the biggest plate of watermelon from the fruit stands outside the shops. One of my favorite stores to go to was Fallas Paredes, a discount department store I frequented mostly because I liked to go up and down the stairs they had in the middle of the store. Instead of going to your typical movie theater, we would go to the Fiesta Twin Theater (now known as the Frida Cinema) because they would always have subtitles in Spanish and that was the only way my dad had any chance of understanding the movie. Dresses for baptisms, weddings and other equally important celebrations were all bought downtown at la Gaviota.

Even as a kid, I knew there was

something special about La Cuatro. I was constantly surrounded by people I knew and felt safe around and I was so proud of it. These days, it feels completely different.

With the gentrification it has endured, La Cuatro began to feel cold. Beloved fruit stands slowly disappeared, the Frida Cinema seldom plays Spanish movies and the shops that have stood there for decades remain empty with lease signs on the doors. Now, all you see when you walk through is luxury apartment buildings and overpriced retail shops.

The streetcar that residents actively advocated against continues to take up space. Not only is it unnecessary, but its construction negatively affected businesses downtown. Santa Ana is losing all of its charm and turning into another cookie-cutter city like Irvine or Tustin. It feels like the city is attempting to model the bland housing and shopping centers of those cities.

Worst of all, with the recent ICE raids, Santa Ana feels lifeless. The city has been beaten down and is struggling to get back to normal. But, how can we do that knowing that at any minute, beloved friends and family could be

gone in an instant?

We must let businesses and public officials know that they are stripping the city's history away. All the changes that have been made have not been for us; they've been made for outsiders. I understand that things always change with time. I've indulged in some of the changes myself. I occasionally grab a bite at the 4th Street Market and watch movies at the Frida Cinema. Despite this, I wish that these places remembered where they set up shop.

4th Street Market should make room for community-owned eats, and the Frida Cinema should play Spanish movies to bring in the Spanish speaking crowd. The problem here is that the residents seem to no longer be a priority. Public officials are making decisions that completely undermine what I believe Santa Ana to be: a one-of-a-kind gem filled with rich history and residents that embody that.

Shop at local businesses that desperately need your support to survive. Help out in your community whenever possible. Let public officials know that we aren't going anywhere without a fight.

Hot Take

DEMOCRACY IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT

Attend a public meeting to hold elected officials accountable, and remind them they serve you.

**WORDS AND PHOTOS
BY GEOVANNI ESPARZA**



Attendees shouted the line "with liberty and justice for all," during the pledge of allegiance at the June 17 Santa Ana city council meeting. ▲

The decisions made by public officials directly impact you and your neighbors. Whether or not you attend public meetings, your tax dollars are being spent. So it's your responsibility to attend public meetings and keep democracy alive.

Elected officials are public servants; their job is to serve the people. And it is the responsibility of the city's residents to remind them where their loyalty should lie.

During the Public Comment section of a meeting, you can address the governing body directly and hold them accountable for their actions or lack thereof.

People have spoken up during public comment and shamed, criticized and yelled at the governing bodies. Once you are elected, you have been thrust into the vortex of public scrutiny, and people will press you.

Since the ICE raids began this past summer, people have been attending public meetings to speak on behalf of their friends, family and peers who were afraid to leave their homes because of the presence of immigration agents in their communities.

I get it. People have jobs, families and other responsibilities that can make it difficult for them to attend the meetings in person.

You can easily get a recording of the meeting or play it in the background like a podcast, and when you hear something you think is important, you'll start to pay attention.

A prime example of why local politics matter is the movie JAWS. The mayor, who knew the beach was not safe because of the shark that was eating people, was still the mayor in JAWS 2.

If everybody stopped showing up to public meetings to hold governing bodies accountable, nothing would get done, and nothing would change.

If your mom never punished you when you misbehaved, would you have stopped?

At the June 17 Santa Ana city council meeting, attendees lined up for six hours and shamed the mayor



Before the June 17 city council meeting began, an attendee was arrested by Santa Ana Police. Councilmember Johnathan Hernandez (left) stepped down from the dais to mitigate the situation. ▲

for not condemning or even addressing the presence of ICE and the National Guard in the city.

It is no coincidence that two days after the meeting, Santa Ana Mayor Valerie Amezcua posted a video on the city's Instagram stating that she and the council "stand united against the presence of ICE and the National Guard in the city."

If your elected officials stop serving the people, remind them they can be voted out as easily as they were voted into office. We decide who gets to serve us.

If you have something to say, then say it. Be an active member of your community and attend public meetings to hold your elected officials accountable.

And if you don't have something to say, take some of your friends to a meeting and watch government officials speak strongly worded emails to one another because the only thing better than watching reality TV is seeing government drama unfold right in front of you.

Signs made to criticize Mayor Valerie Amezcua were seen at the city council meeting. ▶



▲ Hundreds of people attended the June 17 city council meeting. The chambers were so full that the meeting was projected on the wall outside.





Photo by Geo Esparza / el Don