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DIANE BELL
Columnist

Locals battle in 'Beachside Brawl' and 'Iron Chef'

Not just one, but two renowned San Diego chefs are competing on national cooking shows within days of one another.

Claudette Zepeda appears in the latest incarnation of Netflix's popular Iron Chef series — "Iron Chef: Quest for an Iron Legend" — which debuted yesterday.

The executive chef of Vaga in the Hyatt's Alila Marea resort in Encinitas could not be reached for comment, but she is already a TV food show veteran. Zepeda competed earlier on season 15 of Bravo's "Top Chef" and on "Top Chef Mexico."

On June 19, ARLO gourmet chef Josh Mouzakes will rumble in the Food Network's "Beachside Brawl." This new six-week series that airs Sundays at 10 p.m. (and on discovery+) pits five prominent East Coast chefs against five on the West Coast to see which coast offers the tastiest summer dishes.

When judges rule, the winner may be the "best of the East" or the "best of the West," trumpets the show promo.

Mouzakes actually got his start in Eastport, Long Island, before moving westward to culinary commands in the Hotel del Coronado and JW Marriott in downtown Houston and then becoming executive chef at ARLO, the Town & Country's new signature restaurant in Mission Valley.

"I thought it would be good exposure for my career," Mouzakes posted on Facebook following filming. "What I found was much more profound."

Working alongside the coach cooks and show host chef Antonia Lofaso "gave me a whole new perspective." He called it one of his top culinary experiences.

Although no stranger to competition, this was Mouzakes' first time on a Food Network show. But his TV premiere had an omni-

SEARCH CONTINUES FOR TEEN'S BODY

Rip currents pulled 18-year-old underwater off Mission Beach

BY KAREN KUCHER, TERI FIGUEROA & ALEX RIGGINS

SAN DIEGO

A search for a teenager who drowned off Mission Beach will resume today, two days after strong

rip currents pulled the young man underwater.

On Wednesday, about two dozen of the teen's friends and family members sat along the shoreline, comforting each other and staring out at the ocean, watching as lifeguards in boats and on personal watercraft cut through the water north of Belmont Park.

Long-stemmed roses were placed in a line along a large mound of sand near lifeguard Tower 16, the area where the teen had gone miss-

ing a day earlier.

Authorities have not released the victim's name, but confirmed that he was 18 years old.

On Wednesday, 18 San Diego Fire-Rescue lifeguards aboard rescue vessels and watercraft participated in the search, using sonar to aid in the scuba searches, Fire-Rescue Department spokesperson Mónica Muñoz said.

A Coast Guard helicopter and a San Diego Fire-Rescue helicopter were also part of the search effort.

Lifeguard Chief James Gartland said strong currents affected the underwater searches.

"Visibility was less than 3 feet (on Wednesday), which is better than it was the day before, when it was like zero," he said.

Measuring along the shore, the search area stretched from about Tower 16 to Tower 20, roughly three-quarters of a mile. Gartland said authorities determine where to search based on data and experience.

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HAYNE PALMOUR IV FOR THE U-T

Robert Duran loves riding with his cycling crew, despite undergoing chemotherapy to treat his stage 4 pancreatic cancer.

CYCLIST ON COURSE TO FIGHT CANCER

Encinitas man uses his sport to stay mentally, physically strong, raise funds for pancreatic cancer research

BY EMILY ALVARENGA

Every Thursday, Robert Duran spends three hours undergoing chemotherapy treatment for his stage 4 pancreatic cancer at UC San Diego.

Then, after a quick bite to eat, he hops on his bike for a 15-mile ride with his cycling crew.

"It keeps my life going," the Encinitas resident said. "Cycling is my happy place. Everything basically goes away when you're cycling. It almost takes you back to being a kid

because there are no worries."

Cycling has come to be involved in every aspect of Duran's life — the good and the bad.

"Cycling is one of the things that I love and enjoy doing most," Duran said, "but it's also the thing that actually put me in the hospital where the doctors finally found my cancer."

After months of feeling increasingly nauseous, unable to keep his food down, Duran decided to go on a bike ride.

It was after that 35-mile bike ride when he couldn't rehydrate himself that Duran went to the emergency room, where he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2014.

"They finally gave me a CT scan, and they said, 'You've got a golf-ball-sized mass in your pancreas,'" he recalled.

Though Duran says his cancer diagnosis felt akin to getting hit with a big-rig truck, he said he immediately knew he needed to fight. And in the eight years since, it's been

cycling that Duran said has helped him do just that.

Through recovery from each chemotherapy treatment and surgery, cycling has helped him to regain his strength and stay healthy.

"It makes me feel normal, it makes me feel rejuvenated," he said. "It gives me that sense of accomplishment."

Whether road, mountain or gravel bike, Duran says he clocks be-

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