

## Q&A: Council candidate Christine Mott, environmental and community activist

Christine Mott is one of six residents running for a City Council seat this November. One of the reasons why she wants to run is because she wants to represent children and young families.

BY MADELINE YANG  
The Coronado News

**Editor's note:** The 2024 candidates for two open Coronado City Council seats are Andrew Gade, Mark Fleming, Christine Mott, Amy Steward,

Mark Warner and Laura Wilkinson Sinton. A third council member may be selected in the process depending on the mayoral result. Three current council members — John Duncan, Mike Donovan and Casey Tanaka — are running for mayor.

The Coronado News reached out to Mott and all candidates with questions to learn more about their priorities and philosophy. Responses have been edited for brevity and clarity, including additional information from a follow-up conversation.

Christine Mott, 42, is an attorney, wife, mother and community activist who has lived in Coronado for nearly

five years.

Mott was among the community leaders who sued the city to stop the removal of pine trees adjacent to the Lawn Bowling Green, which, according to city officials, contributed to fungus growing on the lawn's surface.

Mott said the controversy got her more interested in local government

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## Patients resonate with music



Pederson's musical instruments are laid out on the table at Sharp Coronado Hospital, Aug. 28.

BY ELAINE ALFARO  
The Coronado News

Noelle Pederson takes out a small speaker from her rolling cart, then a tambourine, some bells and other percussion instruments. She lines them up on the table, hand sanitizer close by. Finally, she props up her Taylor guitar on a stand. Her medical ensemble is ready.

*"Lord I lift your name on high / Lord, I love to sing your praises"*.

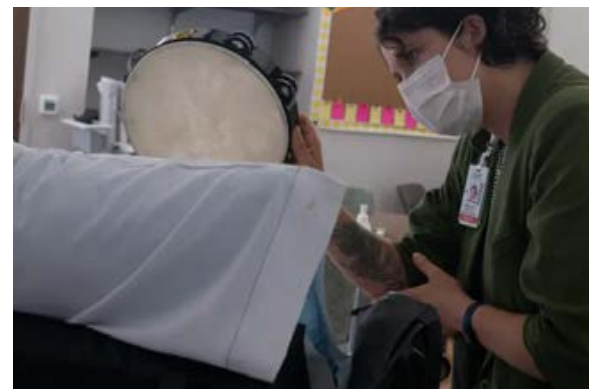
Pederson's vibrato carries the worship song, reverberating off the walls in a large room at the subacute section of Sharp Coronado Hospital. The room overlooks a garden area; natural light floods through shades of green and emerald. Pederson strums the guitar with precision; she watches the patient in the room.

Some of the patients Pederson works with in this section of the hospital are experiencing disorders of consciousness. Pederson asks the patients — or the families if the patient cannot communicate — what songs mean the most to them. The hope, Pederson said, is to use their favorite music to help them reconnect pathways in the brain.

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ABOVE: Noelle Pederson holds her guitar in this portrait photo on Aug. 28. BELOW (L): Pederson sings to the patient on Aug. 28. BELOW (Middle): Pederson takes notes as she observes the patient. BELOW (R): Pederson watches how the patient responds to different sounds and percussion. Photos by Elaine Alfaro.



## Coronado School Board candidate to serve for students and teachers

Shawnee Barton Merriman, a higher education professional, seeks to ensure support for Coronado students and staff.

BY JULIETA SOTO  
The Coronado News

Shawnee Barton Merriman, a mom of four Coronado Unified students and part-time art faculty member and Wellness Ambassador at Califor-

nia State University, Long Beach, said she has experience navigating difficult situations and helping kids get the emotional support they need in announcing her plans to run for the Coronado school board this month.

Merriman is one of four candidates seeking election to the board, which has two four-year seats open in the 2024 election. Merriman is one of two community members who filed nomination documents during an

extended candidate filing deadline of Aug. 14, after the official deadline on Aug. 9.

The other three candidates running for a school board seat are Renee Cavanaugh, Bill Sandke and Fitzhugh Lee.

"I am running for school board to ensure we have high-quality, well-supported teachers and administrators who provide the best education for our children," wrote Merriman in

her candidate statement.

This summer, Merriman led a group of parents in requesting answers from the district about staff reductions and changes due to budget cuts.

Merriman said these changes affected her family; today this is where her heart is and why she feels compelled to be on the board.

"We have an urgent need for school

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# this week

## 10 • tuesday

Sharp Coronado Hospital is offering a free workshop for advanced care planning at the John D. Spreckels Center at 1 p.m. The community is invited to attend a panel discussion with leading experts on health care planning and will include tips on completing your advanced care directive. A notary will also be on site to assist with completed documents.

## 11 • wednesday

Join the Coronado Democratic Club for their Mayoral Candidate Forum on Wednesday, Sept. 11 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. The event will be held at the Coronado Unified School District Office Board Room, located at 201 Sixth Street. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. This moderated session will feature a dynamic discussion with all invited mayoral candidates. The public is welcome to submit questions upon arrival, which may be selected for the Q&A session, time permitting.

## 12 • thursday

Coronado Optimist Club meetings take place at 7 a.m. on Thursdays at the Coronado Community Center. On Sept. 12, Todd Perry will be the featured speaker discussing the Navy SEAL Museum. Anyone who would like to learn more about the club is encouraged to attend a weekly meeting.

## CONTACT US

For news tips, story submissions and letters to the editor, contact Editor Sofie Fransen at [sofie@thecoronadonews.com](mailto:sofie@thecoronadonews.com) or 619-990-8465.

To advertise contact Ad Executive Braeden Stegman at [braeden@numbersix.com](mailto:braeden@numbersix.com)

# Back-to-back author events

Coronado News staff

The Coronado Public Library is hosting two back-to-back author events in September.

Actress and New York Times best-selling author Annabelle Gurwitch will be in the Winn Room on Tuesday, Sept. 10 at 1 p.m. sharing her collection of essays: “You’re Leaving When? Adventures in Downward Mobility.”

Then, on Wednesday, Sept. 11 at 6:30 p.m., Sarah Federman will explore the findings of her new book “Last Train to Auschwitz: The French National Railways and the Journey to Accountability.”

### About “You’re Leaving When?”

Gurwitch was the longtime co-host of the fan favorite “Dinner & a Movie” and appeared on “Seinfeld,”

“Murphy Brown,” “Boston Legal,” and “Dexter.” Gurwitch will discuss and sign her book of essays: “You’re Leaving When?” which tells a story about “harnessing resilience and learning how life’s disappointments can teach you about the things that matter most,” according to the New York Times.

Copies of the book will be available for sale. Seating is first come, first served. Limited reserved seating is available with pre-purchase of the book through the event’s co-sponsor, Adventures by the Book.

### About “The Last Train to Auschwitz”

Federman is an author, educator and conflict resolution practitioner. Prior to this work, she spent a decade as an international executive working with clients such as Google

and the NFL. She is now an Associate Professor of Conflict Resolution at the Joan B Kroc School of Peace Studies at the University of San Diego.

Co-sponsored by the Worldview Project and the San Diego Diplomacy Council, Federman’s talk is an opportunity to dialogue and learn more about an account that changed significantly in the years after World War II.

The book is a “compelling blend of victims’ narratives and rigorous historical and legal analysis, making a significant contribution to our understanding of corporate accountability and transitional justice,” according to Leigh Payne of the University of Oxford, and shares the story of how the French National Railways were complicit in the Holocaust.

Learn more about both events at [cplevents.org](http://cplevents.org).

## PETS OF THE WEEK

# Meet Oreo and Turbo

PAWS of Coronado

Meet Oreo, a handsome 2-year-old male Husky with a heart full of adventure. Oreo was found as a stray, so his past is a bit of a mystery, but his love for exploration and his zest for life are undeniable.

Oreo is happiest when he’s out and about, going on walks and discovering new sights and smells. His curious nature and boundless energy make him the perfect companion for an active household.

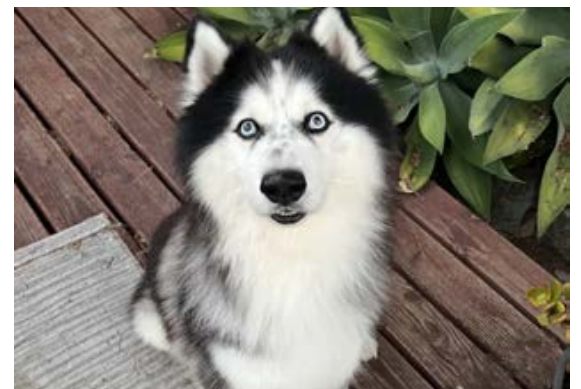
If you’re looking for a loyal and adventurous friend to join you on all your outdoor escapades, Oreo is the perfect match. Open your heart to this

wonderful Husky and let the adventures begin!

Also, meet Turbo, a 1-year-old, 30-pound mixed breed with a knack for stealing hearts!

Found as a stray in Coronado, Turbo has quickly charmed everyone he meets with his sweet personality. This little guy is full of love and ready to find a forever home where he can continue melting hearts.

All animals at PAWS are spayed/neutered, microchipped, vaccinated and up to date on flea prevention. Adoptions are by appointment only. If you are interested in adopting, please visit [pawsofcoronado.org](http://pawsofcoronado.org).



Oreo.



Turbo.



## Healthy Back-to-School Habits

A new school year is an exciting time for kids and parents. At **Sharp Coronado Hospital**, we want to make sure everyone stays safe and healthy, and recommend following these tips:

- Practice frequent hand-washing with soap and water to prevent the spread of illness.
- Stay up to date on vaccinations, including an annual flu shot.
- Boost immunity by eating a healthy diet.
- Stay physically active and get enough sleep.

If you or a loved one needs care, our ER can help 24 hours a day. Visit [sharp.com/coronadoER](http://sharp.com/coronadoER) to learn more.

If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911 or visit the nearest emergency room.





# Never Worry About Charging Your Golf Cart Again

## OUR STORY

“Once Upon A Time” my son and I were discussing solar systems over lunch. Being licensed electricians, we were familiar with Solar Applications and its advantages.

After conducting a fair amount of research, we determined that Solar Technology had advanced to the point that adding a Solar Panel to the roof of a golf cart could significantly add to the travel range, as well as several other advantages including Green Movement Tax Credits.

I had recently moved to a golf cart community and purchased a cart of my own, after installing the best and most powerful system available, the concept of installing Solar Panels on golf carts was conceived.

We began spreading the word to our friends who owned electric carts and began installing Solar Panels on their carts in our spare time out of our garage in Oceanside, CA. Due to the publicized acceptance and popularity in Beach Communities of San Diego County, we decided to expand the business even further. Many beach cities have permitted the use of golf carts in 35 mph zones and are expanding Bike Lanes to 7 feet wide to accommodate their use.

So, there you have it. There is more to the story and we would love to discuss it with you while we install your Solar Panels on your cart.

We took the concept of Green Solar Energy and put it to practical use to lessen the carbon footprint.

We look forward to meeting you soon.

**Richard Stachowicz**  
**Ride All Day Solar Carts**  
**Owner and Coronado Resident**



## ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

*Make the Earth Happy.* Solar energy is clean. No carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere as it is when batteries are plugged into the wall to charge. Similarly, no fossil fuels are consumed as they are in gas-powered golf carts. The sun's energy is both clean and renewable. With their renewable, clean energy and lack of generated pollution, solar charged golf carts are an Earth-friendly option. You can help ensure that golf courses will be around for a very long time.

## FINANCIAL BENEFITS

While it can be costly up front to buy a solar-powered golf cart or convert your existing cart to solar, in the long run, you might save money. You might be eligible for cost incentives offered to people who go solar. Some programs include:

- Federal tax credits
- Federal grants
- State and local utility tax credits
- Rebates

Together, these can help make solar power an affordable option for your golf cart. Additionally, you will likely save quite a bit of money on your electricity bill without having an electric vehicle drawing from your home's electricity supply. Individuals aren't the only ones who benefit monetarily from solar power. When entire golf courses convert their fleets to solar-powered vehicles, they can slash their annual charging costs by about 20 percent. Whether you want to enhance the performance of your golf cart, help the environment, or save money in the long run, you're sure to benefit from changing your power to the sun.

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# OPINION

## A candidate journey by Andrew Gade

BY ANDREW GADE  
Op-ed

**Editor's note: The Coronado News has invited all city council and mayoral candidates to submit a first-person article about their background, civic involvement and reason for running for office. We intend to run articles in the order they are received.**

For the past decade, I've observed how local government decisions have shaped the communities around me and have been looking forward to the opportunity to contribute.

As a business owner and homeowner, I've come to deeply appreciate the significance of good governance and its tangible impact on the community. Since moving to Coronado, I've immersed myself in local life, keen to understand the intricate dynamics that make this place so unique. It's a blend of dedicated residents, charitable foundations, and the tireless efforts of our city employees and elected officials; all working together in a symbiotic relationship that enables Coronado to flourish.

In my first week here, I explored as many local businesses as I could, eager to familiarize myself with the island. A chance encounter at Feast & Fairway led to a lively conversation with Rob Crenshaw about the Island Beer Club. I was instantly intrigued and quickly became a member.

The club is a microcosm of Coronado itself, with members from all walks of life—current and former city officials, lifelong residents, young and old, working and retired. As the largest social club in Coronado, it's not only well-organized but has also been a gateway for me to meet fascinating people, learn about our city's history, and forge new, cherished friendships.

My interest in local governance deepened as I began attending City Council meetings, which inspired me to apply for a position on one of the city's boards and commissions. In April 2023, I was



Andrew Gade is running for Coronado City Council this coming election on Nov. 5. Staff photo by Madeline Yang.

appointed to the Mobility Commission.

This commission is tasked with implementing the Active Transportation Master Plan, developing a traffic calming strategy, assisting city staff with planning and implementing complete and sustainable streets, advancing Vision Zero concepts, and integrating emerging technologies like autonomous and electric vehicles into our city's transportation network. This role has provided me with invaluable hands-on experience and a deeper understanding of the critical elements that keep Coronado moving forward.

In 2022, I joined the Coronado Fourth of July board during a time of significant reorganization. It's been an incredible learning experience, offering a behind-the-scenes look at what it takes to produce Coronado's largest annual event.

Last year, we celebrated our 75th anniversary with one of the best parades, leapfrog demonstrations, concerts, and of course, a spectacular fireworks display. It was a wonderful opportunity to witness the community come together to celebrate Independence Day and to showcase the qualities that make our island so special.

Seeing so many residents volunteer and contribute to our city's vibrant events inspired me to learn

more about the groups and clubs behind them. With new friends who were Rotarians, joining the Coronado Rotary Club felt like a natural choice.

The Rotary Club plays a vital role in our community, organizing events like Flags on Orange Avenue, Beach Cleanups, Low Tide Ride & Stride, and the End Polio Now Wine Tasting, among many others. Being a Rotarian has connected me to a larger family, all dedicated to making a difference in our community.

As someone who has worked for various companies and now owns a business, I understand how crucial the success of local businesses is to the overall health of the community. Being a member of the Coronado Chamber of Commerce has opened up great networking opportunities and allowed me to support the promotion of new businesses in town.

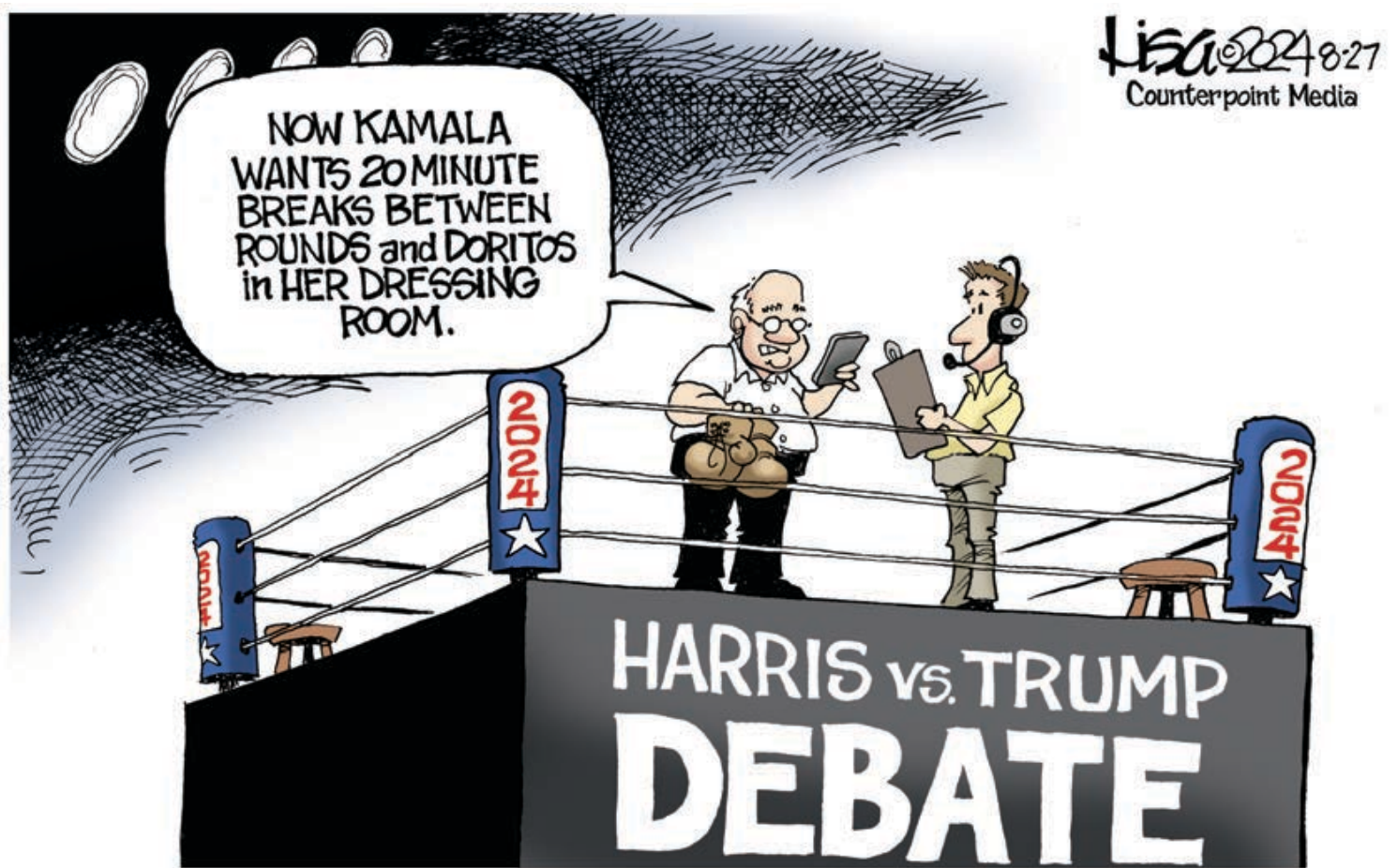
From the Art & Wine Festival to Chamber Socials, Sip & Shop, ribbon-cutting events, and the Celebrate Coronado Community Awards, the Chamber plays an essential role in fostering our local economy.

In addition to my current involvement, I also support various local organizations, including the Coronado Historical Association, Emerald Keepers, FOCUS, Coronado Schools Foundation, PAWS, and Safe Harbor Coronado. These are just a few of the many foundations addressing specific issues and supporting important causes within our community. It doesn't take much to make a meaningful impact.

As I continue this journey, I'm eager to meet as many residents as possible and gain a deeper understanding of Coronado's past, all with the goal of offering the best possible representation. As your councilman, I look forward to working together to shape our community's future.

Andrew Gade is running for a seat in City Council in the Nov. 5 elections. Mark Fleming, Christine Mott, Amy Steward, Mark Warner and Laura Wilkinson Sinton are also running.

LISA BENSON



JACK OHMAN

# CORONADO



Sandra Bonura poses in front of her book, "The Sugar King of California". Photos courtesy of Sandra Bonura.

## "The Sugar King of California" Sparks Renewed Interest in the Spreckels Dynasty

**Claus Spreckels, a German immigrant, became one of the wealthiest men in the world and the driving force behind California's sugar industry and the Spreckels family's legacy in Coronado.**

**BY KATIE MORRIS**  
The Coronado News

People were clamoring to get in the door in mid-July when Sandra Bonura arrived on her book tour at the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas.

The following day, the scene repeated itself just 30 minutes north at the Aptos Branch Library, where a hundred people squeezed into a room, leaving dozens more standing outside.

"And the phone was ringing," she said.

The San Diego-based historian's latest book, "The Sugar King of California: The Life of Claus Spreckels," had drawn crowds that she did not expect.

Some attendees came to reminisce about their days working at the Spreckels Sugar Company.

Others were driven by curiosity to learn more about the man whose name adorns streets along the coast of Monterey to Santa Cruz, or perhaps to learn about the small town of Spreckels, CA, located in the heart of the Salinas Valley and founded by Claus Spreckels himself in 1898 to house the workers of his company.

That legacy eventually was extended south, to Coronado, by heirs.

"What floats my boat," Bonura said, "is when I can find that there is some incredible person who has been ignored by history."

Bonura, a retired professor of education and school counseling, is also an author and researcher specializing in Hawaiian and California history. "The Sugar King of California" is her fourth published work.

### The Sugar King

"The Sugar King of California" delves into the life of a German immigrant who arrived in America penniless at 17.

Years later, his ventures in the sugar trade, stretching from California to Hawaii, would make him one of the 10 wealthiest men in the world. By 1905, Spreckels' estate was appraised at roughly \$50 million, equating to more than \$15 billion today.

According to Vickie Stone, the Coronado Historical Association's curator of collections, Spreckels was equal to the business tycoons of his day such as John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie and J.P. Morgan, but working on the West Coast.

In the wake of the gold rush, Spreckels found

his way to San Francisco and set out to revolutionize the landscape of American agriculture.

With the creation of the nation's largest sugar beet factory, he turned California's Central Valley from arid lands into fields of irrigated crops, laying the groundwork for what we now know as the "Salad Bowl of the World."

His crowning achievement, however, came when he introduced the sugar cube to American households, earning him the moniker of the "Sugar King."

### Spreckels in San Diego

Claus' influence in San Diego began through his son, John, who inherited his father's business acumen and entrepreneurial spirit.

Since the late 1800s, the Spreckels family name has been a well-known part of local history, reflecting their former influence over Coronado. Their holdings extended from the historic Hotel del Coronado to Belmont Park in Mission Beach, encompassing every downtown lot from the ferry landing to Horton Plaza — ferry included.

John D. Spreckels renamed D Street as Broadway and employed his steamships to deliver the first koalas to the newly established San Diego Zoo.

Stone said John initially supported his father's sugar empire through his shipping ventures, which is what ultimately brought him to San Diego.

While Clause was the "Sugar King," John, known as the "Sugar Prince," used his family's wealth to transform Coronado and the broader region.

"John was very involved in all things Coronado and with political, business, and social power — from city government to transportation to real estate," Stone said via email.

### Filling the gap

After publishing her third book, "Empire Builder: John D. Spreckels and the Making of San Diego" in 2020, Bonura was introduced to an article on Claus in "Der Spiegel," one of the most widely circulated weekly news magazines in Europe.

"The article] made a splash in Europe," Bonura said, which prompted her publisher to suggest writing a book about Claus.

She agreed and went back to doing what floats her boat: researching people who have been ignored by history.

From her home office, she worked with a German genealogist and historian to double-check names, dates and the Spreckels' family tree, as well as the Hawaiian State Archives.

Yet the whole journey to write about the



Bonura at the San Diego History Center.

Spreckels started in Hawaii when she was doing research for her 2017 book "Light in the Queen's Garden: Ida May Pope, Pioneer for Hawaii's Daughters" at the Hawaiian State Archives in Honolulu.

"I kept coming across the name Spreckels, and I'm like, 'I know that name, it's in San Diego,'" she said.

However, the documents that Bonura found about Claus either painted him "as a saint or a sinner because of his dealings with the Hawaiian monarchy."

Returning to the mainland, Bonura learned more about the Spreckels at Coronado Historical Association. This is where she got in contact with descendants of the Spreckels family to see if they had diaries, pictures or other artifacts for her research.

So far, she has gotten in contact with about 20 members of the family.

"I'm a historian, so I find original research to the era," she said.

On Friday, Aug. 30 at 1 p.m., Bonura discussed "The Sugar King of California" at the Coronado Public Library.

*"What floats my boat ... is when I can find that there is some incredible person who has been ignored by history."*

- Sandra Bonura

# CORONADO

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# CORONADO

## SDSU Public Health Receives Prebys Grant for Tijuana River Pollution Study

With \$260,000 in starting funds, researchers at SDSU are working to bridge the knowledge gaps about the pollutants from the Tijuana River that infiltrate the air and water of Coronado, Imperial Beach, San Ysidro, and surrounding South Bay communities.

BY KATIE MORRIS  
The Coronado News

San Diego State University researchers, bolstered by a grant from the Prebys Foundation, are launching an environmental monitoring system to detect pathogens in the Tijuana River, along with a community survey to determine the effect on public health.

The initiative, part of a broader \$872,000 commitment, involves SDSU's School of Public Health and SDSU Imperial Valley in addressing this escalating environmental and public health threat, according to a press release from the university.

With \$260,000 in initial funding, SDSU researchers aim to close knowledge gaps about the contaminants flowing from the Tijuana River into the air and water of Coronado, Imperial Beach, San Ysidro and other South Bay communities.

This research will focus on the presence of dangerous pathogens and chemicals, many of which pose significant risks to the health of local residents, including children, pregnant women and frontline workers.

The Tijuana River's pollution has long been a source of concern, with evidence of antibiotic-resistant microbes and hazardous chemicals making their way into the ocean, where currents transport contaminants north to San Diego County beaches.

However, comprehensive data on how these pollutants affect air quality and public health remains elusive.

"This grant is pivotal in advancing our understanding of how pollutants travel from water to air in the Tijuana River region," said SDSU School of Public Health associate professor Paula Stigler Granados in a press release.

The findings, she notes, could be instrumental in pushing for much-needed upgrades to sewage treatment facilities along the border.

As the school's chair of environmental health and the study's principal investigator, Stigler Granados said researchers will gather survey responses to identify health patterns for at least a year, which could lead to a comprehensive epidemiological investigation.

The community survey is set to go out in about three weeks.

Stigler Granados said that her lab will also conduct non-targeted chemical analyses and metagenomic sequencing to detect various chemicals and pathogens in air, water and soil samples.

In collaboration with SDSU environmental health professor Eunha



Sewage at the Tijuana River. Courtesy of the Prebys Foundation.

Hoh, the researchers will test silicone wristbands for airborne chemicals and analyze DNA from pathogens to identify potential contaminants.

The wristbands, Stigler Granados explained, "absorb chemicals in the atmosphere and what people are being exposed to. We'll go out and hang them on fences to see what's in the air."

Stigler Granados said the research team is "very interested in antibiotic-resistant bacteria" and viruses like norovirus, which are highly contagious but often not reported.

Additionally, the team will be looking at school absences, clinic records and other health data to identify patterns related to environmental exposure and illness.

On August 19, the San Diego State University HealthLINK Center received a \$22 million grant from the National Institutes of Health that will support a study in San Ysidro, where researchers will collect dust and air samples and test for environmental contaminants, particularly those linked to pollution from the Tijuana River.

"[Our study] is sort of the pilot to that HealthLINK grant," Stigler Granados said.

Her lab is also partnering with Kim Prather, the University of California San Diego's chair in atmospheric chemistry and professor at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, who has a lab conducting a 30-day air sampling study to measure hydrogen sulfide levels.

Stigler Granados said UCSD is cur-

rently sampling and anticipates having her lab support them with preliminary sampling this week.

"Hopefully our data will complement [Prather's lab's findings]," Stigler Granados said.

In sum, Stigler Granados said, at least 10-15 scientists are working on this research, not including the doctoral and master students involved.

"We're also going to rely on the data that we're collecting from multiple partners and agencies, and some of the county and state agencies as well, to put all the data together," Stigler Granados said. "It's sort of a paint-by-number... until we get the full picture."

Partners of the study include but are not limited to The Surfrider Foundation, YMCA, Imperial Beach Mayor Paloma Aguirre's office, UCSD, Casa Familiar and the California Department of Public Health.

Stigler Granados emphasized that while quick data release is important, analyzing complex chemical samples can take three to six months due to the need to accurately identify thousands of chemical fingerprints.

"The question of the day is, 'How fast can the data come out?' I think the release of data needs to be pretty immediate, however, a deep dive into the data is going to take some time," she said. "Our team is trying to figure out how we explain the findings without creating panic and empower people to have the ability to do something about it."

As faculty and graduate students at

SDSU delve into this research, Stigler Granados said, she hopes their work will not only inform local policymakers and advocacy groups but also strengthen the community's ability to respond to the ongoing pollution crisis.

"My hope is that we are able to communicate a better picture of what's going on," Stigler Granados said. "Ultimately, what we're really asking for is for them [policymakers] to call this [Tijuana River pollution] a national disaster."

Last month, Congress approved \$210 million in the 2024 Water Resources Development Act for San Diego County and the Tijuana River Valley watershed.

This funding aims to alleviate the financial shortfall for rehabilitating the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant. That project is designed to prevent sewage overflows that routinely contaminate beaches from Tijuana to Coronado.

A \$42.4 million dollar contract was awarded in August to a contractor to begin the design for repair at the plant.

Grant Oliphant, CEO of the Prebys Foundation, emphasized the non-profit organization's commitment to supporting SDSU's School of Public Health in addressing this critical public health issue.

In the press release, he said "This partnership underscores our dedication to advancing research that helps to protect and enhance the health and wellbeing of our communities."

## CUSD enters school year below anticipated student enrollment

Enrollment at the Coronado Unified School District currently sits at 2,770 students, just below the goal of 2,800.

BY KYLIE CAPUANO  
The Coronado News

Coronado School officials, already facing a projected \$700,000 deficit by the 2026-27 school year, said schools opened this year with enrollment falling short of a projected goal.

In a June budget meeting, Salamanca said most of the district's funding is reliant on student enrollment, attendance and demographics. Enrollment trends, inter-district transfer applications and attendance yields from previous years left CUSD with decreased revenues and an urgent need for budgeting adjustments.

This school year, school officials opened up online registration and inter-district transfer windows early in hopes of amassing more applications and getting a better understanding of student enrollment.



The Coronado Unified School District's enrollment numbers fall short of the goal. Staff photo by Julieta Soto.

The district typically accepts about 150 inter-district transfers in a given year. This year, there were close to 250. Still, enrollment currently sits at 2,770 students, just below the goal of 2,800.

The proposed 2024-25 budget is yet to be approved. The district awaits a financial analysis and recommen-

dations from the County Office of Education in September. Despite not meeting enrollment expectations, Salamanca said he expects the budget to be approved with conditions for a Dec. 1 interim report.

In the meantime, CUSD has made cutbacks in staffing that resulted in significant leadership changes for the

new school year, with new administrators assigned to the middle school, high school and an elementary school.

### In other news:

Superintendent Karl Mueller announced a facilities upgrade to Village Elementary School as part of an audit of safety systems. Over the summer, CUSD installed a two-door authorization system for entrance into the main campus. The new safety protocol will serve as a model as district officials consider facility upgrades at other schools.

This year, CUSD will commence its Facilities Master Plan, which according to Mueller, will work toward upgrading facilities with budgeting in mind. The district will focus on improving areas such as safety and instructional programming. Discussions will take place in a Facilities Master Plan group.

The next regular board meeting is set for Sept. 12 at 4 p.m. at the district office.



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## Attention, Coronado Art Collectors and Art Enthusiasts



Pauline Johnson-Brown  
Worldwide Art and Auction Advisor  
New York, San Diego, Washington D.C.  
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I am very excited about introducing myself to the Coronado Community. Over the course of my extensive career in Real Estate and in Fine Art, I have been involved in unearthing hidden art provenances, achieving record auction results, as well as making gifts to major museums for my clients.

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Pauline Johnson-Brown

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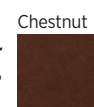
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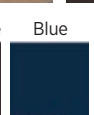
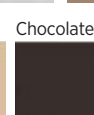
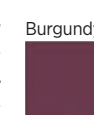
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# CORONADO

## Deputy Secretary visits South Bay plant, still no emergency issued

Coronado News staff

While calls to fix the Tijuana sewage crisis grow louder, U.S. Department of State Deputy Secretary Richard Verma said a federal disaster law – the Stafford Act – won't allow officials to secure more funding by declaring a state of emergency.

"The Stafford Act, which applies to this area, doesn't actually apply to the plant," Verma said, referring to the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) after he toured the facility on Aug. 29. "The particular federal law that's applicable doesn't actually allow us to declare a state of emergency, but we are operating as if there is a public health emergency."

The Stafford Act outlines how the federal government provides disaster assistance and prescribes whether cross-border pollution, or more specifically the dilapidated plant itself, fits the definition of a major disaster or emergency.

"Funding is intended to support incidents that are sudden or unexpected, such as natural disasters, accidental oil spills or, most recently, contagious diseases like COVID-19, not ongoing situations for which the needs are long-term or broader in scope," the San Diego Union Tribune noted in an article last year.

Verma, along with EPA officials and San Diego's congressional representatives, all said on Aug. 29 that they are operating to fix the issue with the urgency of a public health emergency.

"In the past 18 months, we've invested \$31 million on maintenance and repairs to get the plant back into compliance," said U.S. Rep. Scott Peters (CA-50).

Most recently, a \$42.4 million dollar contract was secured to begin the design phase of the total \$600 million overhaul and expansion project.

Maria-Elena Giner, U.S. Commissioner of the International Boundary and Water Commission, noted there is the uptick in funding but said all of the current progress is "catch up" from a decade-long period – from 2010 to 2021 – where only \$4 million was invested in maintaining the plant.

"Everything we're doing now is just catch up," Giner said. "This process of continued collaboration and transparency with Mexico has to happen all the time from here, forever on. Because if not, we are going to slip into a level of comfort where we're not going to have the maintenance either here, or in Mexico, needed to protect the region."

Imperial Beach Mayor Paloma Aguirre said her constituents are at the frontlines of the contamination issue.



The Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Verma (right), visited the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant on Aug. 29.

Staff photo by Sofie Fransen.

"They are suffering the ailments – the upper respiratory illnesses, the lower respiratory illnesses, the gastrointestinal illnesses – from exposure to all these pollutants," Aguirre said. "So we want to just reiterate our interest, and frankly, our desperation from our constituents to get not just this plant fixed, but also to divert and treat the Tijuana River itself."

## Q&A: Council candidate Christine Mott, environmental and community activist

» Continued from Page 1

and serving the interests of her community.

"I'm someone who is not afraid to do the right thing, even when it's hard," she said.

Mott is a former chairwoman of the Animal Law Committee of the New York City Bar Association with over 15 years of experience leading legal and policy efforts to improve animal welfare. She also worked alongside industries seeking to remove animals from the supply chain.

Mott is a member of Emerald Keepers, the Coronado Historical Association, Coronado Soroptimists, the parent organization at Christ Church Day School, a founding member of Save the Trees Coronado and the chair of the Friends and Flowers programming of the Coronado Flower Association.

She is also keen on representing young families as she feels the current City Council doesn't fully reflect the community of Coronado. She has two daughters, ages 3 and 6, and wants "to ensure that the decisions being made are mindful of the impact on our children and future generations of this community."

"We need fresh leadership with a forward-thinking mentality to achieve that," Mott said.

**Q:** Why did you choose to run for a seat on City Council?

**Mott:** "As an attorney and business advisor with a background in public policy my career has been built around public interest work including board service and other volunteer work for organizations helping people, animals and the environment. I am ready to use my experience to serve the community of Coronado."

In response to a follow-up question, Mott said the City Council right now – with only one female and one member under age 40 – is not really representative of the people who live on the island.

"I think that needs to change. And maybe we can start just with, you know, women," Mott said.

"Having the perspective of somebody raising a family here as well, that's really important, too. So I bring all of that."

**Q:** What is your stance on the Cays Park Master plan?

**Mott:** "The Cays Park is Coronado's largest park and I support proceeding with needed repairs and some key enhancements to meet our community's needs. However, I believe the overall price and scope needs a second look, especially at this time when we have various pressing community needs (including our infrastructure and schools). In particular some of the unnecessary additions which have caused public controversy should be reassessed so that we have better



Christine Mott, attorney, wife, mother and community activist is running for city council. Staff photo by Madeline Yang.

community consensus before plans for the project are finalized."

**Q:** Can you spell out specific plans you'd advocate for fixing the stormwater infrastructure?

**Mott:** "As recent storms and flooding demonstrated, our city is not prepared for the new normal of environmental threats that will only worsen with climate change. We cannot simply accept that our homes and businesses will be flooded with water and sewage. The city must proactively maintain our existing infrastructure, accelerate completion of the Parker Pump Station and look holistically and implement innovative and forward-thinking solutions."

One specific solution that I want to see championed is the use of "green infrastructure" to increase our trees, shrubs and green space and implement new solutions like rain gardens and natural area restoration which integrate nature into engineered solutions for stormwater management. We need to be planting trees in Coronado – not chopping them down. Science shows that trees play a vital role in managing runoff, as their roots soak up water and help soil absorb water and their leaf canopies help reduce erosion from falling rain – among many other environmental benefits. We need to preserve and create additional greenspaces to integrate into densely paved areas."

**Q:** What are tangible examples of efforts you've made to address the Tijuana sewage crisis. Or, what do you hope to do during your time in office?

**Mott:** "As a private citizen I have sent letters and joined community petitions and initiatives to advocate for a solution to the sewage crisis, which is an existential threat to our city, community and economy. As an elected official I will keep our city laser-focused on achieving a permanent solution to this crisis. I believe in an all-hands-on-deck approach, including joining forces with our local hotels,

businesses and other commercial real estate and business stakeholders, and increased advocacy efforts with state and federal representatives as well as the Navy."

**Q:** What is your stance on the affordable housing allocation?

**Mott:** "I want to see Coronado's local heroes – our teachers, military families, law enforcement, firefighters and lifeguards – part of our residential community. At the same time – unlike other areas of the state of California – Coronado is a very finite piece of land, making state-mandated housing allocations extremely challenging. We need to find reasonable solutions that balance additional housing development with our community's economic, environmental and community goals to harmonize with infrastructure capacity, traffic, public safety and environmental concerns. I believe that the city needs to take an active role with SANDAG to build a more collaborative relationship and advocate for our community interests so that housing allocations are reasonable and appropriate for Coronado and we retain as much local control as possible. We also need to work closely with the Navy to identify additional cooperative ways for military housing to satisfy a greater portion of Coronado's allocation of housing units."

**Q:** Do you favor an ordinance mandating greater E-bike regulations?

**Mott:** "Yes, I will advocate for local regulations for e-bikes (including specific training and licensing requirements, speed limits and other safety measures and insurance requirements). As heartbreaking accidents throughout the state and country have shown, common-sense regulations are critical. Let's not wait until tragedy strikes here. I also support additional pedestrian safety measures (and ensuring better enforcement) to make the community safer including more crosswalks and

reduced speed limits."

**Q:** What is a topic/issue in Coronado that was not referenced in these questions that you believe you can bring expertise to?

**Mott:** "One of the things that makes Coronado special is that it is home to a wonderful multi-generation community. Right now our city needs to do more to support our schools, youth and families. With our schools facing a funding crisis and teacher cuts we need to do more for our schools especially in this critical time so that we have quality education and resources for our students."

Additional environmental protections are critical to preserving the beauty and allure of our special coastal community and we need to act now to prevent future environmental harms. I support transitioning the city to solar energy, creating a city sustainability program, and initiatives to address plastic waste, pesticides and other pollutants, as well as increased protections for trees and wildlife."

In response to a follow-up question, Mott said the city has extra money to spend on schools, but has chosen not to.

"The City Council just voted in a very split vote to spend \$10 million to expand the Winn Room (at Coronado Public Library). Is that a good choice when our schools are floundering?"

Mott said the city's grant program gave the least amount of funding to organizations involving children, schools or families.

"Not to say those things aren't important, but the historical society and other organizations are all getting huge chunks of cash," Mott said. "Way at the bottom is, like, the school's foundations, boards, things like that."

"I'm right there in the mix with young families. And I see, you know, what's happening with our schools and lack of funding. So, I think that it's just important to have somebody who is living that life in that demographic represented on City Council to really advocate for those issues," Mott said.

**Q:** Local cities and governmental entities have declared local emergencies for the ongoing Tijuana sewage crisis. Will you push for Coronado to do the same?

**Mott:** "Yes. Coronado needs to tackle the sewage crisis head on by declaring a state of emergency. We cannot wait any longer as our economy, public health, property values and quality of life continue to decline due to the sewage crisis. How can we ask state and federal authorities to give us emergency funding and support when we ourselves have not formally acknowledged the problem on a local level? Let's rip off the Band-Aid and roll up our sleeves to find a permanent resolution to this crisis."

# Patients resonate with music at Sharp Coronado

» Continued from Page 1

“Specifically, I’ve studied to be a neurologic music therapist which is using music to help rewire the brain for whatever rehabilitative modes that might be, whether that’s motor, speech, cognition,” Pederson says.

On this Wednesday morning, Pederson is working with a patient whose family says he loves Christian worship music.

“I’m so glad You’re in my life / I’m so glad You came to save us”.

“Music is what’s called a global process,” Pederson says. “If you were to hook up your brain, and a person started singing or listening to music you like, multiple areas of the brain light up. That is why we can use music to help rehabilitate speech or movement, because it’s actually stimulating different areas of the brain.”

As she sings, she pauses occasionally to jot down a note.

“I’m trained to look at little tiny things,” Pederson says. “I’m seeing if he’ll follow a picture of his favorite musician. I’m looking to see if he starts moving any of his body. If he is looking towards me or listening to where my voice is.”

She moves from left to right, orbiting half circles around his bed. She plays music and then rings dissonant bells to see how he responds. This session is the third of four standardized assessments.

“As of this time, if you were to say his name, he wouldn’t open his eyes,” Pederson says. “Or, if you were to make a loud sound over in the corner, he probably wouldn’t jolt. We’re seeing if he is responsive to music.”

He moves his hand as the music continues.

Then, he flutters it again.

Pederson acknowledges his movement, telling him that she’s going to put a string of bells on his wrist in case he wants to interact with the music.

Those two movements were signposts in the session.

“Music therapy is not looking to be curative,” Pederson says. “It’s not like a pill that you take. It’s looking to see how we can use music to remind people of strengths they already have and to help build off of that. It’s helping them connect the dots through things they really love.”

Pederson knew she wanted to go into music therapy after reading research in high school and completing a science project about how music affects young women’s moods.

She played in the high school band and did choir. But, she had stage fright, a fear that revolved around her voice.

“Fun fact: I was terrified to sing a solo by myself until I was a senior in high school,” Pederson says. “I took operatic voice lessons from a college professor as a high school student because I knew I wanted to do [music therapy for my career]. You can’t do it if you have stage fright.”

She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of North Dakota. The music therapy program was 40% behavioral sciences, she says, and 60% music instruction. Through her classes, she became proficient in piano, guitar, percussion, voice, songwriting/arranging, clinical interventions, assessments, therapeutic practices, and more.

She says these skills make her different from a music volunteer.

“A music therapist has the counseling and verbal therapy skills. Then, I can sit and say, ‘I notice there’s some tears coming up for you. Can you share a little bit about what’s this reminding you of?’” Pederson says. “We can delve more into the therapeutic process.”

After moving to San Diego, she put her knowledge to work and completed her degree with a 1,200-hour internship. She then sat for her certification exam. That was back in 2007. She has worked since then in a variety of spaces from hospice to rehabilitation to neonatal.

“A big part of my job here is to use music for pain management, to help bring relaxation, reducing anxiety, to bring comfort,” Pederson says.

Currently, she works in oncology at Sharp Memorial, and she works with patients in long-term and subacute care at Sharp Coronado.

Between the two hospitals, she estimates she sees 60 patients a week, some in groups and others one on one.

She’s even been present to offer music therapy as families navigate the passing of a loved one.

“I’ll be playing the patients’ favorite music and trying to slow it down to help keep them calm, but then as I continue playing, I can ask the family, ‘Can you tell me a bit about your loved one since I haven’t gotten to have a conversation with them?’” Pederson says. “Getting them to start processing and working through anticipatory grief and being able to say, ‘What was their sense of humor like? What did they love most in this world?’”

She’s found that music is a “holding space” in grief.

“It’s interesting because if I stop the music, usually, people then start wiping their eyes and they’re



Pederson walks from the main Sharp Coronado Hospital building to long-term care on Aug. 28.

Photos by Elaine Alfaro.



Pederson says on her music app, she has about 4,000 songs that she knows and can utilize in her sessions.



Juan Obal (left), Joe Barnes and Milagros Bautista listen to Pederson singing and playing guitar.



Joe Barnes holds jingle bells in his left hand and a percussion shaker in his right hand.

like, ‘Okay we’re done,’” Pederson says. “But if I keep the music going then they’re more likely and apt to keep talking and to express themselves. It just makes it a safe space.”

She acknowledges that she doesn’t change a person’s world every single time she picks up the guitar, but the long-term impact is what makes it worth it.

“I truly, truly love what I do,” Pederson says.

This is her 67th Wednesday-morning music class in long-term care at Sharp Coronado.

Five patients – Milagros Bautista, Joe Barnes, Juan Obal, Juan Gonzalez and one other – form a semi-circle around Pederson. The music class has a theme this week – honoring Labor Day.

They start off by checking in on how everyone is feeling from a scale of 1-10.

Most range from 7s to 10s. One of them says they’re a 4.

“We share everybody’s experience. The good, the bad,” a patient says.

Pederson leads them in some songs, bringing out music shakers, little drums or percussion sticks. Milagros’ smile crinkles her face as she taps along with the beat.

They also play a Labor Day game to practice social and thinking skills. They’re asked to name professions for each alphabetical letter. Phone a friend is welcome.

Barnes says what keeps him coming back to music is the engagement.

“It’s exciting and interesting,” he adds.



Pederson shows the check-in table she uses in the music group sessions.

Obal’s favorite song is “You’ve Got a Friend.” Pederson sings some of the lyrics with him.

“When you are happy with your job, you share with others,” a patient says. “Sharing things with others is good for everyone. Happy life, good life.”

The class wraps up with music, just as it started, with everyone describing how they feel on a scale of 1-10.

The number that sticks out from the group is 5. “I’m not saying I’m a miracle worker and leave every room better than how I found it, but that’s the goal,” Pederson says. “I try. Even if it’s an incremental, tiny, bit of change, that’s great.”

To learn more about Sharp’s music therapy program, visit <https://www.sharp.com/give/arts-for-healing>.

*“Music therapy is not looking to be curative ... It’s not like a pill that you take. It’s looking to see how we can use music to remind people of strengths they already have and to help build off of that. It’s helping them connect the dots through things they really love.”*

- Noelle Pederson

# Coronado School Board candidate to serve for students and teachers

» Continued from Page 1

board members who are focused on our kids and care about the people who are educating them,” said Merriman. “As a mom of four, I know all these people. They are not chess pieces to me... I care about them and I just think we need someone on the board who has skin in the game and who cares for the people, not just the numbers.”

Merriman, 44, said she’s been a long-time volunteer in her children’s classrooms, including the past three years as a book club leader at Village Elementary School – her favorite volunteer experience.

Merriman, born in Texas, is an artist, writer, poker player and mother, and has lived in Coronado twice – from 2011 to 2013, and 2021 to present. This is her first time running for public office.

“I strongly believe that parents need to be on the school board. We feel the decisions made by our district acutely and see their impact on the daily lives of our children and their educators,” Merriman said via email.

Merriman said a storm that inundated much of Coronado in January, including local schools, galvanized her concerns about leadership.

“After the difficulties from the [2024] flooding...I want to be sure that our kids and staff have a humanizing advocate,” she added. “I was at that school the night of the flood to bring food to the custodians, and I mopped the playground bathrooms...the next day. As a School Board member, I will continue to show up and care for the people at our schools in whatever way I can.”

Merriman said a staffing shakeup this summer at Village Elementary School was not communicated in a professional or caring manner and caused her deep concern as a parent.

“Our amazing educators and administrators could all leave tomorrow and make more money elsewhere in our county,” Merriman wrote in an email. “Our appreciation, loyalty, respect, hands-on support, and sense of family-like care is all that keeps many gifted educators and administrators here.”

Merriman said her other priorities include: solving district challenges through open communication; supporting military families; embracing bilingual education; crafting hiring guidelines to



Shawnee Barton Merriman is a candidate for the 2024 Coronado Unified School Board.

Staff photo by Julieta Soto.

ensure the district has experienced and qualified educators; and revitalizing adult education course offerings.

Merriman said the district has done a great job developing gender diversity and “strong female leaders,” but found it troubling that some Hispanic school leaders left the district this summer.

“We live in a diverse place,” she said. “My kids need to learn Spanish because their best friends speak Spanish... When they grow up, there’s likely to be more Spanish spoken here in this community than there might be English...We want a diverse community and I think most people do and I think

our school needs to be making decisions that reflect that.”

Merriman said the district’s budget crisis is a major issue, and trustees should focus on how to best support teachers and students in the process. She criticized a decision by the current board to lay off mental health experts.

“I don’t think that people who aren’t parents of young children and of middle-school children understand the different mental health climate that our kids are growing up in today,” said Merriman. “Mental health professionals cannot be some of the first budget cuts, they have to be some of the last.”

*“I strongly believe that parents need to be on the school board. We feel the decisions made by our district acutely and see their impact on the daily lives of our children and their educators.”*

- Shawnee Barton Merriman

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# NAVY

## USS Cowpens decommissioned after 33 years

DVIDS

Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Cowpens was recognized for more than 33 years of naval service during the decommissioning ceremony at Naval Base San Diego on August 27.

Hundreds gathered to celebrate the ship's history of naval service. Cowpens' Commanding Officer Cmdr. Jac O. Ullman III spoke of the ship's legacy and its crew.

One of the notable milestones in Cowpens' history was its participation in Operation Enduring Freedom, tasked with providing air defense and maritime security.

The ship also conducted surveillance, launched precision strikes and provided support for coalition forces during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"From 1983 onward, these ships [Cowpens] defended our nation's interests, supported critical combat operations, and ensured freedom of the seas; more than that, they brought AEGIS and VLS, revolutionary technologies into the hands of our warfighters", said Rear Adm. Ted LeClair, deputy commander of Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Also in attendance was first commanding officer of Cowpens, Vice Adm. Edward Moore (Ret.).

Additionally, the ship played a key role in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations, providing aid to regions devastated by natural disasters such as the 2004 Indian

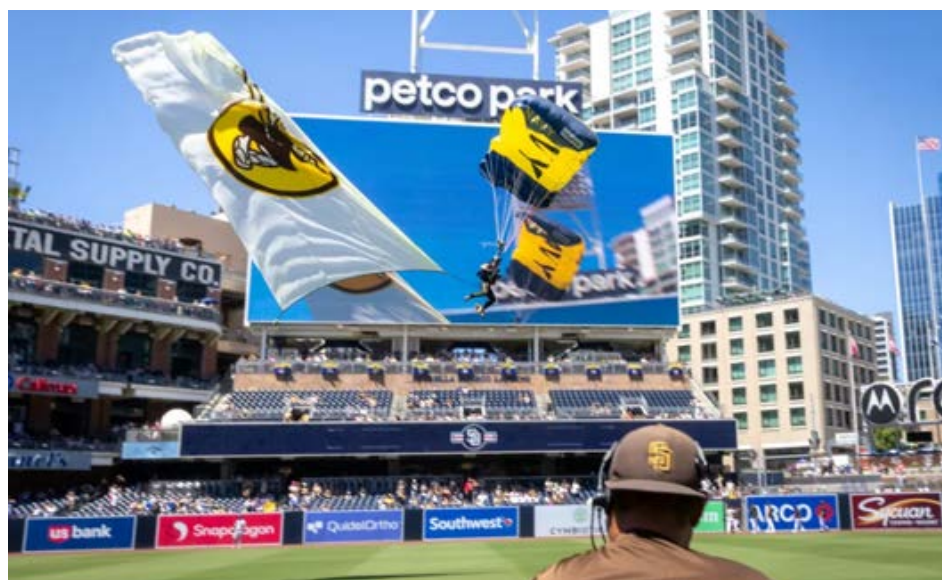


**Cmdr. Jac Ullman, commanding officer of the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Cowpens (CG 63), right, presents an American Flag representing the ship's Ensign to retired Vice Adm. Edward Moore, Jr., Cowpens' first commanding officer, during the ship's decommissioning ceremony at Naval Base San Diego Aug. 27, 2024. Cowpens was commissioned in 1991, marking 33 years as a United States Ship.** U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Claire M. DuBois.

Ocean tsunami and the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

Cowpens was built in Bath, Maine, and commissioned March 9, 1991, in Charleston, South Carolina. Named after the pivotal Battle of Cowpens during the American Revolutionary War, the ship has served the nation for more than three decades.

After the decommissioning and inactivation, the ship will be towed to the Navy's Inactive Ship facility in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii where it will be in a Logistic Support Asset status.



U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Eric Chan.

## Navy Leap Frogs jump into Petco Park

DVIDS

The U.S. Navy Parachute Team, the "Leap Frogs," jumped into Petco Park before the San Diego Padres game on Aug. 25.

The Leap Frogs are the official

parachute demonstration team of the United States Navy and are part of the Naval Special Warfare Command. The Leap Frogs Navy Parachute Team is made up of active-duty Navy SEALs, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technicians and support personnel.

## Change-of-command



**Aug. 29, 2024 — Rear Adm. Seiko Okano, commander, Naval Information Warfare Systems Command (NAVWAR), salutes the sideboys during the Tactical Networks Program Office (PMW 160) change-of-command ceremony at Naval Information Warfare Systems Command. Capt. Nicole Nigro assumes the program manager for PMW 160 from Capt. Catherine Boehme. PMW 160 is the Navy's program office for tactical networks, providing mission effective, affordable and cyber resilient networks for Navy tactical forces.** U.S. Navy photo by Ramon Go.

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## SPORTS

# Islanders Cross Country back in action

BY CADE CAVIN  
The Coronado News

The Coronado High School cross country team got back into action on Aug. 24 at the Bronco Invitational. Head Coach George Green said that the Islanders cross country program is sitting at 30 runners, with around half of them newcomers, so it is still early to tell how they may fare this season.

“There are a handful of freshman girls on the team who could fill-in the remaining two spots for a seven-girl team, but it’s too early to know which ones will step up,” he said about the girls varsity squad.

Although Green said last year’s boys team wasn’t strong, the additions the team has made should provide them with much more depth this year.

“There are three transfers who could join the varsity squad — junior Vincent Russo from Maryland, Andrew Buck from Canyon Hills, and

Nicholas Wosje from Lisbon, Portugal,” Green said.

Green said that for both the girls and boys teams, seven runners can enter the CIF finals. So the final varsity team will be determined at the end of the season. He also said that a few others will get a varsity letter based on their performances throughout the year.

Top returners for the team this year include Nathan Ayan, Jack Letcher, Xavier Marsh and Tyler Horton for the boys, while junior Morgan Maske, sophomores Maeson Everitt, Gwynne Letcher and Nadia Roos, and senior Jaya Jost are the top returning girls.

Green said Ayan and Letcher produced the top two boys performances in the two-mile varsity race on Aug. 24, placing 14th with a time of 10:56 and 24th with a time of 11:17, respectively. On the girls side, Maske and Letcher each placed in the top eight in the girls two-mile varsity race.

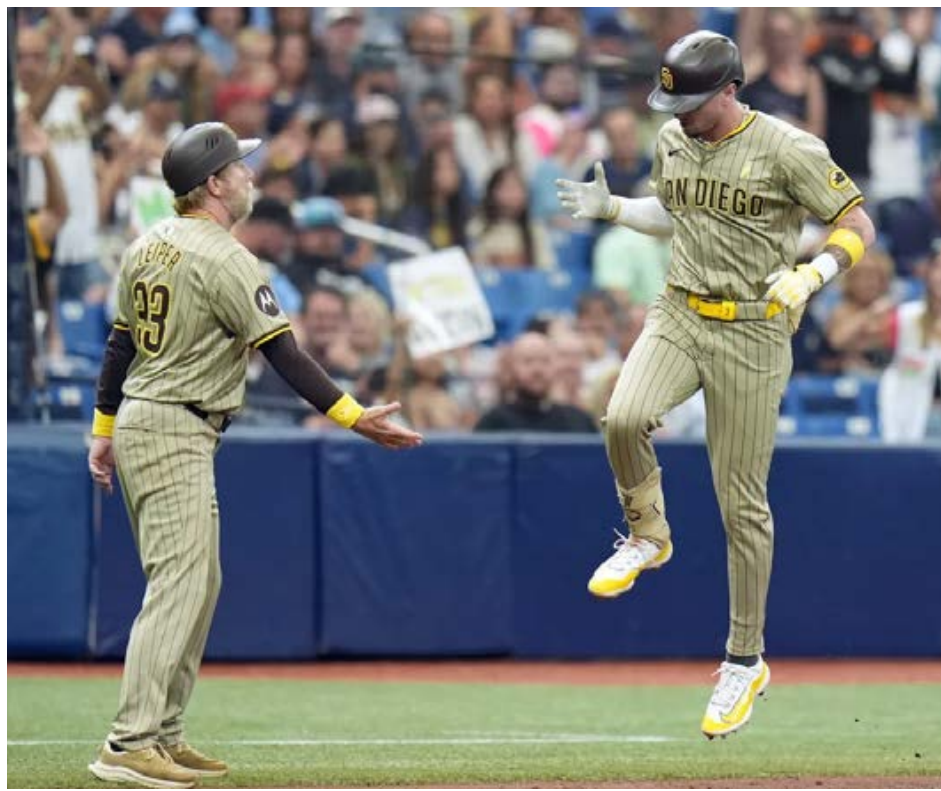


The Islander cross country squad has a total of 30 athletes on the team.  
Photo courtesy of George Green.

Maske finished 6th with a 12:51, and Letcher finished 7th with a 13:06.

The Islanders traveled to Canyon Hills High School on Aug. 31 for the

Raven Invitational. Green says the goal for the year is to finish as highly ranked as possible with many runners going to state.



San Diego Padres' Jackson Merrill celebrates with third base coach Tim Lincecum (33) after his two-run home run off Tampa Bay Rays starting pitcher Ryan Pepiot during the fourth inning of a baseball game Sunday, Sept. 1, 2024, in St. Petersburg, Fla. AP Photo/Chris O'Meara.

## San Diego's Jackson Merrill has flipped the odds on the NL Rookie of the Year race

Associated Press

At the All-Star break, the one award race that seemed like it might be over was for National League Rookie of the Year.

Not so fast.

A terrific month of August has helped San Diego's Jackson Merrill emerge as the new favorite for the honor, displacing Pittsburgh right-hander Paul Skenes. The flip in the betting odds has been dramatic. Skenes was a -1200 favorite at the break, according to BetMGM Sportsbook. Now it's Merrill who is the pick at -800.

It's not as though Skenes has done anything to lose the award. The 2023 No. 1 overall draft pick is 8-2 with a 2.23 ERA and a 0.95 WHIP. The last-place Pirates aren't pushing him overly hard, but they haven't shut him down either, and it was perfectly reasonable to consider him a huge fa-

vorite for Rookie of the Year back in mid-July.

But Merrill, who unlike Skenes has spent the whole season in the big leagues, has made a huge push for a surging San Diego team that is now in wild-card position. In August, he hit .303 with seven home runs and a .969 OPS. After homering again on the first day of September, Merrill is batting .289 with 21 home runs and 79 RBIs.

Skenes still has a solid lead over Merrill in Baseball Reference's version of wins above replacement, but Merrill is ahead in the FanGraphs version.

What's remarkable is that the other major awards have basically held to form. The favorites at the All-Star break — Aaron Judge and Shohei Ohtani for MVP, Tarik Skubal and Chris Sale for Cy Young — are still the favorites now. In fact, all four of them have shorter odds now than they did then.

## US Open: 16-year-old Californian Iva Jovic beats Magda Linette in the first round

Associated Press

Iva Jovic, a 16-year-old from California, became the youngest American to win a women's main-draw match at the U.S. Open since 2000, eliminating 2023 Australian Open semifinalist Magda Linette of Poland 6-4, 6-3 on Aug. 26.

“Surprised, but not surprised,” Jovic said about the result against someone who’s been ranked in the top 20.

“I just had a plan about what I was going to do before we started, and there weren’t that many needs for crazy adjustments, because it was going well,” Jovic said. “So just kind of sticking to that.”

Katrina Scott of the U.S. was 16 when she won a match at the U.S. Open four years ago. Last year, Mirra Andreeva of Russia was 16 when she did it.

Here’s one indication of Jovic’s youth: She still is planning to enter the junior event later in the tournament. Here’s another: Jovic is still in school, taking online courses through a program she described as “convenient and ... very lenient.”

Jovic grew up participating in a bunch of sports, including soccer, gymnastics and swimming. But she gravitated to tennis, which she began learning alongside her older sister on courts built atop the apartment complex in Torrance, California, they lived in.

“I want to be the best that I can be,” Jovic said. “Just get better every day, honestly. Just keep working. I’m on a good path, but there’s a lot more to do.”

She earned a wild-card entry for the main bracket at the year’s last Grand Slam tournament by winning the U.S. Tennis Association Girls’ 18s national championship. She also paired with Tyra Grant there to take the doubles title, which gave them a wild card for women’s doubles at Flushing Meadows; the USTA granted Jovic and another American teen, Kaylan Bigun, a spot in the mixed doubles field, too.

Jovic and Grant teamed up to win junior doubles titles at the Austra-



AP Photo/Adam Hunger, File.

*“I want to be the best that I can be... Just get better every day, honestly. Just keep working. I’m on a good path, but there’s a lot more to do.”*

- Iva Jovic

lian Open in January and Wimbledon in July; they also were the runners-up at the French Open in June.

Jovic’s favorite players are 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic — he’s Serbian, and so are her roots; after the English portion of her news conference concluded Monday, she answered questions in Serbian — and Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Belinda Bencic.

Why?  
“Djokovic, I mean, do I need to say? We all know how great he is,” Jovic responded. “And then Belinda, she just takes the ball so early and her footwork is very cutting the angle, so she just makes her opponents feel kind of suffocated. That’s what I would like to try to do.”

Jovic would love the chance to have a conversation with Djokovic, but their lone interaction so far was when she asked if he would mind posing for a photo.

“I do have a selfie,” she said with a smile. “It doesn’t look great, but it’s there.”

# SPORTS

## Xander Schauffele has the points for PGA player of the year. But the award no longer exists

Associated Press

Winning two majors in a year used to be a shoo-in for earning the points-based award for player of the year presented annually by the PGA of America since 1948. Xander Schauffele was in line to get at least one award this year.

A major is worth 30 points. Two majors comes with a 50-point bonus.

Schauffele, a San Diego native and the PGA Championship and British Open champion, effectively clinched the award last week when Scottie Scheffler did not win the BMW Championship. Schauffele would have had 148 points — two majors, the bonus and 19 points each for being second in scoring average and money. Even if he won the Tour Championship, Scheffler would have had only 140 points.

There's just one problem — the PGA award no longer exists.

In a decision that was not announced at the time, the PGA of America two years ago quietly chose to end its awards for PGA Tour players — player of the year and the Vardon Trophy.

“We are no longer presenting the PGA Player of the Year and Vardon Trophy awards because similar awards are being given by the PGA Tour,” the PGA of America said in a statement.

The last PGA of America awards went to Rory McIlroy (Vardon) and Cameron Smith (player of the year) in 2022.

The PGA Tour's award for player of the year is decided by a vote of the players, and this could go in any direction. Scheffler has been nothing short of astounding this year with the Masters, The Players Championship, four titles in signature events, an Olympic gold medal and the lowest scoring average since Tiger Woods.

But a number of players lean toward multiple majors, the most meaningful titles in golf. It could come down to one of them winning the FedEx Cup.

The PGA Tour award — named after Jack Nicklaus — dates to 1990. The only player who captured two majors and did not win the award was Nick Faldo that year and for good reason: He was not a PGA



Xander Schauffele hits off the second tee during the third round of the BMW Championship golf event at Castle Pines Golf Club, Saturday, Aug. 24, 2024, in Castle Rock, Colo. AP Photo/Matt York.

Tour member and thus was ineligible for the award.

The PGA of America had been regarded as little more than a footnote for several years, mainly because so much in week-to-week golf revolves around the PGA Tour.

But with a player-only vote comes the problem of who actually votes. Scheffler wasn't sure how many times he submitted his ballot and said he wouldn't vote for himself.

The greatest example of voter turnout was 2010, when the award for rookie of the year came down to Rickie Fowler and Rory McIlroy. Neither reached the Tour Championship. Their records were very similar except that McIlroy won at Quail Hollow.

The vote went to Fowler.

The day after it was announced, Dustin Johnson was asked what he thought about the rookie award. He replied, “Man, that's a tough one. I'm not sure who I'm going to vote for.” Just a hunch, but he probably forgot to vote.

The curious decision was ending the Vardon Trophy, which dated to 1937. The PGA Tour basically copied that award — the adjusted scoring average — with the Byron Nelson Award. The only difference was the Vardon required 60 rounds, while only 50 rounds were required for the PGA Tour version.

The winner typically was referenced as winning the Vardon, not the Nelson. But no more.

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