

THE CORONADO NEWS

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Has Coronado eliminated homelessness?



The city that has appeared to eliminate homelessness, Coronado. Staff photo by Madeline Yang.

By **MADELINE YANG**
The Coronado News

Tents, shopping carts, and sleeping bags line the sidewalks of many California big cities including San Diego with entire pavements held by nomadic neighborhoods with homeless people.

There is one downtown, however, that seems to have escaped a homeless problem: Coronado.

Mayor Richard Bailey recently made national headlines by appearing on FOX News and KUSI to

discuss how he's found an answer to homelessness.

However, The Coronado News found that the key reason the city has virtually no homeless people is that the Coronado Police Department rounds up homeless individuals and takes them to shelters in San Diego. And, Bailey acknowledged that it's challenging for homeless people to get onto the island.

California, and especially Southern California, has become an attraction for the homeless with its mild weather and policies by officials in several metro cities who have allowed homelessness to

expand, according to critics.

In San Diego, former NBA superstar and broadcaster Bill Walton last fall publicly crusaded against Mayor Todd Gloria for what Walton called the city's lack of effort to move homeless people off the streets.

Catherine Augustine, a homeless woman living on the outskirts of downtown San Diego, told The Coronado News that the weather is what brought her here – and she's not alone.

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FROM 'BIG NERD' TO PhD CANDIDATE

Meet CHS outstanding teacher winner Maylén Rafuls

By **JULIETA SOTO**
The Coronado News

Known as Señora, Profe, or Madam is teacher Maylén Rafuls, who holds many roles for the advancement of world language education in the Coronado Unified School District.

The Coronado High School French and Spanish educator will accept an Outstanding Teacher award by the California Language Teachers' Association (CLTA) in Visalia during the four-day state conference on March 19.

"It's a great honor to be recognized among many other wonderful teachers in California and just share that with that network," she said.

The 37-year-old teacher understands Italian and Portuguese very well and also received a 2017 outstanding New French Teacher Award in San Diego from the American Association of Teachers of French.

This semester, Rafuls oversees other world language tasks across the district and will resume teaching one section each term beginning next year as she's the district's World Languages Teacher on Special Assignment.

Rafuls also is working closely with district Director of Special Programs Shane Schmeichel,

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"Since I was a little girl, I wanted to be a teacher. It's a really difficult career, and anyone who's a teacher should be admired."

Maylén Rafuls

CORONADO NEWS INVESTIGATION: THE TIJUANA SEWAGE CRISIS

DYSFUNCTION SEEMINGLY AT THE CORE OF TIJUANA SEWAGE MESS

By **DENNIS WAGNER, CRAIG HARRIS, JULIETA SOTO and MADELINE YANG**
The Coronado News

In 2017, professor James Cooper attended a public forum on Tijuana sewage contamination where citizens were invited to hear government officials explain what was being done to staunch the fecal pollution of San Diego County beaches.

That session, like many others, didn't go well.

"(It) was less a meeting and more of an expression of exasperation. Malodorous scents emanated from the nearby sewage," Cooper noted in a written account. "(But) it was worth the trip just to witness the dysfunction."

"Both a U.S. flag and a Mexican flag were displayed in the Meeting Room, but no one on the U.S. side spoke Spanish nor possessed any materials from the Mexican side that were translated into English. Yet both the Mexican and U.S. citizens at the meeting wanted to hold their public officials accountable for doing something about the seemingly endless spills of sewage."

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CORONADO

CORONADO LOVE LETTER

A walk back in time with Susan Keith

By **CRAIG HARRIS**
The Coronado News

With a peek-a-boo view to the Pacific Ocean, Suan Keith's home is a journey back in time.

Whether it's her classic books, military memorabilia or her Republican bathroom – yes, you read that correctly – Keith's large, comfortable home with her rambunctious 2-year-old Labrador Izzy is a modern-day history lesson.

The Tudor home, which she said is the ultimate family hangout during Fourth of July weekend, was bought by her parents, Eleanor and Stan Ring in 1947.

Her father, like the heads of many longtime Coronado families, was in the U.S. Navy.

The Rings had three children: Stewart, Bill and Susan.

Both boys, like other family members, were Navy officers and dad was a vice admiral, according to Keith.

The family spent time with her dad serving in Washington, D.C., and Naples, Italy, but she said Coronado always was home, and the family purchased the place she now resides in when she was 6.

"We are a military family," Keith said with a chuckle, noting her son, Ty, also was a Navy officer.

Susan has two other children: Stewart and Belle.

'Coronado First'

Keith notes that the family is very patriotic – and Republican.

Yet, she says party affiliation has never kept her from a good friendship.



Susan Keith, a longtime Coronado resident, stands inside her "Elephant Room" in her Tudor home near the beach. Staff photo by Craig Harris.

The former Coronado councilwoman said she loves her Democrat friends dearly, but they just vote differently.

And, a winning a political fight is never worth losing a friendship, she says.

She also said party politics should stay out of Coronado City Council and School Board races, and residents running for office in town should put the community ahead of a political party.

"When I ran, my campaign manager was a Democrat," said Keith, who served on the city council in the 1980s. "My campaign signs were 'Coronado First.'"

Keith said she tremendously resents how "our town has gone partisan."

"That's not what we need," she said. "But once you have it, I don't know how you get rid of it."

Dance the night away

Keith says she has many fond memories growing up in Coronado, especially dancing until 2 a.m. at the Hotel del Coronado on weekends during her younger days.

"We used to go every Friday and Saturday night to the Ocean View Room," she said. "They had a band, we had drinks, and we danced and danced..."

In the old days, people thought it was their hotel, and it's not their hotel anymore."

Keith said the Del, one of the top resorts in the country, has become too expensive for locals and primarily caters to out-of-town guests.

So, her home has become the family gathering spot on holidays.

'Leaving the house to them'

Inside that home, Keith has military memorabilia, early edition books and...the GOP bathroom or "Elephant Room," as she affectionately calls it.

It is a homage to Republicans, with souvenir tickets from past national GOP conventions, newspaper clippings, buttons, and hats that represent Republican historical events.

There's also a campaign poster of the late Arizona U.S. Sen. John McCain, a Navy officer who was the 2008 Republican presidential nominee.

Keith notes that McCain and her brother Bill were classmates at the Naval academy.

Keith said none of her kids can afford to live in Coronado, but she prays they will keep the home for future family celebrations.

"I'm leaving the house to them, but if they sell they are never to tell me," Keith said. "Even if I'm dead, I don't want to hear it come out of their mouths. I don't want to think they will never be here."

Do you have an idea for a Coronado Love Letter? Send your tips to Editor Craig Harris at craig@thecoronadonews.com or call 602-509-3613.

this week

18 • saturday

San Diego Storytelling Festival: The Storytellers of San Diego return to Coronado Public Library for a daylong celebration of all things storytelling. This free all-day festival takes over the library with storytelling for adults and kids, open mic sessions, and a debut performance by the participants of the first-ever Storytelling Institute, a storytelling how-to course for novices. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

20 • monday

Coronado Public Library's Mystery Book Club will discuss "The Stranger Diaries" by Elly Griffiths at its meeting in the Library's Winn Room at 2 p.m.

20 • monday

Coronado High School JV and varsity boys lacrosse host Santana High School at 5 and 7 p.m.

21 • tuesday

San Diego Shakespeare Society Staged Reading: "Henry VI" (Part One). Winn Room at the Coronado Public Library. 6 to 8 p.m.

21 • tuesday

Coronado City Council Regular Meeting, Council Chambers. 4 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

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK

Coronado High School students awarded summer study abroad scholarships

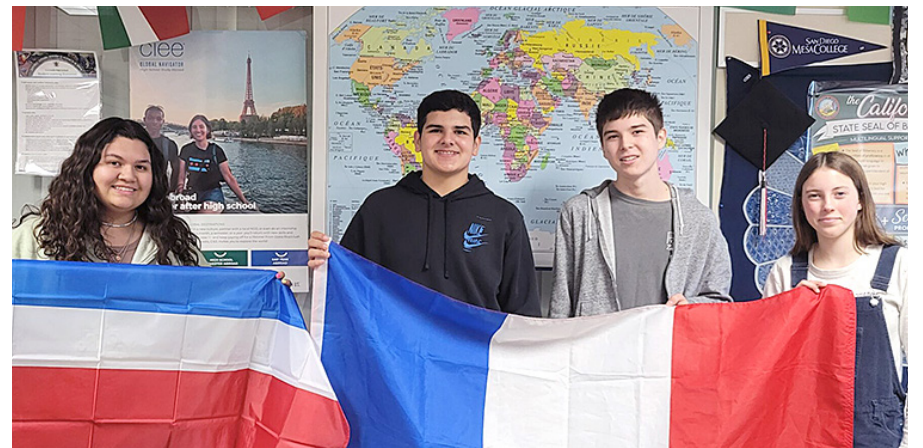
Four students from Coronado High School received partial scholarships through the Council On International Educational Exchange (CIEE) to study abroad this summer.

Three of them will head to France to study French language and culture, and the fourth will go to Costa Rica and engage in environmental action.

"These students will have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to immerse themselves in different countries. Coronado High School and the CHS World Languages department are incredibly proud of these students, and we cannot wait to hear about their adventures next fall!" said French and Spanish teacher and the CUSD Teacher on Special Assignment for World Languages Maylen Rafuls.

Sophomore Spanish student Maya Rodriguez was awarded a scholarship and will attend the 'Women in Stem for Environmental Action' program in Monteverde, Costa Rica.

"I would say I'm mostly excited about the opportunity to travel and



CHS world language program students received partial scholarships to study abroad this summer. Pictured here are Maya Rodriguez, who will go to Costa Rica; and Eduardo Gonzalez-Rubio, Mason Deane, and Claudia Gerald, all planning to study in France.

Photo courtesy of Maria Simon, CUSD.

learn about my passions in a whole new environment," Rodriguez said.

Freshmen Eduardo Gonzalez-Rubio and Claudia Gerald, and sophomore Mason Deane, all received scholarships for the French Language and Culture program in Paris.

The three will have the opportuni-

ty to perfect their French with native professors as well as live with local families and experience the culture and traditions of the country.

CIEE is a nonprofit study abroad and intercultural exchange program for high school and college students. The scholarships help defray the program cost for students.

PET OF THE WEEK

Meet Atticus

This is Atticus, named after my favorite character in my favorite book, "To Kill a Mockingbird."

Atticus is a rescue who had a rough life in the beginning. He was chained up without food or water in a junkyard in Compton.

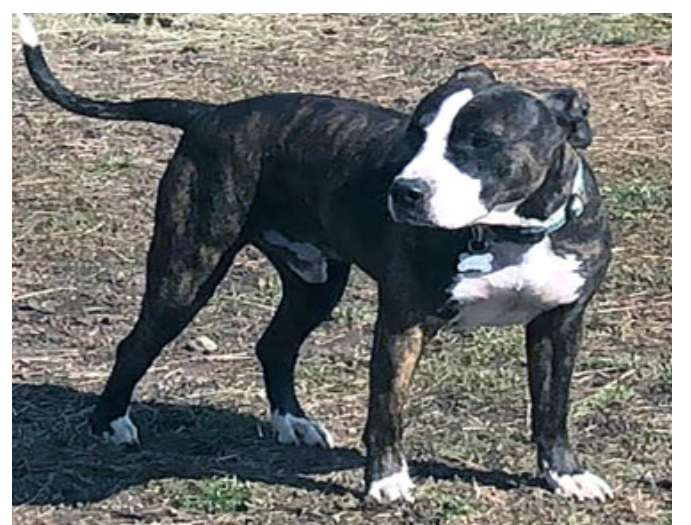
It is thought he was used for dog fighting because of the scar tissue the vet found on him.

He was just 4 years old on February 15, and I've had him for 3 years. He is without a doubt the smartest dog I've ever had.

I taught him commands in French, and he picked them right up. At first he didn't get along with other dogs, but now he loves the dog park playtime.

Atticus should not only be dog of the week but of the year. Coming from the abuse he suffered, he is the sweetest most lovable dog anyone could have.

—Submitted by Margy Barr



Please send your nominations for The Coronado News Pet of the Week to Editor Craig Harris at 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



What makes the spring such a great time to sell?

As the days grow longer and the temperature begins to rise, the spring season ushers in a time of renewed energy and fresh opportunities - including the perfect time to sell your home.

From increased market activity to favorable school schedules, there are several reasons why the spring season is often seen as the best time to sell a home.

In this article, we'll take a closer look at why now can be a great time to list your property and how you can take advantage of this historically busy time in the real estate market.

With warmer weather, potential buyers are encouraged to go outside and explore the local real estate market.

And buyers are more likely to attend open houses and schedule viewings when the weather is comfortable, dry, and sunny. According to Redfin, homes listed in the spring sell an average of 15 days faster than homes listed in the winter.

According to the National Association of Realtors (NAR), in 2022, March and April were the months with the highest number of existing-home sales, with a total of 1.3 million homes sold nationally during those months.

Additionally, the same report showed that home sales during the spring season were higher than any other season throughout the year. This increased market activity can lead to more showings, more offers, and potentially a quicker sale for your property.

Another way to improve home sales in the spring is to have more attractive curb appeal, which can make your property stand out to potential buyers.

Homes with excellent curb appeal can sell for up to 7% more than homes with average or poor curb appeal, according to Zillow. Further, by listing your property during the spring season, you can take advantage of Coronado's natural beauty.

Also, listing your property in the spring season can appeal to families who are looking to move before the start of the next school year, as the National Association of Realtors reports that more than half - 52% - of buyers in 2022 had children under the age of 17 living at home.

A report from Redfin found that the number of buyers with children who searched for homes increased by 26% from January to May in 2022. This suggests that families with school-aged children may be more active in the housing market during the spring season.

Additionally, according to a Redfin survey, the number of properties for sale rises by 5% on average from March to April, with greater increases observed in select markets.

This implies that there might be more choices available to buyers in the spring, which could result in more intense competition and possibly a higher sale price for your home.

The spring season has always been a great time to sell real estate. With increased market activity, favorable school schedules, and the allure of springtime renewal, many buyers are eager to find their dream home during this time.

As a seller, it's important to take advantage of this busy season by properly preparing your property, pricing it appropriately, and working with an experienced real estate agent to navigate the competitive market.

If you're considering selling your home this spring, don't hesitate to reach out to me for more information on how you can take advantage in the market and sell your property successfully.

As a trusted and experienced real estate agent in your area, I'm here to help guide you through the process and ensure a smooth and successful sale. Contact me today to get started on your home selling journey! (619) 568-0568 info@simonerealestategroup.com.

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OPINION

OP-ED: PAUL HUNTSMAN

Why I founded The Coronado News

This past year, I finally took the step, and purchased a home in Coronado.

My father's service in the U.S. Navy brought my parents to Coronado in the 1960s, and they always dreamed of one day having the means to stay in the iconic Hotel del Coronado.



Paul Huntsman is the owner and editorial board member of The Coronado News.

fledgling "paper of record" in Utah: The Salt Lake Tribune. My interest in purchasing the institution was twofold, to bring the paper back into local hands, and find a sustainable pathway forward for local journalism.

After four long frustrating years, I made the decision to convert The Salt Lake Tribune into the nation's first legacy daily nonprofit newspaper.

Two years later, massive losses transitioned to cash surplus, thanks in part to a community that values quality journalism – the bedrock of our democracy.

With the backdrop of beach closures and sewage spill on our beaches in Coronado, why not bring a team together and address this?

I have great respect for anyone willing to invest in local journalism, but my experience has taught me that quality, not quantity, and restless, veteran reporters, combined with skilled, and sage younger talent, can succeed.

Unprecedented disruption

For decades, journalism has been going through an unprecedented disruption. Changes in technology, consumer behavior, advertising, industry consolidation, and now, everyone who has a smart phone is both a publisher, and a consumer.

Too many journalists have been slow to adapt, and that has led to thousands of news deserts around the country. The verdict of these shutdowns?

Lower community engagement, higher partisanship and less trust in their institutions.

The world around us is driven by technology, science, media, finance, and complex litigation.

Unless newsrooms develop a healthy appetite to consume and understand these skill sets and disciplines, they will continue to languish.

Sewage investigation

Can Coronado have a beachhead with these skill sets?

We'll do our best, and hope our presence raises the level of competition which benefits the entire community.

Our first investigative piece of a multi-part series on the sewage crisis is unprecedented work on the island and itself, worth the price to start up this venture. That sets the foundation and water mark for our product.

I wouldn't embark on this venture if I didn't have the leadership of Craig Harris – longtime investigative reporter with Gannett, and San Diego resident.

He's assembled an unprecedented team on the island. They'll be at your school board, and city council meetings, others events, and will frequent many of your businesses.

Please take notice of their presence, and your contributions will only add the quality of output.

A great community deserves a great newspaper. We're here to stay, and look forward to building this for the betterment of our community.

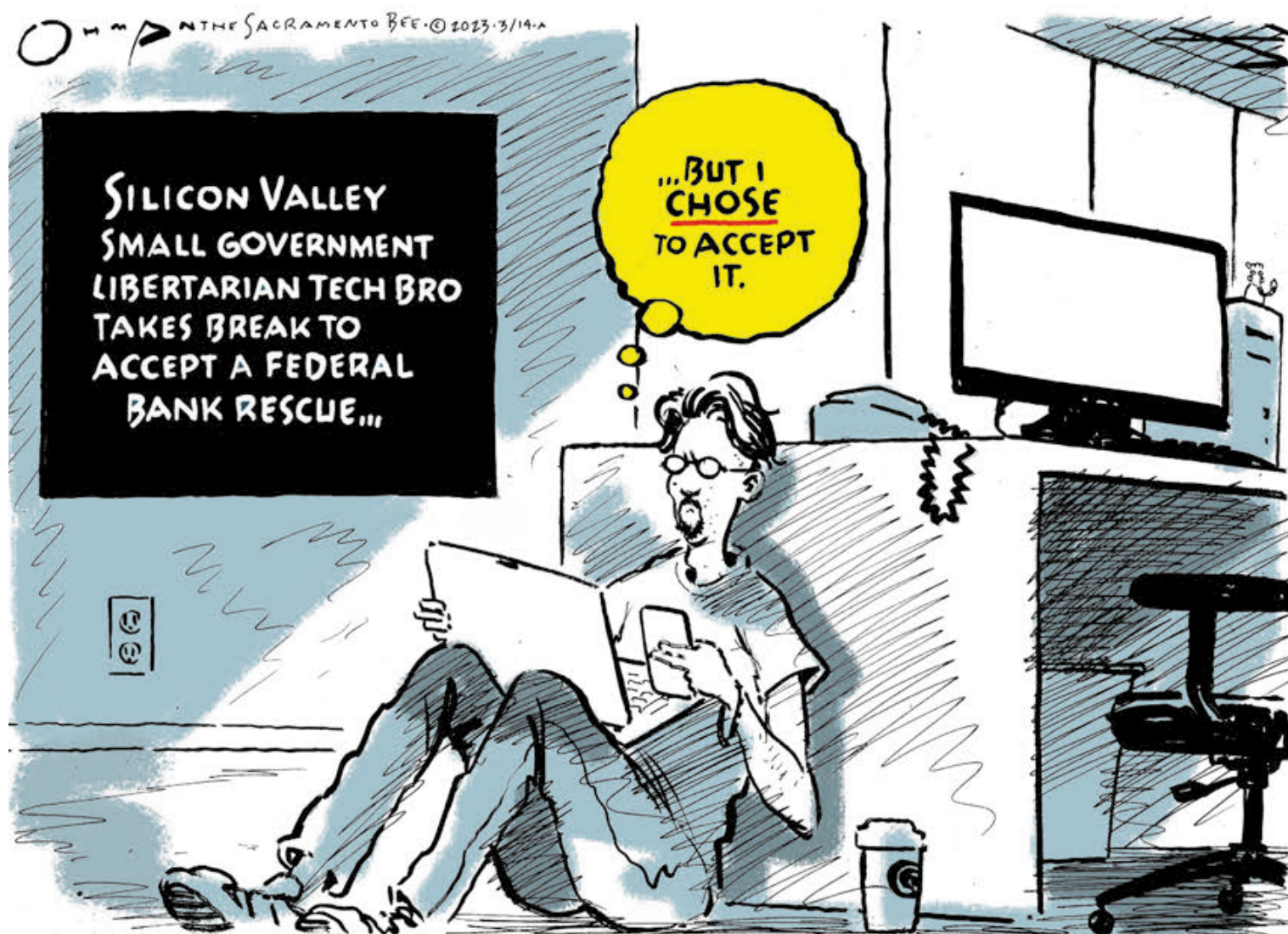
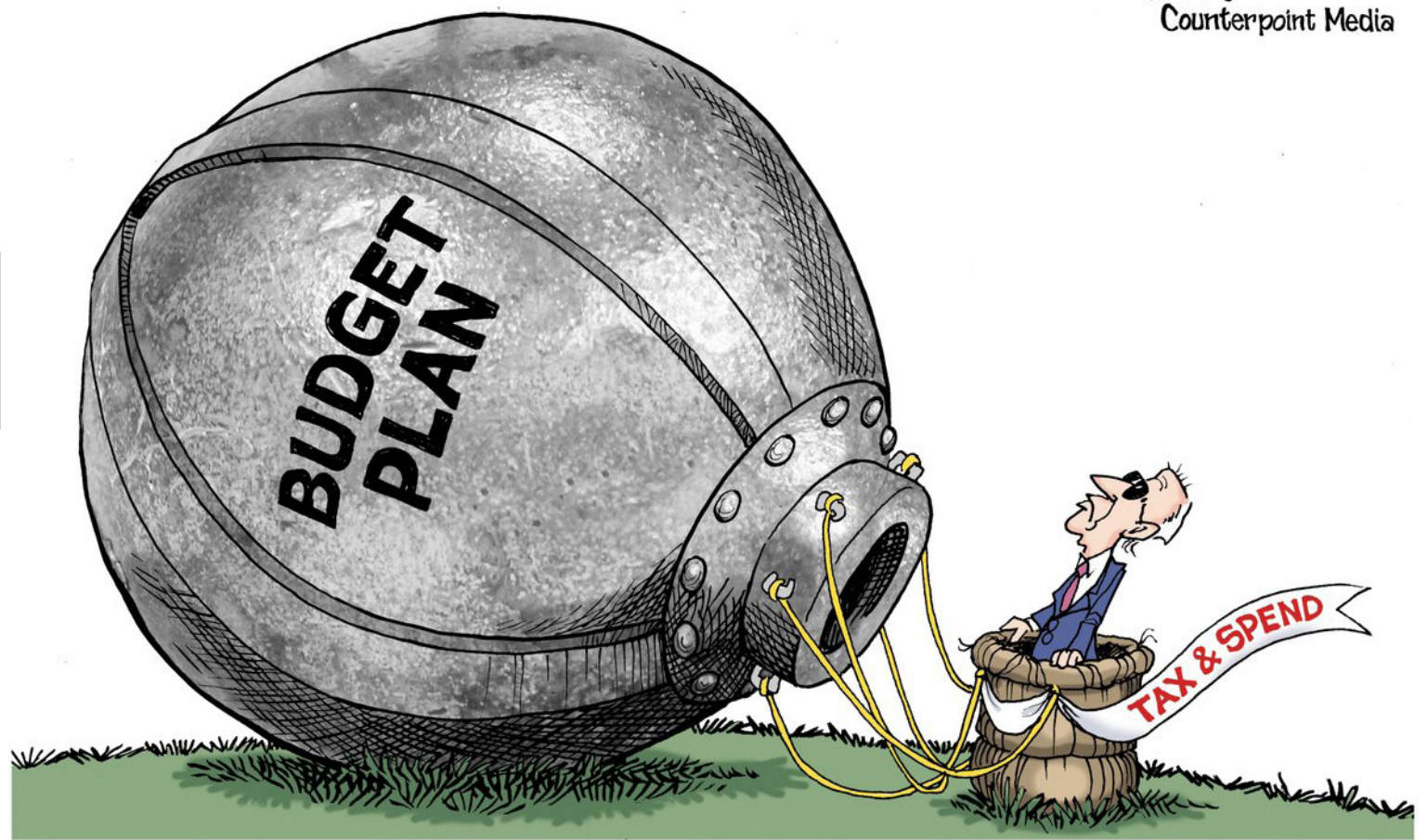
Paul Huntsman is owner and editorial board member of The Coronado News.

Immersed in local journalism

For the past 10 years, I've immersed myself in local journalism, which led to the purchase of the

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CORONADO

Biden lands in Coronado to announce Australia submarine deal

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — President Joe Biden and the leaders of Australia and the United Kingdom on Monday announced that Australia will purchase nuclear-powered attack submarines from the U.S. to modernize its fleet amid growing concern about China's influence in the Indo-Pacific.

Biden flew to San Diego to appear with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak as they hailed an 18-month-old nuclear partnership given the acronym AUKUS — for Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Landed at North Island Naval Air Station

Reports on social media showed Air Force One touching down at North Island Naval Air Station in Coronado shortly after noon. The president's public schedule showed he would meet with Albanese and Sunak around 1:30 p.m. and then deliver remarks on the partnership at Naval Base Point Loma in San Diego.

Coronado Mayor Richard Bailey, a Republican, said he was aware that Biden, a Democrat, had landed on North Island on Monday.

"Only that I wasn't invited haha," Bailey quipped in a text message to The Coronado News.

San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria welcomed the president and the two other foreign leaders on social media, saying San Diego was delighted to host the "summit between the three allies to strengthen international security."

Tri-national partnership

The partnership, announced in 2021, enables Australia to access nuclear-powered submarines, which are stealthier and more capable than conventionally powered vessels, as a counterweight to China's military buildup.

Biden, appearing sensitive to tensions with China and its criticism of the deal, stressed that the submarines are "nuclear powered, not nuclear armed."

"These boats will not have any nuclear weapons of any kind of them," he said at an outdoor ceremony at



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese speaks as President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, right, listen at Naval Base Point Loma, Monday, March 13, 2023, in San Diego. (AP Photo)

Naval Base Point Loma in San Diego, where he was flanked by Albanese and Sunak. Two submarines, the USS Missouri and the USS Charlotte, were tied up at the next pier in the Pacific Ocean behind the leaders.

Albanese said the agreement "represents the biggest single investment in Australia's defense capability in all of our history." It's also the first time in 65 years that the U.S. has shared its nuclear propulsion technology, "and we thank you for it," he said.

Sunak called AUKUS "the most significant multilateral defense partnership in generations." He said the U.K. also will share its 60 years of experience running its own submarine fleet with Australian engineers "so they can build their own fleet."

In a joint statement before the formal announcement, the leaders said their countries have worked

for decades to sustain peace, stability and prosperity around the world, including in the Indo-Pacific.

"We believe in a world that protects freedom and respects human rights, the rule of law, the independence of sovereign states, and the rules-based international order," they said in the statement, released before their joint appearance in San Diego.

"The steps we are announcing today will help us to advance these mutually beneficial objectives in the decades to come," they said.

San Diego is Biden's first stop on a three-day trip to California and Nevada. He was also scheduled to discuss gun violence prevention in Monterey Park, where 11 people were killed in a January mass shooting, and his plans to lower prescription drug costs in Las Vegas.



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CORONADO

Coronado School Board limits time for public comments

By JULIETA SOTO
The Coronado News

The Coronado School Board has changed course and only is allowing public comment on non-agendized items for 20 minutes during the later part of its meetings.

The move expedited the monthly school board meeting on March 9.

Prior meetings this year had public comment on non-agendized items at the beginning of the meeting and public comment on agendized items moving through each section, allowing various community members to talk into the evening.

Now, public comment will be heard after staff presentations.

Coronado USD Board President Renee Cavanaugh said the intent was not to change the individual amount of time for each person or the total amount of time for public comment.

Instead, she said, it was to have public suggestions come right before board discussion about future topics and to keep track of information on items that could appear on future agendas.

Not well received

This policy change was not well received by some who usually attend the board meetings.

“They’ve done it before with the previous board,” said Coronado parent and resident Jim Fabiszak.

Attending CUSD monthly board meetings on a regular basis, Fabiszak considers this change impactful to the community.

“I think it’s a negative impact,” he said. “Moving it to the end of the day may flow better, but it’s definitely a lot

more of impact on parents and community members because that agenda item might not become available until 3 ½ hours, sometimes 4 hours after the start of the meeting.”

Other regular board meeting attendees mirrored concerns, considering it unfortunate for working parents.

Trustee Whitney Antrim, however, expressed her appreciation for the board and rearranging agenda items to really put the focus on students first, the business of the board, and efforts to interact and engage with the community, she said.

Turnover issues

A public hearing was available regarding a new collective bargaining agreement between the district and teachers union. However, no public comment was made.

Moving forward, Superintendent Karl Mueller said the public should reach out to Human Resources Director Armando Farias for any questions.

In a report from Association of Coronado Teachers President Jennifer Landry, she shared that Village Elementary Education Specialist Nicolette Pavila is the newest hire. She also expressed concerns regarding turnover and said that 116 educators have left since 2017, with 32 being members of the district’s special education department.

Reasons for the departure include retirements, COVID, and personal decisions like family planning or wanting support, she said.

According to Farias, 92 general educators and 23 special education employees have left the school district since 2017.

Farias said 13 separation survey re-

sponses from employees show the top reasons for resigning are a promotion/opportunity for advancement, relocation out of the area, or family reasons.

“When asked if they would consider reemployment with CUSD, over 84% state they would,” he said.

4X4 Committee

During Board comments, Trustee Alexia Palacios-Peters shared updates on the 4x4 Committee, which is performing a comprehensive evaluation of the new block bell schedule at the high school.

Palacios-Peters said there will be opportunities to meet with the committee and provide feedback beginning in April, including in person and survey responses to gather data for the report to be presented May 18.

She encouraged audience members to attend corresponding public forums to be held at the Wynn Room at the Coronado Public Library, on April 6, from 5 to 7 p.m. for parents of high school students.

There will be a meeting on April 12, from 5 to 7 p.m., for the community.

Parents will have an additional opportunity to meet with the 4x4 committee individually in 10-minute time slots from 3 to 6 p.m. on April 5.

Faculty and students will have the opportunity to attend one of the on-campus feedback sessions this month and next.

For more information people may visit the CUSD Website which lists items with corresponding dates and links, she said.

Money for transportation

Other issues discussed at the March

meeting include:

The board approving the Coronado USD Transportation Plan for the 2023-2024 school year.

Superintendent Mueller said this plan positions CUSD to be eligible to receive compensation from the state of California to help offset transportation costs.

Deputy Superintendent Donnie Salamanca added that the plan was developed so the district would be able to offer free services to low-income students, English learners, and foster youth.

Salamanca said school districts are eligible to receive up to a 60% reimbursement on transportation expenditures from the prior year.

“Our plan meets all of the mandated requirements,” he said. “This plan is the compliance requirement that makes sure that we’re eligible for that.”

“Spotlight” presentations

“Spotlight” presentations in the meeting included Coronado Middle School’s Advanced Performing Arts students sneak peek of “Willy Wonka Jr.,” a musical on the main stage at Coronado Performing Arts Center on March 24 and 25.

A second presentation was four artwork pieces from the CoSA Visual Art Exhibit on display at the Coronado Community Center (C3) Art Gallery from mid-April through May in partnership with Coronado Arts Council and City Council.

An opening reception and unveiling of the student work exhibit will be from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on April 18.

The next regular board meeting will be April 20, at 4 p.m. at the Coronado Unified School District office.

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CORONADO



Students, teachers and community members celebrate one of Coronado's Purple Star schools. Photo courtesy of Maria Simon, CUSD.

Coronado Unified Schools recognized with Purple Star military distinction

All four of the schools in Coronado Unified School District were recently recognized by the California Department of Education as Purple Star Schools, which recognizes schools best equipped to meet the unique needs of military-connected families.

Coronado High School, Middle School, and Silver Strand and Village Elementary schools each applied and were recognized independently, according to the district.

The four CUSD schools are part of a select cohort of 59 schools across the state to be awarded the Purple Star designation.

Military-connected students make up 41% of the CUSD student body.

"We are proud that all of our schools received the

distinction, making us a Purple Star district," said CUSD Superintendent Karl Mueller. "It is an honor to serve military students and families, and the influence and positive impact they have within our district cannot be overstated."

Capt. Newt McKissick, commander of Naval Base Coronado, addressed CUSD staff and military students recently at a gathering announcing the Purple Star School distinction.

He stated that a significant part of military readiness is ensuring that families, especially school age children, are taken care of and part of a good school community so that the active duty parent can focus on their job.

"Coronado schools do this amazingly well. It is

incredibly important to our efforts, and we are so grateful for what your (CUSD) staff does for our students, for our families.

Congratulations and thank you!" stated McKissick, who added that he has first-hand experience as his own children attend Coronado schools.

The California Purple Star School Designation Program, through the California Department of Education, recognizes schools that are the most committed and best equipped to meet the unique needs of military-connected students and their families.

The program was designed to help mitigate the challenges of high mobility by setting standards for and publicly designating military-friendly schools.

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Mobility issues affect over 1 in 5 Americans. These individuals, and their loved ones, know how decreased mobility can result in loss of independence, pain and falling hazards. They are often stuck at home, missing out on a variety of activities, in a vicious cycle that diminishes their quality of life. In the past, mobility devices like scooters and power chairs were too heavy and bulky to transport easily. Now, carbon fiber material invented for the aerospace program has been used to create the ultimate mobility device. It's called the Journey Air Elite ... and there's nothing else like it on earth.

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» **CORONADO NEWS INVESTIGATION: THE TIJUANA SEWAGE CRISIS**

DYSFUNCTION SEEMINGLY AT CORE OF TIJUANA SEWAGE MESS

» **Continued from Page 1**

“Sighs of frustration and outright incredulity abounded. Two California State Park rangers, each armed with a handgun, watched from the back of the meeting room. One ranger explained that the gun was necessary ‘just in case people get a little pumped up and to keep the discourse civil.’ ... During the meeting, one man incredulously asked out loud: ‘Isn’t there a Hague Court that can deal with this?’”

Over and over during the past century, public outrage over Tijuana wastewater woes has triggered political rhetoric, blue-ribbon studies, protests, lawsuits and promises – only to end with the same old solution: pathogen-filled water flowing into the Pacific Ocean and across the border.

The Coronado News is investigating a nearly century-long legacy of broken promises by the United States and Mexican officials that has caused this public health crisis and exposed beachgoers, U.S. Border Patrol agents and U.S. Navy SEALs to fecal microbes, E. Coli, salmonella and MRSA.

Cooper, the director of international legal studies at California Western School of Law in San Diego, documented that futility last year in an article titled, “Same as It Ever Was: The Tijuana River Sewage Crisis.”

Cooper, in an interview, noted that while environmental laws in Mexico are pretty stringent, enforcement, “however, is not always.”

Beach walk becomes spinal meningitis

Serge Dedina, former mayor of Imperial Beach and a co-founder of the Wildcoast marine conservation organization, said horrendous sewage spills early in 2017 from Tijuana laid bare the governmental failures.

Over several weeks that year, 143 million gallons of raw sewage filled the Tijuana River from broken pipes and collectors, oozing into the ocean as authorities pointed fingers of blame at one another.

When city officials raised concerns, Dedina said, it exposed “a complete lack of transparency and accountability on the Mexican side, and the lack of responsibility on the U.S. side.

“We were really shocked by how unprepared and unconcerned the United States government was,” he said.

That March, Imperial Beach resident Suzanne Parish contracted spinal meningitis after walking with her husband, Mitch McKay, along the beach south of the Boco Rio - near the mouth of the estuary.

The couple said they typically would pick up garbage along their walks, and she never dreamed she’d get sick from walking barefoot in the area. Further, back then there were no San Diego County warning signs about the dangers of the water.

“It was really horrible,” said Parish, who spent 12 days in a hospital in Coronado and incurred over \$70,000 in hospital bills of which the couple paid just more than \$12,000.

Her stay also included a visit from representatives from the regional Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, she said.

Today, McKay serves on the Imperial Beach City Council and his district includes most of the beachfront.

He’s also a 3-year member of the Citizen Forum Board for the U.S. side of the International Boundary and Water Commission, a body created by the United States and Mexico in 1889 to find solutions over border issues.

Parish said she hadn’t publicly shared her story until she saw the recent Coronado News investigation on the sewage crisis.

The couple said it’s time for politicians to quit bickering and find a permanent solution that includes wastewater reclamation to stop tens of millions of gallons of raw sewage from flowing from the Tijuana River Valley and into the Pacific Ocean.

McKay believes the total cost of such a comprehensive solution could exceed \$1.2 billion.

“Everyone who surfs in Imperial Beach is sure to get surfer ear, a rash, or a scratchy throat from the water,” McKay said. “You have to earn those stripes for being in dirty water. But, to think you could get spinal meningitis and almost die from walking the surf line....And, we have seen a lot of other people walk down there.”

McKay said the residents of Imperial Beach have for too long suffered from “apathy and social injustice.”

Rains this winter once again caused the Tijuana



The South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant is designed to currently process up to 25 million gallons of sewage per day. That number is to hopefully increase to 50 million gallons of sewage a day in a few years after renovations. Staff photos by Madeline Yang.

River to dump sewage into the sea, and a pipeline rupture in August shut down San Diego County beaches at the height of tourist season, spewing 30 million gallons daily of raw wastewater.

South Bay plant once “the solution”

The South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant, built with U.S. money on the north side of the border to handle Tijuana’s excess effluent, was once perceived as “the solution.”

But even that huge project was a boondoggle, according to Dedina: It was planned in the 1970s, didn’t get designed until the 1980s, and wasn’t constructed until the 1990s – after Tijuana’s sewage output had more than doubled.

The plant hugs the U.S.-Mexico border, about 17 miles south of Coronado. At its entrance, seagulls and ducks sit along the Tijuana River while turkey vultures fly overhead.



Morgan Rogers at the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment plant.

Staff photo by Madeline Yang.

To the south, cars zoom along the highway in Tijuana as three fences, including a double bollard one with razor wire that’s largely intended to keep migrants from illegally crossing into the United States, protect the plant.

However, with large holes in parts of the main fence, immigrants daily congregate just south of the plant on the American side and wait for U.S. Border Patrol agents to arrest and process them, according to Morgan Rogers, area operations manager for the San Diego Field office of the IBWC.

“We see a lot of immigrants, and they are from all

over the world,” said Rogers as at least 15 people, including a blond haired mother with three young children, waited for the Border Patrol in mid-January.

The area also can be dangerous: Rogers noted a dead body was left just outside the plant during the past few months.

Unexpected challenges

The plant was designed to treat on average 25 million gallons of sewage a day that comes from Tijuana, but in early March it was treating about 30 million gallons daily, according to IBWC records provided to The Coronado News.

The sheer volume of human waste creates unexpected challenges, and the plant has been receiving “excess flows since August 2022,” when a Mexican pipeline was damaged, records show.

Settling ponds at the international treatment plant are used to separate wastes from water. As solids sink, they form a toxic sludge mixed with heavy metals, pesticides and other industrial byproducts.

Tons of this sludge get scooped each day into giant trucks and hauled through a special gate in the border fence to hills south of Tijuana.

Gary Sirota, an environmental attorney, said the gunk gets dumped near the ocean, and subsequent rains send the seepage downhill into a prime surfing beach.

Sirota said most people don’t understand a fundamental aspect of the whole controversy.

For Americans, the concern is pollution and health.

But, for Mexico, it’s about water.

With Tijuana growing and Colorado River supplies getting reduced, the city keeps demanding its share.

“The U.S. was screaming, ‘Clean up your sewage problem,’” Sirota said, “and Mexico was yelling, ‘Well, give us our water.’”

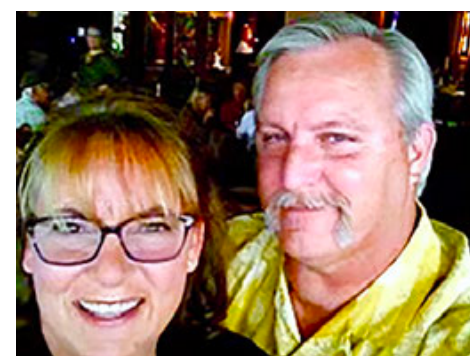
A \$474 million fix

That, then, is the filthy, historic reality.

A century-long infusion of feces, urine and pathogens invades south San Diego County beaches. An alphabet soup of government agencies conducts studies, convenes meetings, contests lawsuits and promises fixes – while average folks wait.

“To think you could get spinal meningitis and almost die from walking the surf line.”

-Imperial Beach Councilman Mitch McKay on the circumstances of his wife, Suzanne.



A love for the ocean inspired ongoing preservation efforts for Diaz

BY JULIETA SOTO
The Coronado News

Margarita Diaz has been fighting Tijuana's sewage problem for 30 years in her home country, but the battle extends all the way to Coronado.

Diaz since 2007 has been the general director of Proyecto Fronterizo de Educación Ambiental (PFEA), an organization that raises awareness over Tijuana River contamination and infrastructure issues.

The organization works to motivate Tijuana residents to volunteer at beach cleanups, and it teaches them about composting.

The work in Tijuana ultimately will help mitigate the raw sewage and waste that flows into the Pacific Ocean and onto San Diego County beaches including Coronado.

Founded in 1991, PFEA currently oversees three projects in Tijuana.

One includes converting a garbage dump, which resulted from a landslide, into a community park and Colonia Anexa Miramar community members learn the process of composting.

The second is Tijuana Waterkeeper whose water quality analysis lab has monitored the coastal environmental health of Baja California since 2015. The water quality results are published on theswimguide.org.

The third is Restaurante Amigo del Mar, specifically created for restaurants to participate and learn to reduce or eliminate the use of single-use plastics.

Diaz also is a representative of Civil Society in the Tijuana Clean Beaches Committee, coordinator of the management program of the Tijuana Clean Beaches Committee, and member of the Plastic Pollution Coalition. Apart from these roles, she's the mother of two young adults.

Binational problem

In late January, Diaz hosted members of Coronado News staff for a tour in Tijuana and showed how sewage that spills into the Tijuana River is a binational problem.

Standing in front of the 24-hour Easy Park Lot near the San Ysidro-Mexico border entrance into Tijuana, Diaz stands at about 5-foot-2 with a full smile.

Curly, short hair falls slightly above the left side of her forehead, where black and white strands meet the rims of small eyeglasses that sit on her nose. She is excited to share that she stood on these same streets in the beginning of her career.



Margarita Diaz stands along a street in Tijuana. For three decades she has been fighting to solve the city's sewage crisis. Photo by Madeline Yang.

Diaz remembers the uncertainty, as a recent college graduate, of standing on the opposite side of the roundabout in the middle of where Avenida de la Amistad and Avenida Frontera intersect.

She had decided to move from Mexico City to San Diego after completing her studies with a senior thesis, the first project in Universidad La Salle México, about green architecture in 1991.

Looking across the street at the hovering building where she waited before crossing to the United States, she said that her time in the states was short-lived, as she eventually moved to Tijuana after two years living in Chula Vista.

Early years in Acapulco

In Tijuana, Diaz settled next door to the founder of Proyecto Fronterizo de Educación Ambiental,

the NGO she has been at since joining in 1993.

Growing up at the beaches and fishing in Acapulco, Margarita said she learned the importance of water and nature.

She completed her high school and architecture degree studies in Mexico City, where she was born. Life in Acapulco contrasted the strikingly tightness of the city she experienced.

"When I moved back to Mexico, I hated it," said Diaz, who said she always knew she would return to the coast.

"I remember going to my balcony and seeing buildings and seeing the sun going down in between the buildings, and I was like oh my God, I don't want to be here," she said.

"I promised myself when I graduate, I am going to the beach, what beach I don't know, but I'm leaving...I don't like the city."

Now, finally and once again, officials are promising a major overhaul of Tijuana's sewage infrastructure.

In August, the IBWC – along with a host of other agencies – announced plans to spend \$474 million on Tijuana sewage infrastructure improvements, with the majority of the money coming from the United States.

In addition to that bilateral agreement, there were settlements of lawsuits filed by Imperial Beach, the Surfrider Foundation, the state of California and others, accusing the IBWC of polluting beaches in violation of the environmental laws.

"I think the lawsuits were an outcry from our stakeholders to do something," noted Maria-Elena Giner, the current U.S. IBWC commissioner. "And I hold our agency accountable."

Plans call for \$330 million in U.S. spending to more than double the capacity of the South Bay treatment plant.

That would reduce the number of days that Tijuana River sewage surges across the border from 133 to 26 – a 76 percent drop – according to the EPA.

Meanwhile, Mexico has vowed to spend \$144 million to replace a defunct wastewater facility at Punta Bandera, six miles south of Tijuana.

That project is expected to reduce by 80% the raw sewage flows which, in summer, get carried by currents to beaches in San Diego County.

Work on those projects is not expected to begin for at least three years.

According to the EPA, those projects comprise a first phase of work.

Over a longer period, the agency says, another \$327 million in spending is planned for more treatment plant expansions, diversion systems, pipelines and other infrastructure in Tijuana.

If funding is authorized and all projects on the EPA list get carried out, total costs will exceed \$800 million.

Key caveat

But the international agreement known as Minute No. 328, contains a caveat: Everything in IBWC's plan is "subject to the availability of funds."

Although the initial \$330 million in U.S. financing already has been allocated, Mexico has yet to appropriate any money for its share of costs.

The government agencies and environmental organizations that sued IBWC apparently agreed to drop their litigation based on the adoption of Minute No. 328 – without enforcement provisions.

The civil complaint filed by Imperial Beach and others alleged that the commission has "utterly failed their legal and moral mandates" to protect public health and the environment.



Smuggler's Gulch, a canyon collector that receives transboundary flows, is seen here near the border. Staff photo by Madeline Yang.

"Instead of addressing these issues, defendants falsely herald their past achievements while the pollution flowing through the Tijuana River onto local beaches grows more severe."

A separate suit filed by Surfrider Foundation alleged: "At its core, this case is about the dereliction of duty and wanton disregard for public health at the hands of a federal public agency. By making bare minimum improvements and blaming any lag in progress on Mexico's inaction, USIBWC has disregarded not only its agency mandate but also the established requirements of U.S. federal law."

The settlement requires the commission to prevent, report and clean up Tijuana sewage spills.

However, it contains no penalty for failure to carry out that duty.

'A turning point' in history

In a response to written questions from The Coronado News, Baja California's water management secretary, José Armando Fernández Samaniego, and Víctor Daniel Amador Barragán, who heads the Tijuana office of the state's public service commission, said the projects mark "a turning point in the history of resource management and binational commitment."

Those Mexican officials also said the "cross-border flow issues are being addressed by all the authorities on both sides of the border that have a role in the issue."

Giner, who became U.S. IBWC commissioner in 2021, previously served as general manager of the Border Environment Cooperation Commission, directing \$8 billion in investments on infrastructure projects.

Asked what assurance the public has that plans for Tijuana sewage mitigation will be carried out, Giner said, "They've got me, all that credibility... I can understand people's skepticism," she added. "We've been talking about this for how long?"

One more boondoggle?

Brian Bilbray, a former Imperial Beach mayor, worries that the latest plan is just one more boondoggle because there is nothing forcing the commission or Mexican government to follow through.

"If you don't have an enforcement clause," Bilbray warned, "That's where it fails."

But Dedina, who became mayor after Bilbray and spearheaded the lawsuit against IBWC, said the commission has transformed from an adversary to a partner in the past couple years, striving to overcome a legacy of failure.

As for the planned fixes of Tijuana sewage infrastructure, he said, "It's exactly what we've been asking for."

Coronado Mayor Richard Bailey agreed. "The good news is it's no longer a question of if, it's a question of when," Bailey said. "And the when is getting closer and closer."

Cooper, the California Western professor who investigated Tijuana's sewage conundrum, welcomed a plan to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on infrastructure, but also issued a warning: "Whatever they're proposing is still not enough. This is a chronic, decades-long problem."

COMING NEXT WEEK: WILL MEXICO KEEP ITS PART OF THE DEAL?

Has Coronado eliminated homelessness?

» Continued from Page 1

According to the Downtown San Diego Partnership's Monthly Unsheltered Count, there were 1,837 homeless people in downtown San Diego in February.

For 2022, there were 4,106 unsheltered homeless people, according to the San Diego Regional Task Force on Homelessness.

In Coronado?

The 2022 report found one homeless person.

One.

That 2022 report would seem to agree with Bailey's statement.

Yet, that report also shows that Coronado went from 16 homeless individuals in 2020, to just one last year.

And, another Point in Time count, the annual count estimating the number of homeless persons in San Diego County, shows that there were only six homeless individuals in Coronado in 2016, when Bailey was first elected.

Geographically protected

While records show there have historically been few homeless people in Coronado, there seems to be several factors as to why the Crown City has managed to escape an issue that has affected larger communities.

Bailey said the low number is attributed to "our geographic location...and our approach. And that approach is making a sincere effort to connect people with the resources they need to get back on their feet."

With only a few points of entry to Coronado including a bridge with no room for pedestrians, about 7 miles of highway along Silver Strand between Coronado and Imperial Beach, and a ferry to and from San Diego, there are limited ways to

get onto the island.

Miss T.J., a homeless woman living in downtown San Diego said that there is no reason for her to go to Coronado when she has a stable place on the sidewalks of 16th and Market streets.

"If you just recently lost your job, it makes sense to stay [in Coronado]; but it doesn't make sense for me to go over there," she says.

But there are those who do make it to Coronado.

No shelters in Coronado

City of Coronado spokeswoman Andrea McCullough told The Coronado News that 58 homeless individuals who were found in Coronado in 2021 were taken to homeless shelters in San Diego.

These homeless shelters include St. Vincent de Paul Village, which is located just south of East Village in downtown San Diego on Imperial Avenue and the Joan Kroc Center, according to Bailey.

There are no shelters in Coronado.

Police approach

In a 2021 Sheltered: Housing Inventory Count (HIC) report by the San Diego Regional Task Force on the Homeless, the numbers show that around 20 to 30% of the housing provided for people experiencing homelessness were not being utilized in 2021.

In an interview with KUSI, Bailey said that, "if anyone wanted shelter space, there was shelter available for people that legitimately wanted help."

These shelter spaces include permanent, emergency and transitional housing.

According to McCullough, the Coronado Police Department has a Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT) clinician in Coronado four days a week who provides emergency assessments and referral for individuals in behavioral health crises.



Mayor Richard Bailey in Coronado

Staff photo by Madeline Yang

Coronado's police officers are also trained on working with people with mental health challenges, with a specific officer designated as the Homeless Liaison Officer.

That officer's role includes providing a list of assistance programs and other resources to department employees, and developing training to assist officers in understanding current legal and social issues related to the homeless, according to the police department's policy manual.

Coronado Junior Optimist Club throwing Dr. Seuss party on March 25

The Coronado High School Jr. Optimist Club is throwing a party for Dr. Seuss, and it's inviting elementary school-age children to the bash.

The party for the legendary author who penned classics such as "Green Eggs and Ham," "The Cat in the Hat," and "How the Grinch Stole Christmas!"

will be from 4 to 5 p.m. on March 25 in the Winn Room at the Coronado Public Library.

The event is free, and it will include games, prizes and activities.

The organizers are asking those who attend to donate a new book or one without much wear.

All books will be donated to the Lindsay School for young mothers.

The Junior Optimist Club instills a changemaker mindset among young people by encouraging them to make a difference within Coronado through various community service projects.

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FROM 'BIG NERD' TO PhD CANDIDATE: CHS outstanding teacher Maylén Raful

» Continued from Page 1

coordinating activities for the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) World Language grant team, and providing resources towards an assessment system for Spanish and World languages.

"My colleagues are a really committed group of individuals who want to do what's best for kids and who want to constantly improve their skills," she said. "I really couldn't ask for a better team."

Spanish for kindergarten to fifth-grade students is something the community has been wanting for a while and has been expanded and received really well, she said.

Schmeichel said Rafulus' vision and passion "help us build an innovative and sustainable program that will support the next generation of CUSD students to become highly engaged global citizens."

One of the most passionate educators

Coronado High School Principal Karin Mellina, another educator involved in the award nomination process, considers Rafuls one of the most passionate educators in the district.

And CHS World Language teacher in Spanish Megan Probasco nominated Rafuls for the award, sharing their helpful colleague relationship.

Probasco said they designed a unit about the violations of human rights in both the Spanish and French-speaking countries and world when Probasco taught AP Spanish and Maylen taught AP French.

"She has just been one of the best coaches for me as a new teacher to Coronado High School," she said. "I can ask her anything. She has so many ideas."

Rafuls considers growing CUSD's world language program and valuing multilingualism something the state wants, as well as a fantastic experience that offers students more opportunities beyond the classroom.

Additionally, Rafuls, a CLTA member, is a professional development instructor during the summer at University of California, Santa Barbara, where she teaches Spanish teachers

'Job is to learn'

Rafuls believes education is a craft requiring leadership skills and subject areas understanding for effective teaching.

She said she grew up "a big nerd" in Cuba until the age of 10 and while in Miami, she worked really hard throughout middle school and high school.

"Since I was a little girl, I remember I really always wanted to be a teacher," she said. "It's a really difficult career, and anyone who's a teacher should



Maylén Rafuls inside her office at Coronado High School Staff photo by Julieta Soto

be admired."

Acknowledging support from academic figures, she points to her parents as her greatest supporters.

"I'm very privileged that my parents really valued education," she said. "They said to me, 'your job is to learn. You have no other job. That is your job.'"

Rafuls graduated from Princeton University with a bachelor in comparative literature and a certificate in translation. After college, she was a Peace Corps volunteer in West Africa, working with young girls educational programs.

Working for a private school in Washington, D.C., she applied to Stanford University where she earned a master's degree in Education for the teaching of Spanish. Now she is a PhD candidate in Leadership Studies at the University of San Diego.

Fighting isolation among teachers

Rafuls considers isolation the biggest issue among educators.

"Providing time and opportunities for teachers to collaborate is key to bridge a culture of isolation that exists in our educational system," she said. "There are already some structures in place for that, but it can be really hard...However, it is very rewarding when we do get to collaborate because the learning is really magnified."

Another rewarding part of her profession is seeing students succeed and believe in themselves, she said.

"I just had a student, a freshman, who was accepted on almost a full scholarship to go to France over the summer," she said. "That's amazing...maybe a

year ago, he didn't know he could achieve, and now he will be able to do that."

A shared mission

Rafuls is passionate about improving education for all students.

"I've always been inspired by the mission of Coronado to champion every child every day," she said. "I love how we care about our students, and we want them to go far."

At the beginning of the year, Rafuls attended an Equity Conference with 24 other CUSD educators, which drew the ire of a small group of parents who questioned why the district was spending money for this.

"Equity work has been a part of my master's program at Stanford, so I've done a lot of work that supports equity throughout my teaching career," she said. "One of the things that we learned about in the conference and that I have been implementing in the past is equity-based grading."

Rafuls said schools are no longer punishing students for not knowing something and, instead, giving them opportunities to grow.

She recalled one impactful student comment during the conference.

"And I quote, 'grades are no longer a measure of social standing and now a measure of learning,'" she said. "We can't fail students for not knowing what they don't know. We have to give them opportunities to learn."

She said this means implementing policies where students can remediate their work within the scope of a class.

Outside the classroom

Rafuls, soon to be married as Mrs. Sullivan, also makes time for the things she loves.

She said her hobbies include going to the beach, kayaking, swimming, and stand-up paddleboarding.

Spending time with her fiancé, Joseph Sullivan, and two-year-old baby, Joseph Guadalupe Sullivan, is something very important in her life, she said.

Still, she believes in never losing the drive to learn.

"Life gets in the way, so I know that it's hard," she said. "But if you're always learning something, even if it's just 10 minutes a day here and there, 30 minutes a day, it's going to be very easy."

Rafuls has completed many of the things on her life to-do list, but looks forward to expanding her multilingual knowledge.

"I'm taking it just day by day, year by year," she said. "After my PhD, I want to learn German."

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NAVY

Navy, California Energy Commission move forward on electric vehicle pilot programs

The California Energy Commission earlier this year approved nearly \$2 million for electrification programs at Navy and Marine Corps installations in the state.

The CEC in late January approved funding for the Navy Electric Vehicle Pilot Program (\$414,000) and the Electrification Blueprint Studies (\$1,500,000) for three Navy and three Marine Corps installations. This is the first execution of projects that the Navy began working on with the CEC following a Memorandum of Understanding signing in December 2021.

“We’re excited to be moving forward with these critical energy projects at Navy bases throughout the Southwest,” said Rear Adm. Brad Rosen, commander of Navy Region Southwest.

“Our partnership with the California Energy Commission is unique to the Navy, and this forward momentum can only increase the chances of similar partnerships becoming available in the future.”

The Navy programs receiving this funding are:

*Defense Innovation Unit Electric Vehicle Pilot: The CEC funds will be used to procure and install 10 Level 2 and four Level 3 chargers at Naval Base San Diego for charging personal and government vehicles. The Navy will measure uptime, usage, duty cycle, vehicle types, ratio of government to personal vehicles, and max charging power

*Electrification Blueprints: They will be created for three installations chosen by Navy Region Southwest and three installations chosen by Marine Corps Installations West: Naval Base San Diego, Naval Base Ventura County, Naval Air Station Lemoore, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton,



Capt. Douglas M. Peterson and Greg Woods participated in a ribbon cutting ceremony on April 25, 2022, officially opening NAS Lemoore’s first POV Electric Vehicle Charging Station. Photo by Jessica Nilsson.

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar and Marine Corp Air Ground Combat Center 29 Palms.

This project will develop specific transportation electrification blueprints for each selected base, to support the transportation electrification requirements of their civilian and military workforce.

The blueprint will provide quantitative analysis cost benefit analysis of

leveraging innovative technologies in the electrification of transportation infrastructure, particularly those related to vehicle-to-grid integration (VGI) and EVSE to grid.

In December 2021, the Navy and the CEC agreed to conduct monthly conference calls, semi-annual in-person meetings to discuss energy and water related issues, utilize working groups to review open issues, and

foster collaboration on mutual interest items in support of each organization’s respective goals.

“Energy is critical to the nation and to the Navy,” Rosen said, “And we are pursuing a deliberate energy strategy to reduce our vulnerability in partnership with the CEC.”

Story by Brian O’Rourke, Navy Region Southwest

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NAVY

USS Midway hosts free public ceremony March 29 to honor Vietnam veterans



USS Midway helps with the evacuation of Saigon in 1975. Photo courtesy of USS Midway Museum.

The 50th anniversary of when the last U.S. troops left Vietnam and the final group of American prisoners of war (POWs) were freed and left Hanoi is March 29, and the USS Midway Museum is hosting a free public ceremony that day.

The event begins at 9 a.m. and doors will close at 9:20 a.m.

The Midway's special flight-deck commemoration ceremony will feature several guest speakers who will describe how their heroic, harrowing and heartbreaking experiences during the war changed their lives and the lives of their families forever, according to organizers.

A special wreath-laying and military flyover also will highlight the ceremony.

Unlike other wars where the blood of U.S. servicemembers was spilled, those who fought in Vietnam were, for the first time our nation's history, not welcomed home as the heroes in some communities, according to the museum.

After five decades, it is time that these extraordinary patriots are recognized for their incredible selfless service and sacrifice in defense of the pillars of freedom that America was built upon, organizers said.

While it's important that all Americans understand that the warrior should never be blamed for war, it is equally important to ensure that future generations remember the bravery and courage they demonstrated on the distant battlefields of Southeast Asia, according to the museum.

The USS Midway served from 1945, one week after the end of World War II, until 1992. It was the longest-serving American aircraft carrier of the 20th century.

It is located at 910 N. Harbor Drive in downtown San Diego. The museum is open daily, except Thanksgiving and Christmas, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.



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SPORTS

CORONADO TRACK AND FIELD IN LINE FOR BREAKOUT SEASON

By **NICK HANCOCK**
The Coronado News

The Coronado High School track and field program, led by seasoned head coach Cameron Gary, has been ramping up its activities in preparation for spring meets.

Gary, who joined the Islanders in 2022, is confident that his team is set to take strides in a positive direction this season.

With only four seniors on the squad, the Islanders are a younger team compared to their competition, but according to Gary, his athletes have bought into the program and its goals in November during pre-season training.

“The talent level of this year’s team seems to have improved substantially over last year’s team,” said Gary.

The improvement that is expected out of the Islanders this season is partially because the 2022 squad had to go through what Gary called a “feeling out period.”

He was new to the program, and so were a lot of his athletes, but now that the comfort level has increased Gary can implement the experience he’s gained from decades in track and field.

According to Gary, there are multiple upperclassmen to keep an eye on this year.

Key upperclassmen

Senior sprinter Jaden Banner had a breakout season last year with a personal best in the 400 meters race, and he contributed in multiple relays as well.

Banner will be competing with a vengeance this season after the conclusion to his junior season was ruined when he came down with an illness.

“We look for Jaden to show senior leadership and take a big step forward in performance this year,” said Gary.

Junior Lindsey Balsey, a City League and Division 3 CIF champion, is a hurdler for the Islanders whose best is still yet to come, according to Gary.

Balsey ranks sixth in the 300 meters for all of San Diego, however she is looking beyond the metro area this year and Gary’s hope for her is to qualify for state competitions.

Kaden Brown and Cian Eberle, both junior sprinters, are two more athletes Gary recommends keeping an eye on. Both sprinters succumbed to injuries



Coronado freshman Nate Ayan (21) is one of the 11 freshmen boys to dip under the 5 minute mark for the 1,600 meters in San Diego this season. *Photo courtesy of George Green.*

last year, but Gary has been pleased with what he’s seen from each of them in training.

Breaking school record?

Rounding out what Gary expects to be an exciting bunch this season is the boys 4x100 relay team.

“I fully expect our boys to break the school record in the 4x100m relay this year. By a considerable margin. I believe our speed has improved that much,” said Gary.

According to Gary, the program is made up of plenty of multisport athletes and the recruiting process for new athletes begins with the middle school track and field team.

With a school as small as Coronado’s, Gary explains recruiting athletes from different backgrounds and age groups is the main way for the Islanders to remain competitive with larger schools.

“This allows us the ability to ‘punch above our

weight,’ relative to other programs,” said Gary.

Talent has increased

According to Gary, the talent and size of the program on both the high school and middle school level has substantially increased.

“The majority of our kids are new and less than 10% are seniors. So the potential for growth in size and performance is tremendous,” said Gary.

The Islanders’ first meet was March 4, at Mt. Carmel High School, with competitions taking place on each of the following Saturdays through March.

Meets will continue through April, with league and CIF finals taking place in early May. Gary has high hopes for his athletes this season, but he’d be the first to tell you that the season is a marathon, not a sprint.

“There are many roads to the top of the mountain. The important thing is to reach the summit,” said Gary.

BASEBALL SEASON UNDERWAY



Coronado second baseman Chance Pettit watches a ball during the fourth inning of a game earlier this season against Eastlake.
Staff photo by Willem Quigley.

The Islanders play Otay Ranch on Monday, after starting the season 3-2. Coronado got a big win on March 8, when the Islanders beat Mater Dei Catholic High School 11-1.

That gave the the Islanders their third win in four games, after losing the season opener 7-4 to Eastlake, according to MaxPreps.

SPORTS

San Diego St. Aztecs going dancing again

The Associated Press

The San Diego State men's basketball team received the fifth seed in the South Region and will face 12th-seeded College of Charleston in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

The Aztecs (27-6), who earned the Mountain West's automatic bid after winning the league's tournament, received the bid Sunday for the "Big Dance" and will meet the Cougars (31-3) on Thursday at Amway Center in Orlando, Florida.

This is SDSU's 18th overall NCAA Tournament appearance, 15th at the Division I level, 10th in the last 14 years, and fourth in the six seasons since head coach Brian Dutcher took over the reigns of the program, according to SDSU.

(The Aztecs were 30-2 in 2019-20, but the NCAA Tournament was canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic).

San Diego State captured the Mountain West regular season with a 15-3 record, and then beat Colorado State (64-61), San Jose State (64-49) and Utah State (62-57) at the Mountain West Championship last week for its seventh Mountain West tournament title.

College of Charleston on hot streak

College of Charleston, meanwhile, earned the Colonial Athletic Association's automatic bid for the NCAA tournament by beating UNCW, 63-58, in the championship game on March 7.

The Cougars have won their last 10 games and have set a CAA record with 31 victories on the season.

The winner of No. 5 San Diego State and No. 12 College of Charleston will square off in the second round with the winner of No. 4 Virginia (25-7) and No. 13 Furman (27-7) on Saturday, March 18.

The Aztecs and Cougars have met once before with SDSU winning, 72-52, in the opening game of the Wooden Legacy on Nov. 28, 2013 in Fullerton, California.

Mountain West title game

The Aztecs on Saturday held Utah State without a field goal for nearly nine minutes, changing the tenor of the game as San Diego State rallied to win.



San Diego State players and coach Brian Dutcher, bottom center, celebrate their victory over Utah State for the men's Mountain West Tournament basketball championship Saturday, March 11, 2023, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/Steve Marcus)

The Aztecs (27-6) claimed their Mountain West-record seventh tournament title, and second in three years.

This also was their conference-record 15th appearance in the title game.

This was the fourth time in the last five years the teams have played each other in the Mountain West championship game.

Utah State won the 2019 and 2020 title games, and San Diego State went home with the 2021 trophy.

Boise State temporarily ended the monopoly last season by beating the Aztecs 53-52.

Tournament MVP Matt Bradley scored 16 points for San Diego State and Jaedon LeDee had 13 points and 10 rebounds. Half of LeDee's rebounds came on the offensive end.



Lamont Butler of San Diego State battles for the ball during the Mountain West championship.

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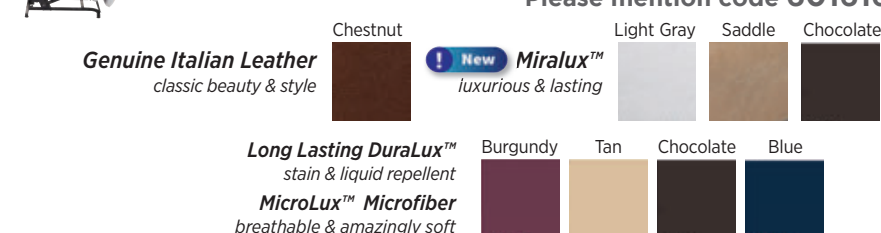
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LIFE ON THE ISLAND



Taylor Jenkins Reid, author of the novel "Daisy Jones and the Six," poses for a portrait at the Four Seasons Hotel in Los Angeles. (AP Photo/Chris Pizzello)

Taylor Jenkins Reid writes her own Hollywood success story

The Associated Press

"I'm jealous you get to meet her," an employee working behind the scenes at a recent press opportunity for "Daisy Jones & the Six" told some journalists.

The "her" in question was not Riley Keough, the star of the Amazon limited series, or any of the show's other female stars. It was Taylor Jenkins Reid, the bestselling author behind a celebrity-infused, decades-spanning literary universe suffused with glitz and grit: "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo," "Daisy Jones," "Malibu Rising" and "Carrie Soto is Back."

"Daisy Jones," debuting Friday on Prime Video, is the first Reid adaptation to hit the screen and others are in the works.

Reid and her husband, Alex, adapted an early book, "One True Loves," which stars Phillipa Soo and Simu Liu and opens April 7. She's also written a screenplay with her best friend, which Kay Cannon ("Pitch Perfect") is slated to direct.

Reid says she always knew she wanted to work in Hollywood and calls writing books "a happy accident." She originally moved out to Los Angeles to work in casting but when she wrote her first novel, "Forever Interrupted," she knew that was what she was meant to do.

"I found this piece of myself I never anticipated," she says. Now, to have Hollywood come calling for her work, Reid says, is "really fun."

Reid spoke with The Associated Press about the future of her book series, the intertwining threads and the status of that "Evelyn Hugo" adaptation.

The transcript has been condensed for brevity.

AP: You've said that your most recent novel, "Carrie Soto is Back," is the last in your series of books about celebrities. Is that true?

It's not something that I come to easily. I ache to return to this world. I ache to return to each one of these books. I miss them when I'm done with them. And they never feel like they never feel over for me. It always feels like an opportunity to go back to them is so welcome.

But I have likened it a little bit to, you know, it's senior year of high school and .. it's important that we go expand and do other things and find new challenges. That is what I am planning to do. It is

not because I'm ready to go as much as I just know it's time.

AP: The character of Mick Riva, a playboy, smooth-talking crooner shows up in each of those books. Why?

First and foremost, I write about women and I'm interested in women, but women are very affected by the decisions of men and a lot of time women are left holding the bag. When men make the decisions that they do, that they sort of escape unscathed. There are a lot of men in our culture who keep making pretty big mistakes, and it doesn't stick to them, but there are women behind those men dealing with the consequences of those men's actions.

While I do write about women, I wanted to put forth a man who gets away with it. I know people hate him. And I know when they see his name in books, they get mad. But I want you to be mad because there are many, many, many Mick Rivas in the world. I think we would all do well to look out and see if we can spot any of them, because they're getting away with a lot and they're allowing the women around them to be the one to pick up the pieces, whether it's whether it's Nina Riva or it's Evelyn Hugo or it's Daisy Jones at a party or it's Javier Soto finally being the person who calls them out.

Not every man is Mick Riva, but there are a lot of Mick Rivas in the world.

AP: Do you agree that there was a change in tone to your writing from "Evelyn Hugo" on? If so, was it intentional?

Absolutely. I'm not sure it was intentional as much as it was honestly not too similar to how I feel now with the end of "Carrie Soto." It was just time. I want to tackle new and different things, and it's really wonderful when you find this pocket of creativity where you feel like, "Oh, I can live in this space for a little while and I can tell a lot of stories here," but I never want to stay at the party too long.

AP: "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" blew up, in large part due to readers on TikTok posting about it. What was that experience like for you?

You probably heard about it before me, because

what happened to me was I'm sitting at my computer. I get an email from my agent with the New York Times list, and she's like, "Evelyn Hugo' just made The New York Times." I yelled in my office and my husband comes rushing in ... and I'm like, "I must be misunderstanding this, right? Can you read this?"

The book had come out many, many years before and had not hit the list when it first came out. My husband read it and he's like, "Nope, I think this is real. I think you're understanding this." It took us probably two weeks to figure out how it had happened. Everyone kept going, "What led to this bump?" And I'm like, "I don't know." Then my manager, Brad, he goes, "I think it was something called BookTok." I was like, "What's that?" And he started showing me that there were all these young women talking about "Evelyn Hugo" on TikTok. I felt very seen because I'm very, very proud of that book and to have it take off with readers, especially young women, just felt really good.

AP: Netflix is adapting "Evelyn Hugo" into a film. Did you ever wonder how they're going to fit a story of a woman who had seven husbands into a movie?

I did. Then I read the script and I'm not concerned, but I get it. I understand. It's not dissimilar to the experience on "Daisy Jones." You have to pick the right people and trust them. Liz Tigelaar, who wrote the script, is a phenomenal talent, and I said, "I don't know how you're going to do this. I think you need to condense the story." And she said, "No, I don't." ... And then she turns in the script and I was like, "I was wrong. You were right. You got it."

AP: During the height of the pandemic you also wrote a screenplay with your best friend Ashley — who was not a writer prior to this — sold it, and Kay Cannon will direct. Not everyone would take a chance like that.

I grew up with very little, and I have so much more than I ever dreamed. I never thought people would read my books at this rate. I never thought that Hollywood would come calling. I have been so blessed that if all I'm doing is taking that in and I'm not using that light to bounce it on others, I'm not sure why I'm doing this.

Lamb's announces another extension of "R-E-S-P-E-C-T"

The Lamb's Players Theater, which opened its 2023 season in January with "R-E-S-P-E-C-T," has extended a celebration of 1960s divas and singers through April 9.

"We've had an outstanding response, so have decided to extend this new musical," said Producing Artistic Director Robert Smyth.

Lamb's Associate Artistic Director Kerry Meads and Associate Artist Vanda Eggington created the new piece. After developing previous hits "BOOMERS" and "AMERICAN RHYTHM," Smyth said.

The cast for "R-E-S-P-E-C-T" includes Angela Chatelain Avila, Caitie Grady, Rebecca Jade, Janaya Mahealani Jones, Sydney Joyner and Joy Yandell.

Tickets range from \$38 to \$92, depending on the day of the week and the theatre's seating section. And discounts are available for seniors (66+) and veterans.

There also are half-price tickets available for active duty military, youth (ages 5 - 17), and young adults (18 - 34) who join the theatre's free Under 35 Club.

Lamb's has presented performances since opening its first resident stage in 1978, in National City.

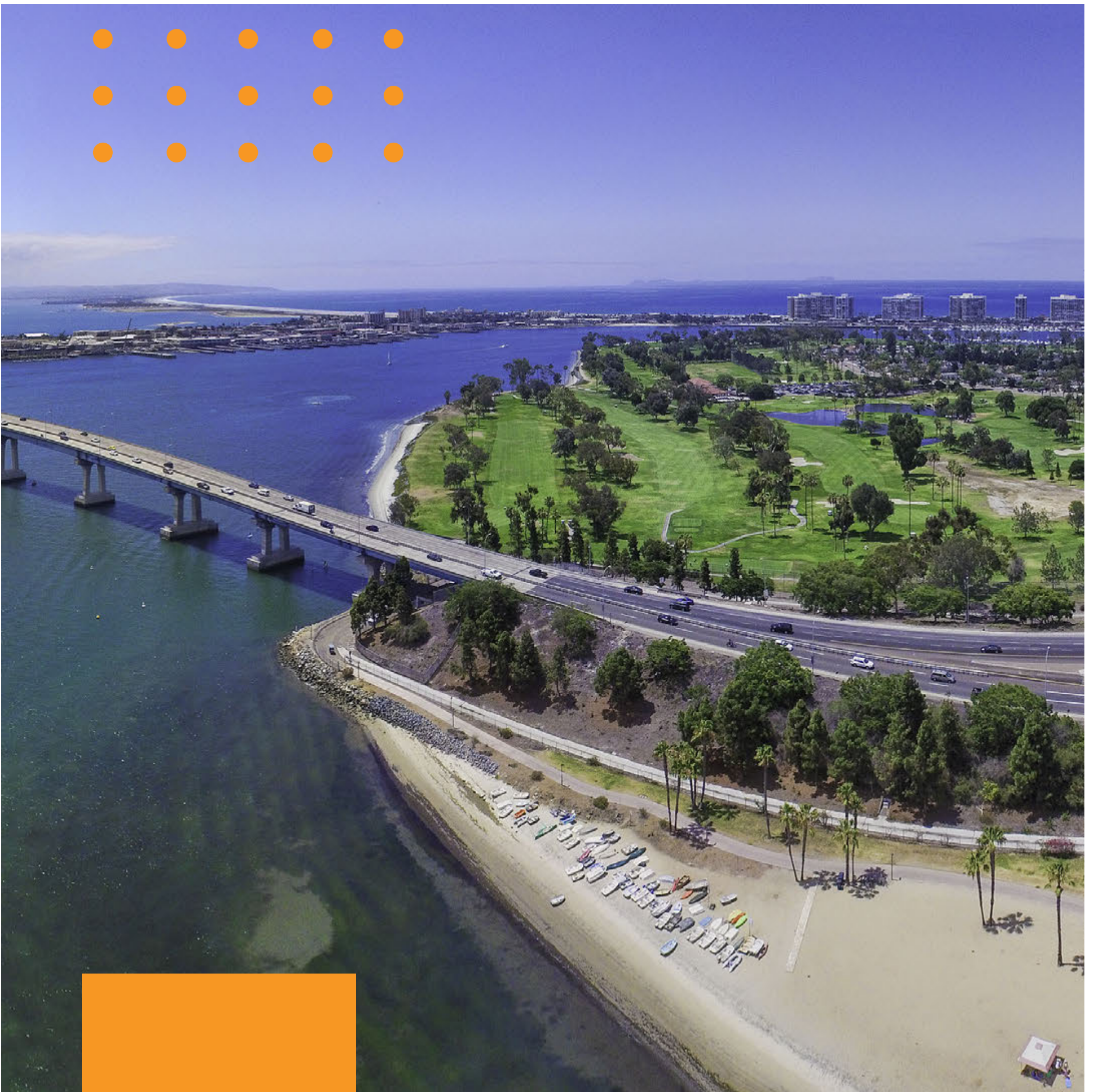
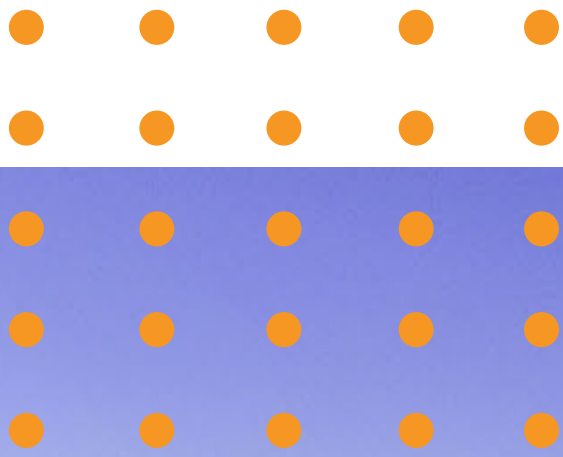
The company spent 17 seasons there and has become the region's third largest not-for-profit professional theatre company after the Old Globe and the La Jolla Playhouse, according to the theater. The organization moved to Coronado in 1994.



The Lamb's Players Theatre opened its 2023 season with "R-E-S-P-E-C-T." Photo from Lamb's Players Theatre Facebook Page.



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