THE CORONADO NEWS

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Caution signs at Coronado Beach due to the polluted waters. Officials at an environmental conference on June 1 said more money is needed to fix the sewage crisis. *Staff photo by Madeline Yang.*

Key officials: More money needed to fix Tijuana sewage problem

By JULIETA SOTO
The Coronado News

A three-speaker panel of local key officials spoke June 1, on the efforts to mitigate a binational sewage issue at the 2023 Annual Environmental Conference in San Diego.

City of Imperial Beach Mayor Paloma Aguirre, Executive Officer at San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board David Gibson and Area Operations Manager at International Boundary and Water Commission – United States Section Morgan Rogers presented to a group of over 50 environmental agency representatives.

They gave an overview of the transboundary pollution issue in the Tijuana River Valley, and environmental and community impacts and actions over the years. Panelists highlighted that the main challenge is stretching an allocated $330 million from Congress and $144 million from Mexico that's expected to fund wastewater infrastructure projects they said was an "unrealistically low" amount.

A Coronado News investigation earlier this year found the Tijuana sewage problem stems from a nearly century-long legacy of broken promises by both countries resulting in a public health crisis

» Continued on Page 10

Naval Air Station North Island hosts Warrior Games

Air Force athletes are being briefed before the opening ceremony on June 2. *Staff photo by Madeline Yang.*

By SOFIE FRANSEN
The Coronado News

The notes of the Star Spangled Banner drifted above a string of red, white and blue lights hanging over the flight deck of the USS Midway on the evening of June 2, kicking off the 2023 Department of Defense Warrior Games.

Serving as an outlet of recovery through adaptive sports competitions, the annual Warrior Games, which started in 2010 and rotates locations in the United States every year, celebrates the resiliency and mental toughness of wounded, ill and injured active duty and veteran U.S. military service members.

For the first time in the history of the games, San Diego is the host city and Naval Air Station North Island in Coronado is the venue for the athletic events that include eight individual sports and three team sports.

This year's challenge, spanning

» Continued on Page 8

"HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT TWINS?"

Mariella and Natalia Avanni's story began in China, and the twins have excelled in the classroom, NJROTC and golf

By ANDREW NADLER
The Coronado News

Through hard work and adapting to new circumstances, identical twins Natalia and Mariella Avanni have created a bright future for themselves.

When the Coronado High School seniors were 15 months old, they were adopted by the Avanni family, who, at the time, only was planning on adopting one child.

Their mom, Ann-Marie, discovered there was an option for twins around a month before traveling to China.

"It's been a pretty amazing journey," Ann-Marie said. "Just from start to right now. It took us about two years to go through China's adoption process. And, at the end of two years, about a month before we traveled, our agency called and said, 'How do you feel about twins?'"

Until they came to Coronado seven years ago, the family had moved numerous times like many military families do.

The twins said they were able to experience different places like Hawaii, Washington, D.C., and Louisiana.

Despite all the changes, the twins excelled in the classroom and had near-identical grade point averages.

» Continued on Page 9

Mariella (left) and twin sister Natalia Avanni pose with Cpt. Jacob Rosales, their mother Ann-Marie and Commander William H. Nesbitt on June 1, at the Optimist Club of Coronado scholarship breakfast. *Staff photo by Craig Harris.*

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CORONADO

CORONADO LOVE LETTER

Meet the Bridge and Bay Garden Club

By MELANIE COFFMAN
The Coronado News

While the Coronado Public Library hosts a plethora of people who walk through its doors, there is one room that holds a meeting for a very special group.

On the fourth Monday of every month, the Winn Room holds a number of members of the Bridge and Bay Garden Club, many of whom are women who live in Coronado.

"This is a club where everyone is welcome," says Claudette Harshberger, the current BBGC president, who has been a member since 2007. "We are very open and welcoming [to] anyone who is interested in flowers and gardening and taking care of the earth."

Claudette Harshberger (left) and Dorothy Stanley pose for a picture. Both are members of the Bridge and Bay Garden Club. *Staff photo by Melanie Coffman.*

Positive words to start meeting

Club meetings commence with coffee and other refreshments, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, a few announcements and inspiration, usually in the form of encouraging and positive words.

Then, guest speakers discuss different topics around tending a garden, horticulture and community gardening.

If this group sounds familiar, you just might recognize them in the Coronado Fourth of July Parade.

Each year, the BBGC dawns bright pink shirts, yellow bird-like feet, and a flamingo hat, complete with palm tree props and an entertaining dance for the parade.

Why the flamingo?

Dorothy Stanley, or Dodo, has been a member since 1987 and helped develop the flamingo mascot for the club.

"Every year, we had an entry in the parade, and it was always a chore to think of what to do," she said. "So I got to thinking about the ubiquitous and corny pink flamingo that was, you know, in everybody's yard."

This bright pink, feathery symbol stuck, and with the help of Dodo's daughter, Carrie Ewing, it materialized as a Fourth of July costume.

Numerous community contributions

The parade is only a fraction of what the club contributes in Coronado.

Penny Pines is an annual project where the BBGC contributes to planting new trees in the Cleveland National Forest, where many areas are scarred by fires.

There's also the The Coronado Floral Association Hand Tied Bouquet, an event which recently occurred, where the club members hosted and taught middle schoolers to create their own bouquets.

This year was the 101st year of the tradition.

"We want them to become interested in flowers and growing them and appreciating them," says Harshberger.

June Installation Luncheon

The next event for the Bridge and Bay Garden Club is the June Installation Luncheon, which is to honor and thank members who have served on the board and usher in the next board members.

The installation will be held at the Coronado Yacht Club on June 17.

"When people come to the meeting as a guest or invited, they don't have to be invited, they can just come," Harshberger said. "And they join!"

Club longevity

Keeping the interest and connection thriving serves as a possible challenge for the longevity of the club.

With about 75 members, the club hopes to keep the community involved.

"We do positive things that people enjoy," Harshberger said. "So for new people coming to Coronado, it's a good way to get to know people."

this week

10 • saturday

The Coronado Democratic Club at 11 a.m. will hold a general membership meeting in the Winn Room at the Coronado Public Library. The doors open at 10:30 am for social time and the program begins at 11 am. With summer just around the corner and the beach season starting, the meeting will feature a presentation by Romina Schiess, an Environmental Health Specialist with the County of San Diego for over 20 years. This event is open to the general public. Any questions about the press release should be directed to Brian L. Trotier at 619-913-1273.

11 • sunday

A public art exhibition featuring the work of six Coronado contemporary artists is open through July 9 in the Spreckels Reading Room at Coronado Public Library. The show is sponsored by the Library and the Coronado Art Association. Meet the artists at a reception to be held June 11 from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Library. The reception will feature musical accompaniment by harpist Amy Kanner. The exhibition includes paintings by Uwe Werner, Teresa Espaniola, Tina Christensen, and Beate Bermann-Enn; as well as photographic prints by Greg Kallajian and ceramic sculptures by Gerry Werner.

12 • monday

"Through Their Eyes," Coronado Public Library's biography and memoir book club, will discuss "The Indifferent Stars Above" by Daniel James Brown at 1 p.m. (This program has been rescheduled from its original date of June 14.)

15 • thursday

Coronado High School's graduation ceremony will take place at 7 p.m. at Niedermeyer Field. Gates will open at 6 p.m.

Theatre Dybbuk, a Los Angeles-based experimental repertory theater, will present a Shakespeare-inspired part-theater, part performance-art piece entitled "The Villainy You Teach" at Coronado Public Library from 6 to 8:30 p.m.

CONTACT US

For news tips, story submissions and letters to the editor, contact Editor Craig Harris at craig@thecoronadonews.com or 602-509-3613

To advertise contact Ad Executive Braeden Stegman at braeden@thecoronadonews.com

SCHOOLS

Optimist awards scholarships to four Coronado High students

The Optimist Club of Coronado on June 1 awarded four $3,000 scholarships to graduating seniors of Coronado High School.

The winners were Tayah Bubulka, twin sisters Mariella and Natalia Avanni and Austin Miller.

The students were presented with their checks and honored at an awards breakfast among family and friends at the Coronado Community Center.

Optimist Club of Coronado President Paul Lull praised the parents for their involvement in the lives of their children, and he said all the scholarship winners provided optimism and showed what it took to be successful.

Here are the winners:

Optimist Club of Coronado scholarship winners Mariella and Natalia Avanni (seating) and Tahay Bubulka and Austin Miller pose with their checks on June 1. *Staff photo by Craig Harris.*

Tayah Bubulka

Tayah Bubulka, one of the top swimmers at Coronado High School and a Military Child of the Year semifinalist, received the Octagon Club Scholarship.

Bubulka will attend USC and major in architecture. She also is a Gold Award winner, the highest honor among Girl Scouts who set themselves apart from their peers through perseverance and grit.

Bubulka is also involved with the Junior Optimist Club.

Mariella and Natalia Avanni

Twins Mariella and Natalia Avanni each were awarded the NJROTC or Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps scholarship.

This sisters play golf and have excelled in the classroom.

Once the Avanni sisters start college this fall at the University of California San Diego, they plan to use the scholarship money toward their cognitive science major.

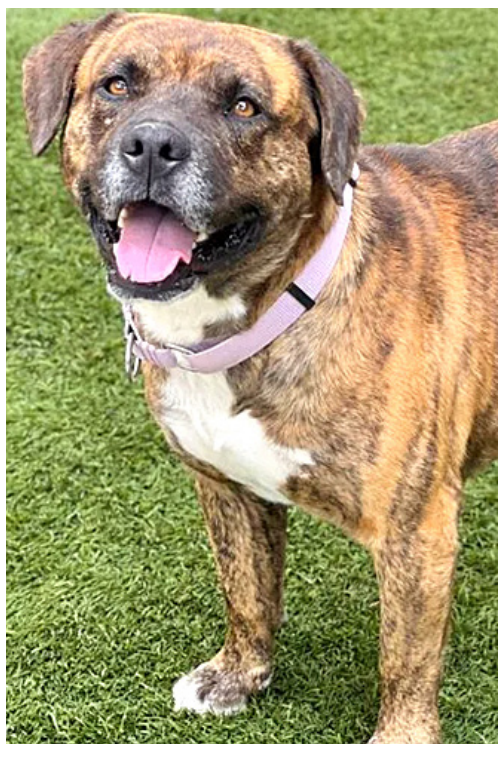
Austin Miller

Austin Miller has participated in the Boy Scouts for 10 years, and he plans to study business and E-commerce at Cal Poly Pomona and Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand.

Miller received the Eagle Scout Scholarship, and he also has an online sneaker business and his own YouTube channel.

PET OF THE WEEK

Meet Jedi



Hey, Star Wars fans, here's a canine for you.

Jedi got his name because this guy was found at the dog beach on May 4. Jedi is a 5-year-old (65lbs) bundle of love looking for his forever home, according to PAWS of Coronado.

This handsome dog has a heart of gold and a playful personality that is sure to light up your life. Jedi is a social butterfly, and he absolutely loves people.

At 5, Jedi has reached the perfect balance of maturity and playfulness. He knows when it is time to be calm and relaxed and would make a great companion to cozy up with for a movie night.

However, don't be fooled by his calm demeanor, as Jedi also loves to engage in fun-filled activities. Whether it is a leisurely walk in the park, or exploring new hiking trails, he is always up for an adventure.

Adoptions at PAWS are by appointment only. If you are interested, please visit the website at pawsofcoronado.org. For more information, contact Jennifer Stein at Jennifer.Stein@pawsofcoronado.org.

You too can submit your Pet of the Week by sending a picture of your furry friend and a short story to craig@thecoronadonews.com.

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ISLAND INSIDER

Expert Analysis on the Coronado Housing Market

HELLO CORONADO!

Corey Simone here. Every Friday moving forward, I will be bringing you news, stats and information in the ever changing real estate market. Should you have a topic you want covered please email me at **info@simonerealestategroup.com**

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Empower Your Homeownership Journey with Homebot: Unlocking the Benefits of Personalized Financial Insights

I've enjoyed and appreciated all the reach outs and kind comments about my last two personal articles. It is great hearing from you all; I love getting to know you more on a personal level. Please continue to reach out!

To all my readers out there who want VALUE ADD, this one's for you....

In today's dynamic real estate landscape, staying informed about the financial aspects of homeownership is crucial. That's where Homebot comes in, an innovative platform designed to empower homeowners with personalized financial insights.

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Homebot is an advanced software platform that provides homeowners with a comprehensive and personalized view of their property's financial health. By leveraging data analytics and machine learning algorithms, Homebot generates regular updates and reports tailored to each homeowner's unique situation.

These reports encompass a wide range of financial aspects, including estimated home values, equity accumulation, potential refinance opportunities and much more.

I am excited to share that as a dedicated real estate professional in Coronado, I have partnered with Homebot to provide this invaluable service to you as my valued readers, completely free of charge.

My goal is to support and empower homeowners in our community by offering access to Homebot's comprehensive insights without any cost or obligation. It is my way of expressing gratitude for your trust and allowing me to assist you throughout your homeownership journey.

Rest assured, your information will be handled securely and with utmost confidentiality. Together, let's harness the power of Homebot to unlock the full potential of your home's financial future.

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Should you have any questions or need further guidance on your homeownership journey, please don't hesitate to reach out. 619-568-0568 info@simonerealestategroup.com.

I am always here to help and support you in making informed decisions that align with your financial goals.

-Corey

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OPINION

FROM THE EDITOR

We are a proud Coronado Fourth of July Parade sponsor

Meet our newest staff writer, summer interns and what's new with the newspaper

It may be "June Gloom," but The Coronado News has a lot to celebrate.

We are proud to announce that The Coronado News will be among the Coronado Fourth of July Parade Announcer sponsors, and our spot will be in the Churchill block. We also will be sponsoring the toy giveaways for kids during the parade.

And, during the next several weeks, you are going to see more than a dozen feature stories about the big event and the volunteers behind the best small city Independence Day celebration that attracts more than 100,000 people to the island.

One of those writers telling those stories is Sofie Fransen, who has gone from an unpaid intern to a part-time reporter to a full-time staffer as of June 1, for The Coronado News.

The Coronado News is sponsoring a Coronado Fourth of July Parade Announcer Stand.
Photo courtesy of Coronado Fourth of July.

Meet Sofie Fransen

Fransen joins full-time staff writers Madeline Yang and Julieta Soto who have done an amazing job covering the Tijuana sewage crisis as well as City Hall and Coronado Public Schools.

Fransen, a recent graduate of Point Loma Nazarene University, has written features about Cheryl Landon, daughter of actor Michael Landon; Navy retiree and drone specialist Ken Bitar; and the $400 million renovation of the Hotel del Coronado.

Fransen, however, won't be giving up one of her true loves: Commercial fishing for the sockeye salmon run in Alaska with her family in July. (Yes, she's burning some vacation time to work 18-hour days on a boat.)

Summer interns

When The Coronado News launched at the beginning of this year, we were blessed to have an outstanding crop of interns from Point Loma Nazarene University and San Diego State University to get us off the ground. This summer, we have five new interns who will be doing features, sports stories and – of course – Coronado Fourth of July coverage.

Here are the interns:

Maya Sciarretta was born and raised in San Diego, and she's a rising third year student majoring in religious studies at Grinnell College, a liberal arts school in Iowa founded in 1846.

Sciarretta is about to embark on her second podcasting adventure in college, and she has an "undying love" for all things radio, baseball and tea.

Andrew Nadler is a sports journalism student at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University.

He's a Southern California native whose passion is to work in sports media and to be a storyteller to those who do not have a platform. Nadler's first story for The Coronado News was a profile of Coronado High School twins Mariella and Natalia Avanni, who have excelled in the classroom, golf and NJROTC.

Sam Datin is an aspiring broadcast journalist studying at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University.

Datin hosts Sun Devil Athletic sporting events, serves on-air and production roles for Pac-12 Networks, and has previously worked in content creation, video editing, and social media.

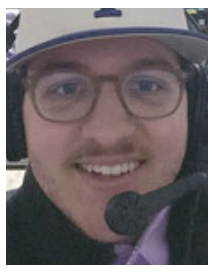
Datin's first story for The Coronado News was a profile of Coronado High School football player and photographer Graham Bower.

Melanie Coffman is a recent graduate from PLNU's multimedia journalism undergrad program with a sociology minor.

As a California-based writer, she is inspired by the beauty and creativity of the people and places around her.

She is currently freelance writing and transcribing in addition to working at a local coffee shop. Her specialties include writing and editing, making to-do lists, and chocolate chip cookies (both baking and eating).

Her first story for The Coronado News was a profile on the Bridge and Bay Garden Club.



Carson Arnold is a Point Loma native and rising senior at TCU, where he studies political science and sports broadcasting.

His passion and admiration for San Diego and Coronado are rivaled only by his love of the San Diego Padres.

KenKen Puzzle and 40K

Another new addition you will see is on the LIFE ON THE ISLAND page towards the back of the print edition of The Coronado News.

Joining our features stories is the KenKen Puzzle, a grid-based numerical puzzle that uses basic math operations – addition, subtraction, multiplication and division – while challenging your logic and problem-solving skills.

And, lastly, a big thank you!

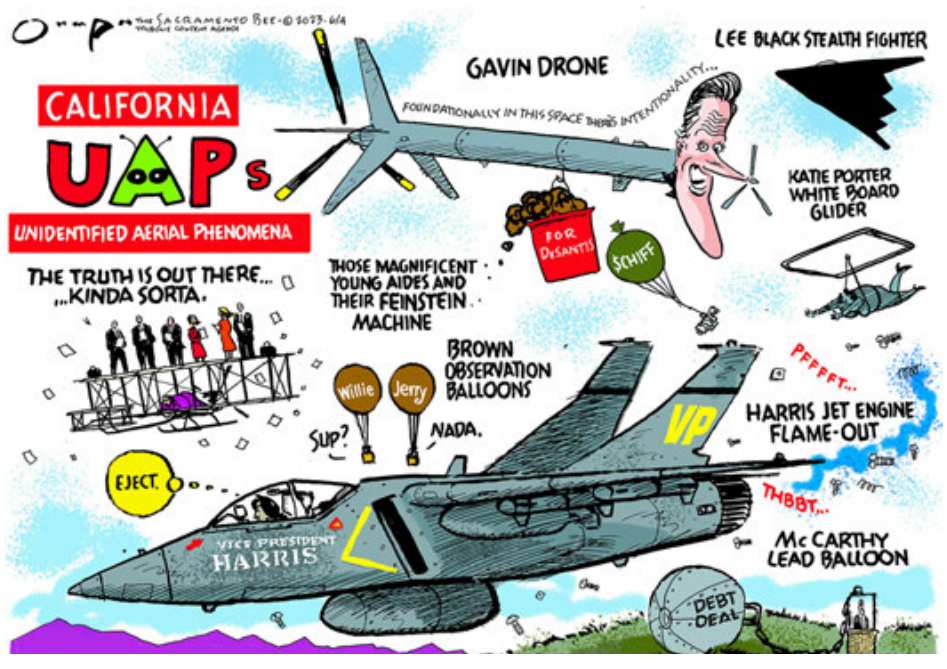
Our website – TheCoronadoNews.com – reached a nice milestone at the end of May, when we eclipsed more than 40,000 online pageviews.

We just about hit 20,000 pageviews for the month, roughly the total of the previous three months since launching around Feb. 1.

We appreciate all of your support, and I hope you will drop by and say hi during the Coronado Fourth of July Parade. I'd love to hear your story ideas and anything more that we can do to cover the community.

You can always reach me at craig@thecoronadonews.com.

The Coronado News accepts Op-Eds and Letters to the Editor. Please send them to Editor Craig Harris at craig@thecoronadonews.com.



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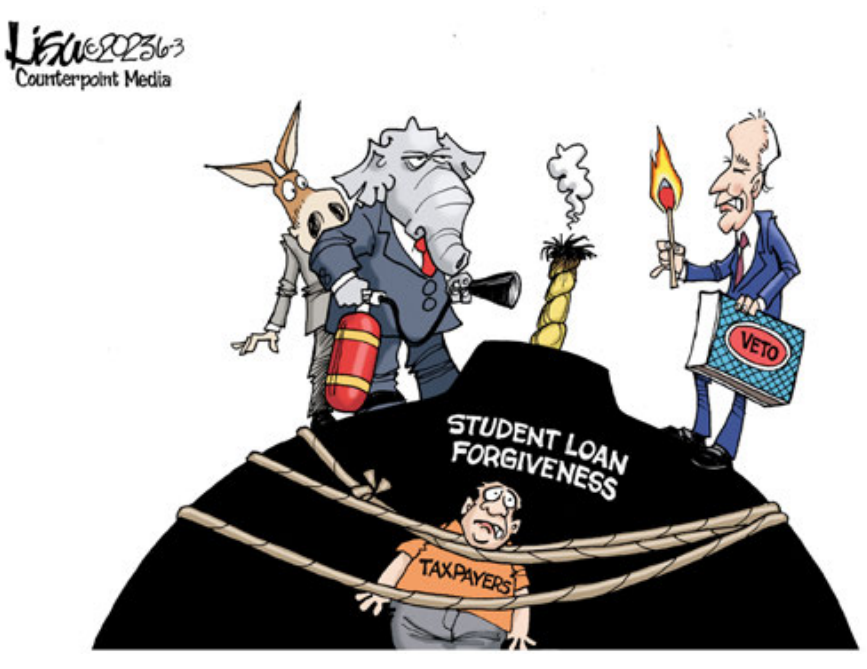

LISA BENSON

CORONADO

School Board shuts down critic of high school controversy

By JULIETA SOTO
The Coronado News

A parent and lawyer told the Coronado School Board on May 31 that a high school employee placed on administrative leave after students were sent "inappropriate material" on their smartphones should be fired.

Bill Pate, during the public comment period, told the board that based on the allegations, the staff member's permanent dismissal was not a question but rather a matter of law.

He cited a similar court decision involving the San Diego Unified School District to support his statement.

Pate, however, was interrupted by board members who said the comment was not related to an agenda item, was based on allegations and would not be permitted at "special school board meetings" like the one May 31.

The meeting also included evaluations of Superintendent Karl Mueller, which was not released to the public, and the board.

Police investigation May 25

The Coronado Police Department launched an investigation May 25 into a situation involving a Coronado High School employee who has not been identified and was placed on paid administrative leave. Coronado Police has not provided any additional details.

Nine students and two parents previously told The Coronado News that many students on May 24 were sent screenshots of a shirtless male who resembled an administrator at the school. Students were later sent a video of the same faculty member.

Mueller told those in attendance that "during special board meetings, all public comments need to be relevant to the agenda."

Pate, meanwhile, told the Coronado News that he believes faculty should be held to a moral standard. He considers that this situation places focus on the district and its hiring and retention practices.

Neither the school district nor police have provided additional information other than the employee remains on paid leave.

Mueller evaluated

The job evaluation of Mueller, which is common for school superintendents, proceeded to be discussed in a closed session.

According to district Public Information Officer Maria Simon, the evaluation process has not been finalized.

After the board deliberated for a little over 60 minutes, Board President Renee Cavanaugh reported in open session that no action was taken regarding Mueller's evaluation and encouraged those who wish to speak on non-agendized items to return for the next regular board meeting, where comments on other matters may be shared, on June 8.

Board evaluates itself

Along with evaluating the superintendent, the board engaged in a self-evaluation workshop.

Cavanaugh used California School Boards Association (CSBA) training for a series of 50 questions.

Cavanaugh said the first 25 questions addressed the board's effective governance and the second part related to board responsibilities in accordance to five major responsibilities: Setting direction; Establishing an effective and efficient structure; Providing support; Ensuring accountability; Providing community leadership as advocates for children, the school district and public schools.

One topic of conversation was the time for discussion and agendized items during school board meetings.

"As long as it takes"

The board agreed that plenty of time should be taken for effective discussions, and Trustee Scot Youngblood voiced his support for board meetings to take "as long as it takes."

However, the board also agreed that consistency is key and agendas require time management.

They decided to implement realistic anticipated times for agenda items and to revisit when closed session discussions will happen during meetings.

Regarding professional development opportunities, board members discussed time management and the district paying for these expenses as factors that hinder participation.

In terms of channels of communication with the community and community leaders, the board made mention of office hours posted to the district website, the board president's role as a spokesperson for the board, and encouraged discussion between the community and the board as a whole.

Success of all students

The board also discussed reviewing and canceling unused board policies, considering the cost for storage.

The district will wait on the Small School Districts' Association about the process of bringing down the amount of board policies.

One concern among the board was the efforts to advocate on behalf of public education and actively promote the belief in the success of all students and staff in the district.

A board member wrote "about the failure to implement a cohesive strategy to offer a safe and supportive environment for ALL students after the eradication of NPFH and the tortilla incident as was promised."

No Place for Hate is a self-directed program combating bias and bullying in over 1,600 schools across the country, according to its website.

Trustee Malachy Sandie mentioned the training for all the sports teams reduces incidents of similar behavior from the "Tortilla-gate" incident and points to a supportive environment.

Trustee Alexia Palacios Peters questioned what is being done to promote support among students and teachers.

However, Youngblood said that based on site visits to campuses, he believes each of the school sites speak to honoring and cherishing all students.

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Baseball legend Steve Garvey weighs US Senate bid in California

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — You'd have to go back a generation — to 1988 — to find the last time a Republican candidate won a U.S. Senate race in heavily Democratic California. This time, the party might get an MVP on the ballot.

Baseball legend Steve Garvey, who played for the Los Angeles Dodgers and San Diego Padres, is meeting with voters and senior GOP officials as he weighs a potential 2024 Senate bid in a race that already has several prominent Democratic contenders. He appeared at a recent fundraiser for Republican Rep. Michelle Steel in Orange County, where he signed baseballs and talked about his potential candidacy.

"He is seriously considering entering the race," said veteran consultant Andy Gharakhani, who is advising Garvey.

Former San Diego Padres Steve Garvey waves to fans before a game against St. Louis June 29, 2019, in San Diego. Garvey, who played in Los Angeles and San Diego, is considering entering California's 2024 U.S. Senate race as a Republican. *(AP Photo/Gregory Bull,File)*

Flirted with politics previously

Garvey has flirted with the possibility of entering politics before, including after his retirement from baseball, when he teased a possible U.S. Senate run but never became a candidate.

"I have been approached to run for office and am exploring that. No announcement is imminent," Garvey said in a statement released by a Dodgers team spokesperson.

The 74-year-old Garvey had an 18-year major league career, and he was National League MVP in 1974. He retired from baseball in 1987.

The growing field of candidates already includes Democratic Reps. Katie Porter, Adam Schiff and Barbara Lee. The seat is held by Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein, who has announced she is not seeking another term.

Would be an underdog

Still, even with his celebrity sparkle, Garvey would enter the race as an underdog. Democrats hold every statewide office and dominate the legislative and congressional delegations. Republicans — who are outnumbered about 2-to-1 by Democratic voters in the state — have struggled for years to find credible candidates for statewide offices.

In the state's last two U.S. Senate races, GOP candidates performed so poorly in the primary elections that only two Democrats advanced to the November ballot. Garvey's candidacy could give the GOP a chance to make the November election, potentially lifting party turnout and also helping down-ballot GOP candidates.

The power of celebrity can produce surprises at the ballot box, noted veteran Democratic consultant Roger Salazar, referring to the political rise of former California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and former President Donald Trump, among others.

"Never say never"

While a Democrat would be favored given the state's political tilt, a fractured Democratic primary vote could provide an opening for Garvey to slip into the November match-up.

"I've learned to never say never when it comes to celebrities in politics," Salazar added.

Political scientist Thad Kousser, who teaches at the University of California, San Diego, said part of Garvey's challenge will be changing the perception of the GOP brand in liberal-tilting California, where Trump lost in the 2020 election in a landslide. He noted that Schwarzenegger, the state's last Republican governor, was a moderate who supported abortion rights and environmental protection.

Although unlikely to win in a state that favors Democrats, Garvey would scramble the dynamics of the race with a large and growing field.

If he becomes a candidate "he's not going to win the game but he is going to change the game," Kousser added.

"I think Steve Garvey would be one of the most interesting and dynamic candidates for a statewide office Republicans have had in decades," said Republican National Committeeman Shawn Steel, who is married to the congresswoman.

"He's good on the stump … and he reminds me of a Reagan-esque approach," Steel added, referring to former Republican President Ronald Reagan, another Californian.

Republican attorney Eric Early — an unsuccessful candidate for state attorney general in 2022 and 2018 and for Congress in 2020 — entered the Senate contest in April.

In a statement, he said Garvey "has more personal baggage than Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner," an apparent reference to 1980s sex scandals that sullied Garvey's reputation as "Mr. Clean," a moniker that referred to his buttoned-down image from his Dodger days.

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Naval Air Station North Island hosts Warrior Games

» Continued from Page 1

from June 2 to 12, was launched with a patriotic opening ceremony with 200 athletes on the Midway to represent their respective teams: Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Navy and U.S. Special Operations Command.

Travis Claytor, Director of Strategic Communications for the DoD Warrior Games, said he couldn't imagine a better place to host a kickoff event than the historic flight deck. It was the perfect fit to match the mission and vision of the Warrior Games, he said.

In fact, this is the first year that the opening ceremony was held on an aircraft carrier.

"I've spent over 25 years in the Army, and I was a pilot, so naturally, I am in heaven here," Deputy Director for the joint information bureau for the DoD Warrior Games Ricky Ray Sims said of the Midway. "I spent the last 14 years as a Department of Army civilian. Out of all of those, this is the coolest place I've ever been to have one of these functions."

With his many years of experience in the Army, Sims said that being surrounded by planes and fellow military members felt like home.

He joked that when he retires, he's going to invent an air freshener company that replicates the scents of a flight deck or jet fuel.

"There's a lot of crazy guys out here that would know what I'm talking about," Sims said. "It's just a lot of memories."

Athletes standing for the national anthem at the 2023 Warrior Games Challenge on June 2. *Staff photo by Madeline Yang.*

Navigating a new normal

A deep sense of camaraderie and respect coursed through every moment of the June 2 opening ceremony, showcasing the exceptional resiliency of the men and women in the U.S. military who deal with wounds, illnesses and injuries, both visible and invisible.

Julia Melzer, Mass Communication Chief who does the protocol for team Navy, said the brotherhood and sisterhood runs deep within the Navy, specifically referencing those competing in the Warrior Games Challenge.

"What these athletes overcome, how they find their new normal, and how they navigate that, is just paramount," Melzer said. "The adaptive sports programs that each branch brings, provides a new sense of brotherhood that is unique and on its own."

Kallie Quinn, head coach of the Air Force's team and Sports Operations Specialist, has been involved with the Warrior Games since its inception in 2010.

She said that adaptive sports have become a big part of an athlete's recovery program.

"It gives [athletes] a sense of teamwork back, and it gives them a sense of, 'Hey, even though I've gone through this, I can actually go do things that I can do with my friends and family,'" Quinn said.

The games showcase the unique bond that comes from going through similar journeys, along with the competitive spirit among the teams, Quinn said.

A Navy group performs during the 2023 Warrior Games Challenge on June 2. *Staff photo by Madeline Yang.*

Special Operations Command (SOCOM) athletes at the opening ceremony of the Warrior Games on the deck of the USS Midway in San Diego on June 2. *Staff photo by Madeline Yang.*

Warrior Games Challenge slightly reduced

Different from the annual Warrior Games, this year's Warrior Games Challenge is slightly reduced in scope because Team U.S. will be taking competitors to represent the Department of Defense at the Invictus Games in Düsseldorf, Germany in September, Claytor said.

With this slightly reduced scale, the Warrior Challenge has eight individual sports and three team sports, consisting of wheelchair basketball, sitting volleyball and wheelchair rugby.

At the opening ceremony, each team was recognized with a short video to highlight the athletes in action, with a background song of their team's choice.

Emceeing the event was Liberty Zabala, four-time Emmy award winning reporter and weather anchor for Fox 5 San Diego and an U.S. Navy Reserve Officer.

She emphasized the resilience, determination, and recovery of the Warrior Games athletes, which is being celebrated through the camaraderie and competition of the games this week.

Since the games are only open to those who have access to Naval Air Station North Island, Claytor encouraged the general public to watch the livestream at https://dodwarriorgames.com/, where there will be full coverage of the event complete with announcers and interviews with the athletes.

Air Force athlete's head coach and sports operations specialist Kallie Quinn. *Staff photo by Madeline Yang.*

"How do you feel about twins?"

» Continued from Page 1

According to their mom, Natalia will finish high school with a 4.5 GPA, while Mariella has a 4.44 GPA. The twins will turn 18 on June 23.

Who's who?

Once they got to Coronado, they joined the golf team at the middle school because they had been playing golf with their family.

They continued playing golf at Coronado High School and Natalia and Mariella said a funny moment they would not forget was when they were freshmen and Natalia hit a hole-in-one.

When the coach went to give her a trophy, it had Mariella's name on it because he mixed up who shot it.

Joining NJROTC

Along with golf, the twins started NJROTC, or Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps, during their sophomore year.

According to Commander William H. Nesbitt and Senior Chief Thomas Hellwig, the NJROTC program at Coronado High School strives to help cadets develop high leadership, personal responsibility, and self-discipline.

Mariella said one of her most memorable moments from NJROTC was doing a sailing academy and learning how to sail several boats.

Optimist Club scholarship winners

Their commitment and success in NJROTC led to them each being awarded a $3,000 scholarship from the Optimist Club of Coronado on June 1.

"They have been exceptionally active in the community and demonstrate the commitment to service that the Optimists are known for in Coronado," Hellwig said. "Mariella and Natalia have grown so much as leaders, and it has been great to see them rise from brand new cadets to now mentoring the younger students entrusted to their leadership. It is a joy to observe Mariella and Natalia leading their respective NJROTC platoons with ever-increasing poise and confidence."

The Optimist Club of Coronado was started in 1972 by a Navy captain.

Bill Parry, an Optimist Club scholarship selection committee member, commended the girls' grades, perseverance, activeness in sports and extracurricular activities and community service as to why they deserved the scholarship.

Mariella Avanni stands in the foreground while her sister, Natalia, can be seen walking. *Photo courtesy of the Avanni family.*

Natalia Avanni (left) stands with Coronado High School golf coach Stuart Gordon and her sister, Mariella. *Photo courtesy of the Avanni family.*

"Impossible" to chose one over the other

Usually, the organization only gives three scholarships, and the twins each applied for the same NJROTC award.

However, the Optimist Club didn't want the sisters to split the $3,000 scholarship, so this year, four awards were given, with each Avanni sister getting the total amount.

(The other $3,000 awards went to Tayah Bubulka and Austin Miller)

Parry said it was "impossible" to choose one sister over the other, so the club raised extra money and gave them an equal scholarship.

On to UCSD to study cognitive science

Once the Avanni sisters start college next fall at the University of California San Diego, they plan to use the scholarship money toward their cognitive science major.

When Natalia and Mariella are not golfing or at NJROTC, they say they like drawing, painting, and reading fiction novels.

As a family, they cook some of their favorite foods like Gnocchi dumplings and Jambalaya.

From what Mariella and Natalia have been through, their mom could not be more delighted for them.

"I've been really proud of seeing them accomplish all they have and become who they are," Ann-Marie said.

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Key officials: More money needed to fix Tijuana sewage problem

» Continued from Page 1

that has exposed beachgoers, U.S. Border Patrol agents and U.S. Navy SEALS to a myriad of diseases from the fecal-exposed Pacific Ocean.

During the Memorial Day weekend, a group of protesters in Coronado held a "Stop the Sewage" press conference to raise awareness about the issue that has closed that city's beaches and hampered the economy.

State of Emergency

Aguirre at the conference shared that the City of Imperial Beach is looking to declare a State of Emergency through an official letter and she has asked San Diego County mayors to send a "sign-on letter" to the White House. In addition, a letter writing blitz to President Biden from children in Imperial Beach is in the works.

Beyond the dollar figure, a successful expansion of the wastewater treatment plant at the border may be able to treat up to 60 million gallons per day, according to Rogers. Currently, the plant near San Ysidro treats about 25 million gallons a day.

Rogers said that failing pump stations cause additional flow at the international wastewater treatment plant that lead to additional transboundary flows. For this reason, pump stations rehabilitation in Mexico, including PBCILA and PB1, is crucial for the infrastructure, he said.

Rogers also said the International Collector, which catches rubbish before it hits the sewage plant and has been certified in Tijuana, is set to begin rehabilitation work this summer.

And the funded San Antonio de los Buenos treatment plant is supposed to start construction between 2024 and 2026.

Price tag for total repair: Up to $1 billion

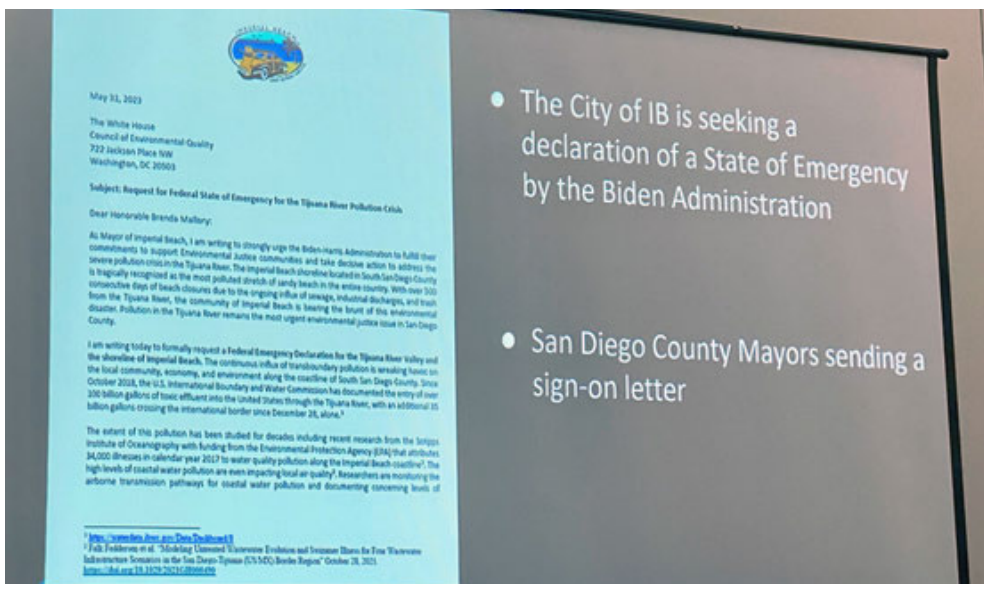
In discussion with the audience during questions, the panel concluded that total costs to fix the sewage crisis range from $700 million to $1 billion.

Gibson considers the solution is very clear and believes there's no disagreement between the United States and Mexico as to what components they need to implement together, he told The Coronado News.

"What is lacking is the funding … we should get away from the blame Mexico argument and focus on getting things done in both countries," said Gibson.

He noted that bi-national agreements called Minute 320 and Minute 328 "give us the architecture to build the floors of a shared building on water quality and mutual beneficial use protection."

During his presentation, Gibson shared that the issue is more than beach closures and referenced the 55 listed impairment conditions under the 2020 Clean Water Act section 303(d) List, such as indicator bacteria, ammonia, solids and sedimentation.



City of Imperial Beach letter request for a State of Emergency. *Staff photo by Julieta Soto.*

Closed 517 days

According to Gibson, the Border Field State Park, south of Imperial Beach, has been closed 517 consecutive days as of June 1, 2023.

"There's been continuous sewage flows that have resulted in excessive bacterial indicators all those days," said Gibson.

Gibson said this is due to San Antonio de los Buenos discharging between 35 and 60 million gallons of raw sewage from metropolitan Tijuana in the coastal area that heads north all the way to Coronado.

"If we can keep Mexico on track with their upgrade to San Antonio de Los Buenos, that will be really, really excellent for coastal water quality," said Gibson. "That's a key part of our strategy."

Tijuana River Valley timeline

Gibson also provided a Tijuana River Valley history timeline, recovery team efforts, Water Board actions, and hopeful expectations for the future.

"My strong pitch to you and decision makers is that we have a chance now to make a generational change, not a half measure, and we have a chance now to make a difference for both countries," Gibson told the audience.

Aguirre shared her constant work to ensure that Mexico moves funds to the appropriate agencies in a timely manner to pay for its share of the repairs.

Aguirre commended Mexico's ability to build in short timelines regarding the two sewage treatment plants on the east side of Tijuana, built in 2 ½ years, she said.

Green bonds

Earlier in the panel, Aguirre spoke about her meeting with Baja California Governor Marina del Pilar where she learned that "they have created green bonds, which will allow a private public partnership to be able to supplement some of the needed funding for some of these infrastructure improvements."

Aguirre said 20 and 30% of private investments will happen through the green bonds, and considers that efficient rehabilitation efforts at San Antonio de los Buenos will reduce beach closures anywhere from 80 to 90%. Aguirre said $430 million would be the required additional funding amount and acknowledged that the timeline extends beyond 2028 up to 2030.

During the panel, Aguirre made mention of Imperial Beach and the South Bay communities' high minority demographics.

She said that Imperial Beach has had to cancel their junior guard program, which is usually a pipeline for lifeguards. Additionally, a Scripps Institution of Oceanography study has found traces of pathogens, chemicals, viruses and bacteria in aerosolized form, she said.

"At the end of the day, we are experiencing the hardships and the negative impacts of all of our pollution," Aguirre said in an interview.

South Bay Letter Writing Campaign

As of June 1, the City of Imperial Beach drafted the letter to the White House asking for a state of emergency, approved during an Imperial Beach City Council Meeting in May.

This effort may secure quick avenues for additional funding required for projects that may reverse beach closures, she said.

» Continued on next page

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Phase One of tennis and pickleball court resurfacing completed

The Cays Park courts will be reopening June 5, after the completion of Phase One of the Tennis and Pickleball Court Resurfacing Project.

The rapidly growing sport of pickleball in San Diego spurred months of engagement, a community survey and meetings with the Coronado Tennis Association and Pickleball Coronado Association in order to discuss more playing areas for the increase in pickleball users in Coronado, according to city officials.

Since construction started on this project in April 2023, crews converted two existing tennis courts in Cays Park into Coronado's first dedicated pickleball courts.

The first phase began at Cays Park, and the city is now celebrating its completion.

According to Aguirre, the City of Imperial Beach and regional letters to the White House will be sent this month.

"I'm trying to shoot for a couple weeks so that we can get as many mayors as possible signed on and then send it in as well," said Aguirre.

Council Member (District 2) Jack Fisher proposed in May that the city reach out to South Bay Union School District for a letter writing campaign to the White House in order to reach the president.

"I met with the Superintendent Jose Espinoza for South Bay Union School District, and my colleague Jack Fisher has been collecting some of the letters at the farmer's market," said Aguirre. "We need all hands on deck. ... including our youth, because they're the ones that are being affected the most."

According to the city and district, the letter writing campaign will also take place during a summer session and teachers will take the lead in the campaign.

"We're going to try and get some letters done this last week of school, and then we're going to do a more intense campaign the next school period," said Aguirre. "I want us to collect as many as possible and from their own personal voices and points of views, how they are personally affected by this crisis."

Coronado protests sewage issue

In Coronado, during Memorial Day Weekend, a protest organized by Stop the Sewage, gathered over 50 folks, according to media reports.

The protest took place at Central Beach in Coronado around noon on May 27, following the decades-long sewage issue that has closed beaches on the southern pacific coastline extending from Imperial Beach to Coronado.

Stop the Sewage protested to demand action from elected officials at the federal, state, and local level.

Planning for additional protests this summer, Stop the Sewage will continue to seek the Declaration of a Public Health Emergency.

"As the public expressed its concern and outrage, which we share, at Coronado over the Memorial Day weekend, unfortunately it doesn't look as though the solutions that we propose can be implemented in a swift enough time to interrupt those [beach closures] and prevent the repetition of last summer where most of the time Coronado was closed," Gibson said.

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NAVY

Navy cooks come up short in Galley Wars

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Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Ryan Watson and Culinary Specialist Caroline Ramirez, assigned to Coast Guard Cutter Terrell Horne, holds up a plaque showing they won Galley wars aboard the Battleship USS Iowa Museum during Fleet Week LA 2023 in late May. LAFW is an opportunity for the American public to meet their Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard teams and experience America's sea services.
U.S. Navy photos by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Lyle Wilkie

LOS ANGELES- Galley cooks from the Navy, Army, Marines and Coast Guard engaged in a culinary competition judged by a panel of celebrity and executive level chefs during Los Angeles Fleet Week in late May.

This year's Galley Wars aboard the Battleship Museum USS Iowa on May 28 had the theme of surf and turf and military chefs had to prepare Mahi Mahi, steak and two sides in 30 minutes.

The competitors thought the Mahi Mahi or a firm, lean white fish was a tough ingredient to tackle in this competition.

"We've never even seen Mahi Mahi," said Nico Maclin, Regimental Support Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. "So, I've heard about it, never actually physically seen it. And I did not know the actual flavor component, the texture of Mahi Mahi. The cooking technique. So, I had to do a lot of studying on that to have a cooking proper."

The competition came down to the Coast Guard and the Marines and the Coast Guard took down the top prize. Even though the Coast Guard won they knew they had tough competition.

"I was really scared of the Marines and of course Army because they won last year," said Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Ryan Watson, assigned to Coast Guard Cutter Terrell Horne. "There was no real warnings; we were trying to keep everything a secret from the competition."

Creative style leads to victory

The Culinary Specialist from the Coast Guard think that their creative style was the reason they won.

"I feel like our dishes were really creative," said Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Caroline Martinez, assigned to Coast Guard Cutter Terrell Horne. "I have a Mexican background myself. I felt like that was going to be too easy of a go to, so we wanted to kind of mix it up. LA is a huge mixing pot of cultures. We wanted to bring some of that in here."

Rear Adm. Robert Chadwick II, Commander Carrier Strike Group 9, knew who the real winners of this competition were.

"I was disappointed our Navy team did not win, but I hope what everyone took away from this is the pride each of these teams put into their work," said Chadwick. "I think the real winners are the Sailors, Marines, Soldiers and Coast Guardsmen who get to eat the food that these wonderful professionals make every day. That's what we're trying to highlight here."

LAFW is an opportunity for the American public to meet their Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard teams and experience America's sea services.

During fleet week, service members participate in various community service events, showcase capabilities and equipment to the community, and enjoy the hospitality of Los Angeles and its surrounding areas.

Story by Petty Officer 1st Class Lyle Wilkie.

Specialist Tyonne Jones, assigned to Regimental Support Squadron (RSS), 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (11th ACR), spreads sauce on tortillas at galley wars aboard the Battleship USS Iowa Museum during Los Angeles Fleet Week 2023.

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NAVY

San Diego-based Seabees construct camp, channel crossing in Philippines

U.S. Navy Sailors with Amphibious Construction Battalion 1 operate heavy machinery equipment to prepare land for the life sustaining area utilized during a combined joint logistics over the shore operation in preparation for Balikatan 23 in Casiguran, Philippines on March 24, 2023.
U.S. Navy photo by Ensign Brianna Curley.

Defense Visual Information Distribution Service

Amphibious Construction Battalion 1 Sailors who are headquartered in San Diego constructed a life support area and channel crossing this spring in support of Exercise Balikatan 2023 in Casiguran, Philippines.

ACB 1 is the sole Navy unit to conduct Improved Navy Lighterage System or INLS missions, and it supports Joint Force operations and humanitarian aid response with ship-to-shore logistics and rapidly deployable construction teams around the globe, according to the Navy.

The life support areas, built in April, are camps that provide service members with housing, food, medical services, and sanitation and preparation areas while deployed ashore. To build the areas, ACB 1 Sailors cleared and leveled six acres of land and constructed facilities to support 500 personnel for the duration of the mission.

Balikatan is an annual exercise between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and U.S. military designed to strengthen bilateral interoperability, capabilities, trust, and cooperation built over decades of shared experiences.

Channel Crossing

The construction crew members also built a 70-foot-by-15-foot channel crossing requiring 900 cubic tons of material, large enough to support Combined Joint Logistics Over the Shore operations and the movement of heavy equipment to and from the Military Sealift Command ships supporting the exercise.

Paired with the channel crossing, ACB 1 utilized Improved Navy Lighterage System craft to conduct over ther shore missions due to the crafts' portability and modular capabilities.

The exercises maintain the U.S. Joint Force and allied capability to strategically maintain ship-to-shore logistics around the world.

Roll On/Roll Off and Amphibious Bulk Liquid Transfer System missions also rehearsed during the exercise.

With the construction efforts, the mission was successfully completed as the combined team was able to transport 200 pieces of military equipment while maintaining unbroken services for all 500 service members, according to the Navy.

"The construction projects we completed here were critical to the success of the overall mission, and our Seabees were able to complete them safely and quickly," said Chief Equipment Operator Christopher Ransomer.

"What the construction team did here is the bread and butter of being a Seabee, and as always, they did it well."

Story by Petty Officer 1st Class Storm Henry

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SPORTS

Coronado softball recap: Ups and downs prep team for future

By CADE CAVIN
The Coronado News

The Coronado girls softball team had a challenging season, but Coach Tom Dull says they will grow and looks forward to 2024. *Staff photo by Willem Quigley.*

Despite a grueling schedule, with 10 of the 15 opponents qualifying for CIF playoffs, the 2022-23 Coronado High Softball team gained valuable experience that Coach Tom Dull believes will benefit the team and players down the road.

"I feel like teams that go through seasons like we had can't help but grow stronger and closer together. They supported each other through all the ups and downs," He said. "A 2-19-1 season has more downs than ups and these girls did not quit."

Dull reminisced on a moment during the season he believed epitomized the team and the players' efforts this year.

"At our Senior night against Clairemont down one run, our two seniors Eva Serdio and Madison Cannon would start a two-out rally that gave us a chance to win. Although it didn't go our way, we battled all the way to the end," Dull said.

The Islanders may have struggled overall, but throughout the course of the full campaign Ali Pecus, Susanna Pate, and Cannon were able to showcase their abilities, with Pecus earning all league First Team honors while the other two were on the league's Second Team, he said.

Senior captain and infielder/outfielder Cannon recognized the season's difficulties and shortcomings, but said the team grew over the course of the 22-game season.

"It was a tough year, but I think we are all better players and people for going through it," she said.

Battle tested

Dull said he believes the difficult season will aid the team down the road.

"I feel like we are battle tested and ready for next season," Dull said. "Five of those teams are playing in the semifinals of Division I, II, and III. Playing this schedule this year gave us the experience we will need to take us far into the playoffs next year."

The Islanders will lose some talented players to graduation, but Coronado is a young team with a large portion of their production this year hailing from underclassmen, he said.

Dull said players like Pate, Tatum Munoz, and Parker Thompson took steps in their game to help get Coronado High Softball back to being competitive.

> *"It was a tough year, but I think we are all better players and people for going through it"*
>
> **Captain Madison Cannon**

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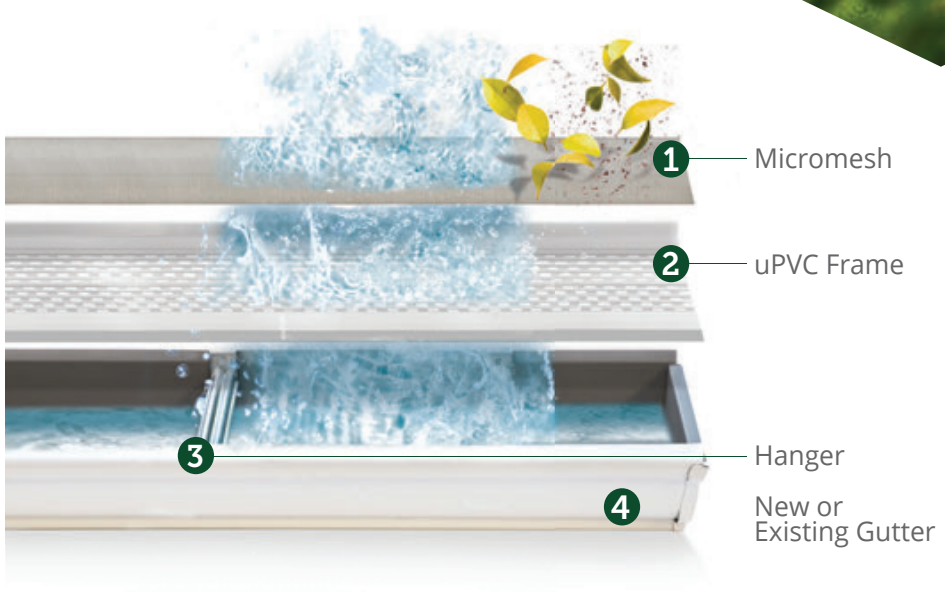

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SPORTS

PUTTING THE "STUDENT" IN STUDENT-ATHLETE

Versatile football player Graham Bower excels in classroom, seeks future in sports media

By SAM DATIN
The Coronado News

Graham Bower, a member of the Coronado Islanders football team, is a clear-cut example of why the "student" comes first in student-athlete.

Bower, a senior this fall, is entering his fourth year on the varsity football team, and his second as a captain.

He is ambitious in sports media, taking photos for a Coronado media outlet, and has been chosen by the California Interscholastic Federation to be a member of the San Diego Section Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC).

And, he said he has a 4.0 grade point average.

Humble demeanor

Bower distinguishes himself by his humble demeanor and leadership qualities, according to Islanders Head Coach Kurt Hines.

"My favorite thing about Graham is he is one of the most humble, hard-working, honest kids, " said Hines. "His humility, his willingness, and desire to apply to teammates to help them is phenomenal. So I won't, but I could go on forever about him because he's just that good of a human being."

Versatile on the gridiron

On the gridiron, Bower is a versatile and vital team member, playing quarterback and linebacker this past season, and he intends to play slot receiver and linebacker this fall.

Graham Bower will be a fourth-year varsity player this fall for the Coronado Football team, but he also excels in the classroom with a 4.0 gpa. *Photo courtesy of Bower.*

Bower is interested in playing college football but is only considering attending schools to help his career.

"I'm looking for schools with a good film and photography program, because that's one of my passions," said Bower.

Bower understands the importance of finding the right fit and does not value playing at certain programs just for prestige.

"Montana State University and the University of Montana are two schools that I'm looking at that are Division I. It would be a lot of fun to play at that high level of a school, but if there's a Division III school that I really love the area, the town and the players themselves, then I think that would be a good fit. So it all kind of depends," said Bower.

Happiness in unconventional ways

Bower also writes for The Coronado Times and edits videos for its Instagram page.

Bower also attends his high school's soccer, rugby, lacrosse, and basketball games to shoot and edit videos, and Bower finds happiness in unconventional ways by bringing light to fellow student-athletes.

"Being able to write about other sports and other players," Bower said. "It really makes me happy because I can get them some exposure and have them be seen by other people."

As voted on by San Diego coaches, Bower was one of 16 student-athletes chosen to join the San Diego Section Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC).

During his first year on the committee, Bower organized a leadership conference for the San Diego student-athletes.

"Naturally gifted athlete"

"We were able to fully lead it ourselves with no adult intervention. We spoke in front of about 80 student-athletes and got to talk to them about how things are going in their schools with sportsmanship and how they can become better leaders," said Bower.

Hines believes in Bower, calling him a "naturally gifted athlete."

"I always kind of hesitate even when I say that because I don't want to take away from all the countless hours that he puts in to come into the offseason workouts, to fuel his body to get some reps in running the ball or throwing the ball."

Hines parallels this memento to Bower's life.

"He's a gifted young man who hasn't let his gift, you know, fall by the wayside," said Hines.

"It really makes me happy because I can get them some exposure and have them be seen by other people."

Graham Bower on taking photos of other sports teams

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LIFE ON THE ISLAND

How the most 'incompetent talk show host of all time' keeps getting guests

The Associated Press

This image released by Adult Swim shows Eric Andre in a scene from "The Eric Andre Show," premiering its sixth season on Sunday. *(Tyler Golden/ Adult Swim via AP)*

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "The Eric Andre Show" is ostensibly not a series that lends itself to longevity. Its titular star, who plays a version of himself and satirizes talk shows by putting unsuspecting celebrity guests through hellish interviews, has become considerably more famous since the series first aired over a decade ago.

But through a combination of disguises and an artfully deceptive booking team, Andre is gearing up for the premiere of the sixth season this Sunday on Adult Swim, boasting a star-studded list of guests in the episodes to come, including Lil Nas X, Natasha Lyonne and Jon Hamm.

"We used to worry about, like, 'Oh, am I going to be more recognizable?'" Andre said of his increasing fame, eventually realizing it doesn't take much to fool people. "I disguised myself a lot this season. I rocked the ponytail and the glasses, and I would wear COVID masks sometimes."

There is a kind of poetic, albeit sadistic, justice that comes from watching the cult show make the most envied in society the butt of its joke, including high-profile names over the years like Seth Rogen, Demi Lovato, Dennis Rodman and Judy Greer.

A few — including Lauren Conrad and T.I. — have walked off in disgust or indignation. But that number is surprisingly low given that Andre often keeps guests in emotional and physical discomfort for an hour or more, only to edit interviews down to mere minutes.

"I'm in character," Andre explained. "I'm trying to just be the most absurd and incompetent talk show host of all time."

Once celebrities are brought on the "talk show," their egos are subjected to all kinds of abasements, both through Andre's absurd line of questioning and through physical pranks — some unbeknownst to viewers and only revealed later by former guests.

"It's a break from the kind of fictitious propaganda of traditional press, I think," he theorized, mocking actors and the stories they share on actual late-night talk shows. "They're like, 'Hey, you know, on set, George Clooney played a prank on me,' or whatever. They have some anecdote from set. It feels — people can smell it's a little inauthentic."

Part of what makes the pranks so impressive is Andre's ability to pull them off, even when guests become visibly angry and sometimes threatening toward him.

"I'm calculating every next step," the comedian said of what goes through his mind during the interviews. "I don't want to laugh. I've done so much work and so much prep has gone into bringing that prank into production that I don't want to be the one that blows it."

Despite the fact that even he is not particularly comfortable with it, Andre's antics often at some point involve nudity — either by him or the show's infamous "naked PA" — a move that frequently pushes guests over the edge.

"You gotta do what it takes," Andre, ever the showman, explained. "There's not a lot of things that are like completely jaw-dropping shocking. So, nudity is just kind of like a guaranteed reaction."

Although he denies outright lying to get people on the show, he concedes he and the bookers frequently "bend the truth," and then come up with elaborate schemes to prevent publicists from seeing the torturous pranks they unknowingly walked their clients into.

"We don't let publicists into where the stage is and we'll show them like fake monitor feeds and stuff," he explained, adding they are sometimes sent on a "wild goose chase" when they get an inkling of what is going on.

He recalled having actor Robin Givens on the show last season, saying her publicist at one point demanded the interview be stopped. In an effort to buy Andre more time, the show's assistant director allegedly led the publicist down a series of wrong turns throughout the building.

"Outside, back in, pretending he didn't know where we were," Andre said, bursting into laughter.

His stunts might lead some to believe that Andre is a simple clown. But the comedian, who studied upright bass at the Berklee College of Music, will often give glimpses into the more learned corners of his brain, inexplicably dropping commentary on things like capitalism or militarism amid the chaos of his interviews.

"What can I say, man? Patriotism is the conviction that your country is superior to all others because you were born in it," he says abruptly in one interview with NBA player Blake Griffin last season.

The fact that Andre keeps coming back for more has been of late a pleasant surprise for fans, given that he at times seems ready to move on from the show, as well as his recent involvement in other projects.

He fittingly stars in a sort of spoof on reality competition shows called "The Prank Panel" alongside his "Jackass Forever" co-star Johnny Knoxville and Gabourey Sidibe.

And in 2021, after years of delays and back and forth with different studios, Netflix finally released "Bad Trip," a narrative film with pranks on real people that stars Andre, Tiffany Haddish and Lil Rel Howery.

"I was going to end the show after five seasons and then I didn't make any money on 'Bad Trip,'" he laughed, though he acknowledged his motivations for coming back to "The Eric Andre Show" were not just financial.

"Why permanently close the door on a show where I have full creative freedom?" he said, hinting that door is still open for more after this season.

Despite Andre's claim that "Bad Trip" didn't make him any money, the film's success once it hit Netflix seems to have engendered future opportunities for the comedian, though he is reluctant to say more about what those projects are.

"It's not even my corporate overlords. It's superstition. So, I'll tell you when the time is right," he teased.

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