

READING

# Mayor’ kicks off his own book club

Garcia chats with columnist Tim Grobaty about his book chronicling changes in the news business and the city

By Josh Dulaney  
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It’s not often that a mayor risks a public chat with a local columnist who has taken plenty of shots at elected officials over a four-decade career, especially if the conversation is in front of a couple of hundred people.

But that’s what happened Thursday night at the Beverly O’Neill Theater, when Mayor Robert Garcia welcomed Tim Grobaty — a veteran Press-Telegram

writer — as the first featured author in the Mayor’s Book Club.

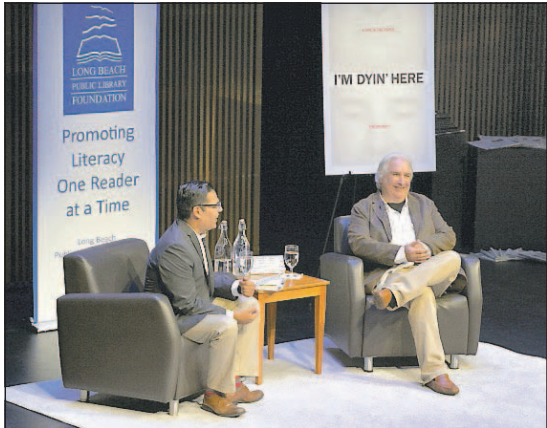
Garcia led a discussion about Grobaty’s latest book, “I’m Dyin’ Here: A Life in the Paper.” The book chronicles not only the transformation of the newspaper business but the changing landscape of Grobaty’s native Long Beach.

“This is, I think, a really good first selection to be able to enjoy and to share with folks as well,” Garcia said at the event Thursday night. “I’ve been obviously reading Tim Grobaty as a columnist

in the Press-Telegram for as long as I’ve been in Long Beach. I’ve been in the city for a little over 20 years, and Tim’s always been a part of Long Beach.”

Grobaty graduated from Wilson High School, then attended Long Beach City College from 1973 to 1976, where he wrote for The Viking student newspaper before applying at the Press-Telegram. Just a few credits short of his associate’s degree, a 21-year-old Grobaty was hired as a copy boy. Earlier this year, he was

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Press-Telegram columnist Tim Grobaty, right, joins Mayor Robert Garcia to discuss Grobaty’s book “I’m Dyin’ Here” at the Beverly O’Neill Theater in Long Beach on Thursday.  
SCOTT VARLEY  
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

LONG BEACH

## A CAN DO ATTITUDE

Constructing canned food exhibits has become an annual ritual before donating the much-needed grocery items to the area’s needy

The third annual exhibit of sculptures made from canned goods that benefits the Food Finders food bank is underway in Long Beach. Six artworks built in the lobby of the Landmark Square Building on Ocean Avenue as part of a competition will be on display through Sept. 25, when the food will be distributed to local shelters and the needy.

PHOTOS BY  
BRAD GRAVERSON  
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Chandra Johnston of Kamus + Keller works on a sculpture at the third annual exhibit of canned food artworks.



Six sculptures made from canned goods are being constructed for the exhibit, which has the theme “We Can Do It.”



C/A Architects employees work on their canned food sculpture at the Landmark Square Building.

BUSINESS

## LB-based company opens a new office

Conference-calling outfit makes itself at home in Signal Hill

By Andrew Edwards  
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A Long Beach company that manages audio and video conferencing services has opened a new Signal Hill office to accommodate its customer service staffers.

FreeConferenceCall.com, which has operated in Long Beach since its 2001 founding, opened its satellite office about eight weeks ago, company chief operating officer Josh Lowenthal said.

The company has about 45 employees working in shifts to staff the Signal Hill office 24 hours a day, he said.

Having an in-house customer service team is a priority.

“We like to be as close as possible as we can to our customers for us to understand them and for them to understand us,” he said.

FreeConferenceCall.com started with a revenue model based upon the firm sharing the access fees that conference callers paid for phone service to the phone companies themselves. Since June however, the company has also offered a paid service called StartMeeting through its FreeConferenceCall.com for business brand.

Lowenthal said the Long Beach  
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MUSIC MAN

## The nitty-gritty of folk music in Long Beach this weekend

Obviously, there’s nothing more entertaining within 1,000 miles of Long Beach this weekend than Saturday’s fourth annual Long Beach Folk Revival Festival from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. at Rainbow Lagoon Park on Shoreline Village.

Festival boss Shea Newkirk has built the fest into a musical juggernaut with a ton of bands playing bluegrass, folk, roots and other Americana genres.

This year’s fest is capped by one of the mightiest bands of all under the vast folk revival umbrella: the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, performing in its 50th year after being born in the back room of the old and sadly now-gone McCabe’s Guitar Shop on Anaheim Street in 1966 by a core pan-Moore League slate of musicians from Millikan, Wilson and Jordan high schools.

Despite its Long Beach genesis, the band hasn’t performed here since anyone’s heard of them.



Tim Grobaty  
Columnist

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