THE CORONADO NEWS

ONLINE 24/7 @ THECORONADONEWS.COM • FRIDAY, NOV. 29, 2024 • VOLUME 2, NUMBER 41

**FILE: Repairs at the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant are expected to cost $600 million, according to Maria-Elena Giner, the commissioner of the International Boundary and Water Commission. A $42.4 million contract was awarded to begin the design of rehabilitation.** *Staff photo by Madeline Yang.*

# South Bay residents sue Veolia, allege "negligent and reckless operation"

**BY JULIETA SOTO**
The Coronado News

A group of South Bay residents has filed suit against operators of the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant, blaming the company for sewage pollution that has shut down local beaches and endangered public health.

James P. Frantz, CEO of Frantz Law Group, said the complaint, filed Nov. 15 in San Diego Superior Court, so far includes four individuals against Veolia North America, alleging mismanagement of the plant whose failing infrastructure discharges untreated sewage into the Tijuana River and Estuary and causes exposure to contaminants like Hydrogen Sulfide, DDT, Benzidine and Polychlorinated Biphenyls.

Veolia said this environmental crisis is caused by unprecedented and uncontrolled flows of sewage from Tijuana, amplified by the fact that there is a critical lack of funding from the U.S. and Mexican governments to fix the issue.

This legal action, brought forward by plaintiffs Rachel Havens, Steven Havens, Ursula Sanchez and Brian McCray, comes just days after Vista adopted a resolution declaring a state of emergency due to the ongoing cross-border pollution.

"The residents of Imperial Beach are tired of hearing the decades-old 'broken promises' of a company knowingly dumping billions of gallons of raw sewage on their beaches and in their estuary causing continuous beach closures, surfers and beachgoers getting sick, as well as individuals and families being constantly subjected to airborne pathogens and noxious odor," Frantz said in a statement.

During a Nov. 18 press conference, Frantz said his law firm is seeking monetary damages, medical monitoring and testing for the individuals affected by Veolia's alleged years-long negligence.

"These harmful contaminants may also lead to latent illnesses such as respiratory, cardiovascular, neurological and mental health issues," said Frantz.

The lawsuit cites "intentional actions, negligence, recklessness, and other unlawful conduct" from defendants, specifically California Health and Safety Code section 5411, wherein plaintiffs "were and are continually exposed to pollutants, sewage, and hazardous waste in the air they breathe, the water they drink and use in their home, and the soil on their properties."

"The State Water Board and the San Diego Water Board have issued hundreds of violations to IWBC and Veolia. But Defendants continue to allow the toxicity and pollution in the river and waters off the coast to increase and run unchecked and unmediated," reads the complaint.

Kristin Westphal, an attorney representing the

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**Flight personnel stand on the flight deck of the USS Carl Vinson in July 2023, preparing for the next plane to take-off. The USS Carl Vinson left Naval Air Station North Island on Nov. 18, 2024 to deploy to the Indo-Pacific region.** *File photo by Madeline Yang.*

# *Three aircraft carriers leave San Diego as USS Abraham Lincoln returns*

Coronado News staff

The USS Nimitz and USS Carl Vinson, two of the three aircraft carriers homeported in Coronado, left Naval Air Station North Island on Nov. 18 as a third flat top – the JS Kaga – also departed from San Diego Bay.

The three ships are en route to different locations. While the Nimitz is scheduled to perform readiness drills off the coast of San Diego before decommissioning in 2026, according to the San Diego Union Tribune, the JS Kaga is headed home to Japan. The Carl Vinson will swap out with the USS Abraham Lincoln in the Middle East.

Known among its crew as "The Abe," the USS Abraham Lincoln initially departed for the Middle East from Coronado on July 11. On Sept. 29, Pentagon Press Secretary Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder announced the carrier's deployment was extended in response to escalating regional tensions.

Now, the Coronado-based USS Carl Vinson will replace "The Abe" as it is on its way back to San Diego.

According to the U.S. Naval Institute, the last time the U.S. left the Middle East without a carrier strike group was in June.

# Agreement reached between Coronado Unified and teachers union

**Negotiations between the Coronado Unified School District and the Association of Coronado Teachers have been ongoing since March. They reached an agreement on Nov. 18.**

**BY SOFIE FRANSEN**
The Coronado News

An eight-month-long process of contract negotiations between the Coronado Unified School District and the Association of Coronado Teachers came to a close after the two parties reached agreement on a 4% salary increase for teachers.

The union's initial demand for 10% more pay was rejected by the district as it faces substantial budget shortfalls, which have already resulted in reductions to staffing.

Alexia Palacios-Peters, the president of the governing board, said at a Nov. 18 special meeting that she wishes the district could afford to give teachers the pay requested, but she also has a responsibility as a trustee to keep the district solvent and maintain core programs for students.

**Coronado Unified and the Association of Coronado teachers have reached a contract agreement after eight months.** *File photo by Julieta Soto.*

Members of the union have been vocal about their demands throughout the negotiation process. At a Coronado Unified School Board meeting in May, Katie Quinly, who is part of the union's negotiation team and

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## this week

### 4 • wednesday

Coronado Public Library, in partnership with the Coronado Island Film Festival, presents Film Forum Coronado, taking place the first and third Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. in the library's Winn Room. Film expert Ralph DeLauro provides a brief introduction to each film and leads a discussion afterwards, often including pointers about how lighting or camera angles contribute to a scene's mood or propel the story.

On Dec. 4, "The Russian Question" will be discussed.

### 5 • thursday

Author David Davenport, a research fellow emeritus at the Hoover Institute, will discuss his book, "A Republic If We Can Teach It: Fixing America's Civic Education Crisis" at 11 a.m. in the Winn Room of the Coronado Public Library. Davenport examines the urgent need for better civic education to preserve the republic, highlighting the disconnect between young Americans and the foundational principles of self-government and freedom.


## CONTACT US

**For news tips, story submissions and letters to the editor, contact Editor Sofie Fransen at sofie@thecoronadonews.com or 619-990-8465.**

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


# Richard Lederer coming to the Coronado Public Library

Coronado News staff

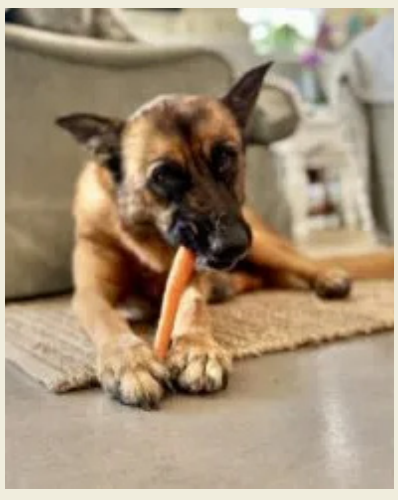
Richard Lederer, master of wordplay, best-selling author, and San Diego Union Tribune language columnist, will be giving a presentation at the Coronado Public Library on Dec. 14 at 11 a.m.

In his presentation, "A Feast of Words," Lederer will share everything from a brief history of English to bloopers and puns.

With more than 60 books to his name, including the "Anguished English" series, Lederer has a unique ability to make language both enlightening and fun. He is also the founding co-host of the popular KPBS program, "A Way With Words" and a recipient of the Toastmasters International Golden Gavel award.

This event is free to attend. More information can be found at cplevents.org.

**Richard Lederer will give a presentation at the Coronado Public Library on Dec. 14.**
*Photo provided by Richard Lederer.*



**Fiesta.**

PET OF THE WEEK

## *Meet Fiesta*

PAWS of Coronado

This adorable 4-year-old German Shepherd is all about fun and love! He's a pro at cuddling, a tennis ball enthusiast, and can't resist a crunchy carrot snack.

Whether he's basking in the sun or warming your lap, Fiesta's ready to bring joy to your life! Adopt this sweet party pup and let the good times roll!

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.

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Help loved ones revitalize their emotional, spiritual and physical health with a gift certificate to the **Sewall Healthy Living Center at Sharp Coronado Hospital**.

At our tranquil, spa-like destination, guests can receive treatments for more than 40 conditions — including arthritis, back pain and headaches. We offer customized Swedish, hot stone, deep tissue and sports massages, as well as acupuncture and microneedling. Certified massage therapists and licensed acupuncturists incorporate clinical aromatherapy in their treatments.

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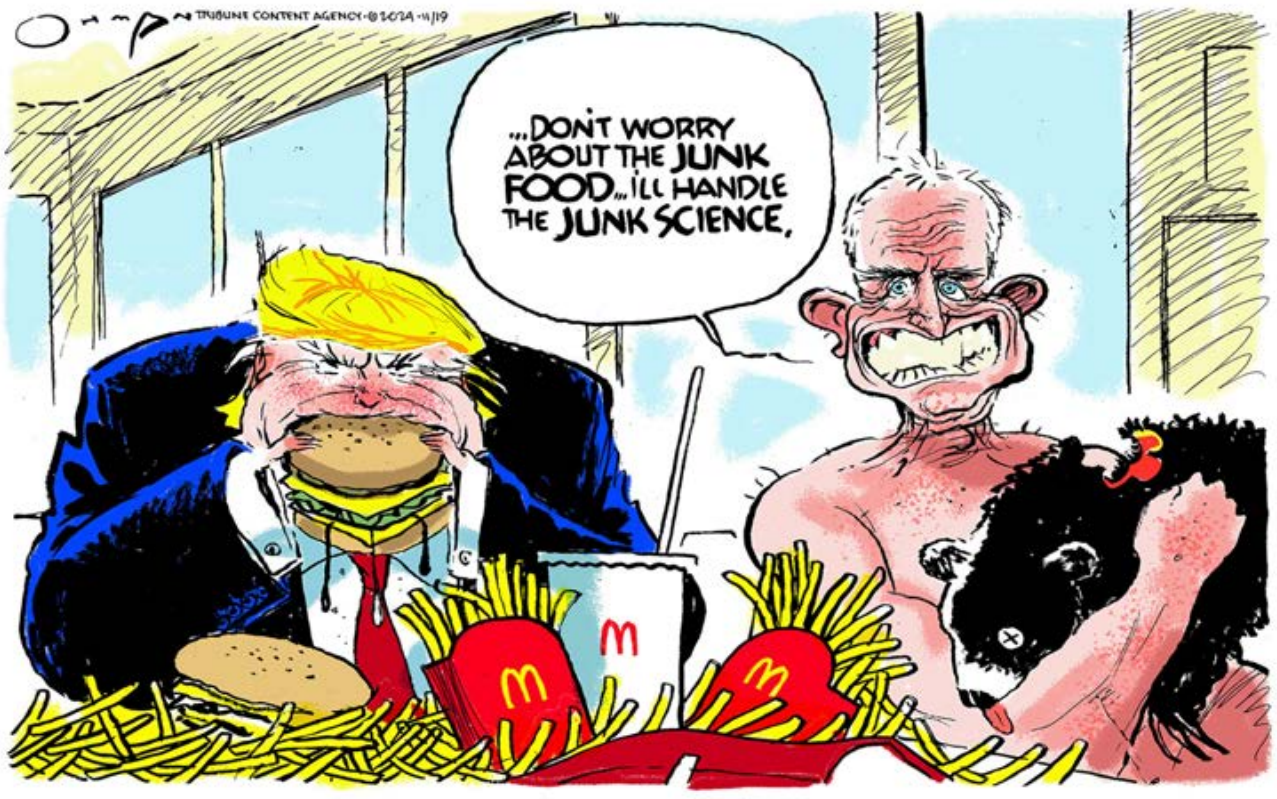
# *Thank You!*

## TO OUR OUR VOLUNTEERS, BADGE AND TICKET HOLDERS, FILMMAKERS AND OUR WONDERFUL COMMUNITY THAT HELPED MAKE OUR 9TH SEASON MEMORABLE

# OPINION

LISA BENSON

JACK OHMAN

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CORONADO

# Coronado students show higher college and career readiness

**Coronado High School Principal Karin Mellina discussed student performance data in her annual report.**

**BY JULIETA SOTO**
The Coronado News

Local high school students showed mixed results in recent evaluations of academic achievement, according to a report presented at the Coronado Unified School District.

High School Principal Karin Mellina said students significantly improved their scores for college and career readiness, but recorded substantially lower scores in a state assessment of student performance.

In a report to the school board, Mellina said the college and career readiness indicator increased by 7% from last year.

"We are 77% prepared in comparison to the state, which is 45% prepared," said Mellina.

According to Mellina's report, two-thirds of the 255 graduates last year attended a four-year university.

And, four out of five 2024 CHS graduates met A-G requirements, following additional course offerings, where students fulfill specific courses required to enroll in the state university systems.

Mellina also reviewed the current senior class' California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) results from last year.

Based on a dip in CAASPP scores –13% lower for English language arts and 7% lower for math – Mellina said she believes students are not prioritizing the exam which follows lots of other testing "because there's not really an incentive."

Still, Mellina said Coronado High is piloting the STAR assessment as a program to provide more support for students who need intervention.

### Heat Day Concerns

In a separate report, Deputy Superintendent Donnie Salamanca said the board will be reassessing the district's heat day guidelines to adhere to new Occupational Safety and Health Administration Heat Illness Prevention requirements.

Some Coronado classrooms do not have air conditioning so the school day is shortened when the temperature is forecast to be 90 degrees or higher for more than one day.

Salamanca said the district acknowledges its board policy is 10 years old and hoped to provide the board and community an opportunity to provide feedback.

Four teachers addressed the board, describing their classroom experiences on sweltering summer days.

"We make it work the best we can," said Matthew Smith, a teacher at Coronado Middle School. "When the heat of the day hits, our students are, for lack of a better word, demoralized. They're heads down, frequent water breaks, it's really hard to get them excited about anything."

Salamanca said more information will be provided next month before the board approves changes in January.

### In other matters:

- Senior Director of Learning Megan Battle announced the district received a $1.25 million grant from the Department of Defense Education Activity to support computer science curriculum through 2029.
- The board recognized outgoing Trustee Whitney Antrim, who completes her four-year term next month and attended her last meeting on Nov. 21.
- The board recognized the late Kristine McClung, a founder of the Coronado School of the Arts (COSA). A celebration of life will take place on Dec. 7 at 10 a.m. at the COSA theater.

The next regular board meeting is Friday, Dec. 13 at 4 p.m.

# *Coronado Fire receives go-ahead from City Council on electric engine*

**A request to fund a Rosenbauer RTX electric fire engine was met with a unanimous "yes" from City Council on Nov. 19.**

**BY KYLIE CAPUANO**
The Coronado News

First responders lined the walls of the Nov. 19 Coronado City Council meeting in support of outgoing interim police Chief Rick Martinez, and in anticipation of the council's decision on the purchase of an electric fire truck.

The meeting kicked off with the recognition of Martinez, whose temporary service ends Nov. 29. Martinez, a police officer in Santa Cruz for over 30 years, stepped in as the interim Coronado chief following the December retirement of his predecessor, Chuck Kaye.

City Manager Tina Friend applauded Martinez' service and thanked him for his time leading Coronado's department.

"He's ethical. He has an impeccable sense of what it takes to run a department extremely well," said Friend. "Over the past 10 months, he has shown remarkable leadership and a remarkable sense of stability."

Coronado's new chief, longtime San Diego officer Paul Connelly, will be sworn in on Dec. 9.

**Entrance to Coronado City Hall.** *Photo courtesy of Andrea McCullough.*

### Coronado Fire requests electric engine

The Fire Department's proposal for a Rosenbauer RTX electric fire engine initially was presented on Sept. 17, but City Council members had many questions, prompting Chief Jayson Summers to return to the meeting on Nov. 19 after conducting more extensive research.

Summers described the vehicle's environmental benefits, operational efficiency and cost advantages. He said electric engines offer twice the equipment storage due to the absence of a traditional motor, can travel 62 miles on battery alone or 310 miles with a backup diesel system, and can hold up to 500 gallons of water in each engine.

While the cost for an electric fire truck is around $935,000 more than a traditional rig (including the cost of a portable charging unit), Summers said the switch to an electric engine would save around $55,000 dollars over eight years by reducing diesel fuel costs.

Advanced electric engine diagnostics, according to Summers, have shown fewer maintenance issues in trials compared to diesel rigs. Over seven years, diesel engine maintenance has cost the department $150,314, accumulating 373 hours of repairs and 692 days of the engine being out of service.

### Health and environmental benefits

On top of a reduction in city fleet labor time, the decrease in carbon dioxide emissions from switching to electric would equal the emissions of 47 passenger vehicles driven for one year, according to Summers.

Summers said the quieter engine on an electric truck would reduce first-responder hearing loss and the risk of cancer due to carcinogens found in diesel exhaust.

From a mental health standpoint, without a diesel engine separating the crew from the engineer and captain in the front, first responders would be able to greater lean on each other for support.

"One of the things that we have studied in depth is traumatic incidents that firefighters respond to and trying to eliminate the potential for PTSD," said Summers. "One of the things that has been proven is debriefing immediately after an incident and being able to talk to each other and just check in and unpack what may have been seen. In a traditional apparatus, you don't really have that opportunity to do that because of the separation. Whereas on the electric engine, you can turn and rotate the seats to all face each other, and the leader of that company can check in on their crew."

### City Council approves funding

A number of Coronado residents spoke in favor of the vehicle upgrade, including Carolyn Rogerson.

"If the Coronado Fire Department thinks the electric fire truck is a good fit for this city, I would be happy to support funding for the new technology with our tax dollars," said Rogerson. "We have very exceptional police and fire, so I support anything they feel they need to maintain the safety of the city."

Following Summers' presentation, the request to fund the electric fire truck was met with a unanimous "yes" from the council.

The Rosenbauer RTX electric fire engine will replace one of Coronado Fire Department's three vehicles. Unlike traditional engines, the RTX features all-wheel drive, an independent suspension that allows for greater maneuverability and the ability to move forward while pumping water.

### Restrictions on e-bikes passed

In another matter, the City Council passed an ordinance cracking down on the usage of electric bikes on the island, a measure touted to prevent accidents.

The new regulations will require riders to dismount and walk their motorized devices on all city sidewalks, the Paseo, the boardwalk near Coronado Shores and the Promenade along the Glorietta Bay Marina between Glorietta Bay Park and Bluewater Grill. Persons under 12 years of age will be prohibited from operating a class 1 or 2 electric bicycle.

Those found in violation will be fined $25. The new regulations will come into effect on Jan. 1 as an initiative to reduce injuries and potential collisions with pedestrians.

The next Coronado City Council meeting is set for Dec. 3 at 4 p.m..

CORONADO

# Winners of Coronado turkey coloring contest announced

**192 entries will be on display at the Coronado Community Center.**

**BY KYLIE CAPUANO**
The Coronado News

Ten elementary school students out of 192 entrants were recognized at the Nov. 19 City Council meeting as the winners of this year's turkey coloring contest.

The City of Coronado Recreation & Golf Services and the Coronado Junior Women's Club announced the winners at the Nov. 19 meeting. Mayor Richard Bailey and council board members thanked the children for participating in the contest.

In the kindergarten and first grade category, Maxine Mooney from Silver Strand Elementary placed third, Madelyn Fannin from Village Elementary placed second and Alana Stiffarm from Sacred Heart Elementary placed first.

For second and third grade, Hattie Waddel from Silver Strand Elementary placed third, Sally Yedid from Village Elementary placed second and Camille Delgado from Silver Strand Elementary placed first.

Out of the fourth and fifth grade submissions, Grace Hartsell from Christ Church Day School placed third, Eli Gbeh from Village elementary placed second and Landry Ralph from Village Elementary placed first.

The entries will be on display at the Coronado Community Center through Dec. 2.

**From left: Maxine Mooney, Madelyn Fannin, Hattie Waddell, Sally Yedid, Eli Gbeh, Grace Hartsell and Landry Ralph were the winners of this year's turkey coloring contest in their respective age groups.** *Photo provided by the City of Coronado.*

# Behind Coronado's Christmas glow: the teamwork behind a 49-year tradition

**The Coronado Christmas Tree Lighting and Holiday Parade is expected to draw in over 17,000 people and will be held on Dec. 6.**

**BY KATIE MORRIS**
The Coronado News

On the first Friday night of December, the heart of Coronado transforms into a colorfully festive tableau, with Rotary Plaza's towering pine at its center.

This year, the Coronado Christmas Tree Lighting and Holiday Parade on Dec. 6 will mark the city's 49th annual celebration. Behind the sparkling lights lies an orchestration led by the Coronado Chamber of Commerce, the City of Coronado and Discover Coronado, the local tourism enterprise.

The tree lighting, scheduled immediately after the evening parade, is a culmination of months-long planning and community effort.

"We absolutely love our natural tree at Rotary Plaza," said Rena Clancy, executive director of the Coronado Chamber of Commerce. "It is perfect in every way, and is a symbol of gathering with family, friends and neighbors for the holidays."

**The pine tree in Rotary Plaza is illuminated with a strand of lights that stretches the length of the Coronado Bridge.** *Staff photo by Sofie Fransen.*

Planted in 1936 by the Rotary Club of Coronado along Orange Avenue, the tree – now 85 feet tall – has stood through generations of holiday celebrations.

The chamber takes the lead in organizing the parade, an event that draws over 17,000 attendees annually and will feature around 50 local entrants this year. To support these efforts, the city gave the chamber a $15,000 grant.

"It's a great event to get people into town," Clancy said. "A lot of attendees stay, shop, and eat in our restaurants, making it a fantastic opportunity to showcase Coronado's best."

The city complements the chamber's efforts by managing logistics, from installing holiday banners to lighting the median trees along Orange Avenue.

A part of the city's role includes closing Orange Avenue to vehicular traffic for several hours during the event, creating a pedestrian-friendly space where attendees can stroll freely.

"Our Police Department reroutes traffic and buses, and Caltrans grants us the permit to close the avenue for the night," said Kelly Purvis, Coronado's senior management analyst.

The parade route runs down Orange Avenue to the Hotel del Coronado before looping at RH Dana and Adella streets.

The tree itself is decorated with 18,175 lights on two miles of wiring. Purvis said the city and Discover Coronado share the cost.

"The lighting process is quite the production," Purvis said. "We hire an outside company, and they work overnight with three boom lifts to ensure the tree is ready for the big night."

The result, Purvis said, is a spectacle admired by locals and visitors.

"Our tree is one of the most beautiful in San Diego County," she added.

## South Bay residents sue Veolia, allege "negligent and reckless operation"

» Continued from Page 1

residents in the lawsuit, said the decision was made to not include the International Wastewater Treatment Plant (IBWC) or government agencies from Mexico in the complaint.

"It does not name these agencies because the action was brought in state court and is focused on the wrongdoing by the entities, these defendants, responsible for operating and maintaining the failing facilities and infrastructure that allowed the discharge and leaking of the raw sewage that damaged South Bay residents," said Westphal in a statement.

Listed as defendants are Veolia Water West Operating Services, Inc.; Veolia Water North America-West, LLC; Mark Wippler, an employee of Veolia; and other officers, directors, and managers anonymously grouped together.

Adam Lisberg, the senior vice president of communications for Veolia, said the environmental crisis is caused by unprecedented and uncontrolled flows of sewage from Tijuana, adding that there is a critical lack of funding from the U.S. and Mexican governments to fix the issue.

Lisberg described the lawsuit as "dishonest rhetoric" from attorneys with "baseless accusations."

"Veolia has done an excellent job helping to operate the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant despite these challenges, and we look forward to working with our government partners to help bring about a long-term solution," Lisberg said.

**Kristin Westphal, a Frantz Law Group attorney, said she has personally been affected by the Tijuana sewage crisis.** *Staff photos by Julieta Soto.*

**Frantz Law Group CEO James P. Frantz said the pollution bleeds into Coronado where beach closures impact tourism following a Nov. 18 press conference.**

The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission, a binational federal agency responsible for sewage and water infrastructure along the U.S.-Mexico border, has for years contracted Veolia to operate, maintain and manage the San Ysidro plant.

Frank Fisher, public affairs officer for the IBWC, said the agency does not comment on pending litigation.

"We remain focused on fulfilling our mission along the U.S.-Mexico border, including the recently announced rehabilitation and expansion of the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant, monitoring Mexico's sanitation infrastructure improvements, and taking urgent actions to eliminate dry weather transboundary flows," Fisher said in a statement.

So far, the IBWC has secured $400 million in federal funding for rehabilitation and expansion projects at the plant, which according to officials doubles in total cost. Last month, the agency announced a project that began expansion of the plant over the next five years, part of a binational agreement, Minute 328, to eliminate 90% of untreated Tijuana River wastewater reaching the coast.

The law firm said its civil complaint is a mass tort, where each plaintiff's damages and circumstances are individualized, potentially leading to higher recoveries.

While a mass tort typically includes a smaller group of injured plaintiffs compared to a class-action suit, Frantz said his team expects to have "hundreds, if not thousands" of plaintiffs in the case.

"Just this morning I got up for my walk at 6 a.m. and the smell was there. Last night, 9 o'clock, the smell was there," said Westphal.

Westphal, 54, who moved to Imperial Beach this past summer and previously lived in Coronado, said she has plans to become a plaintiff along with her family.

"Why would you want your children exposed to this?" said Westphal referring to alarming gases reported by university researchers studying pollution hotspots in September. "My own family has experienced headaches, sore throats, … gastrointestinal upset."

Frantz said the firm is also in the process of filing lawsuits, also in state court, on behalf of several school districts in the county also affected by the pollution.

No decision had been announced by Coronado Unified as of Nov. 18. Public Information Officer Maria Simon said the district board would be meeting with legal counsel to determine if it will join the lawsuit in the near future.

An amendment to the lawsuit will include additional individual plaintiffs, Westphal said, while school district complaints would be filed separately.

"You can only imagine if this happened in North County or Pacific Beach, how enraged the population would be," added Frantz, "People in South Bay deserve nothing less."

CORONADO

# State university guarantees Coronado Unified student admits

**New program secures a spot for Coronado students at CSU San Marcos.**

**BY JULIETA SOTO**
The Coronado News

College application submissions are around the corner and over a dozen Coronado students graduating this spring are taking advantage of a program to secure a spot at a local university campus.

Coronado Unified School District and California State University, San Marcos, a public university in San Diego's North County, approved an agreement last school year that makes Coronado's class of 2025 the first to participate in a program offering guaranteed admission if certain requirements are met.

The program is intended to provide students an automatic spot, which can significantly reduce stress associated with the college admissions process, said the district's lead counselor, Kristen Ereno.

Ereno, who began work to make the program available at the campus earlier this year, said "the most significant aspect of this program is that it provides students with a valuable local university option that is both affordable and accessible."

To be eligible to apply and receive guaranteed admission Coronado students must complete CSU approved course requirements, have at least a 2.5 GPA upon graduation, submit a financial aid application, and take junior year state assessments.

The high school counseling department estimated 20 to 25 students would submit applications following the district's official program rollout this fall, an offering available across neighboring districts.

**A program at Coronado High School secures a spot for students at CSU San Marcos.** *File photo.*

Ereno, who oversees the high school's counseling and college and career programming, said she plans to seek similar agreements with other local universities.

## Program offering

CSU San Marcos enrolls over 17,000 students in 43 undergraduate programs, 24 master's programs, 11 teaching credentials and one joint doctoral program.

Jerry McCormick, the university's director of strategic communications, said 17 high schools in San Diego County participate in guaranteed admission programs with CSU San Marcos.

The university has agreements with 25 partner school districts, including outside San Diego County, according to its website. The school says a guaranteed spot helps students who want to attend college stay motivated throughout high school.

These agreements ensure that CSUSM students come from a variety of backgrounds that represent the language, ethnic, and economic diversity of the region, reads the school's page.

The Coronado school board approved a five-year agreement in April.

## Admission requirements

Students seeking guaranteed admission must meet program requirements and apply between Oct. 1 and Dec. 2.

To qualify, students must earn a C grade or higher in courses specified by the state university system, and earn a minimum 2.5 grade-point average in those classes. They also must take the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress mathematics and English assessments in their junior year or successfully complete additional coursework designed to build the appropriate skills and knowledge. Finally, they must submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or The California Dream Act application by March 2.

Kheng Waiche, the Office of Recruitment and Outreach Interim Associate Director, said the program makes exceptions for students who end up graduating from Coronado High School, but do not reside in Coronado.

Ereno said that's one of the benefits for students who are military connected or inter-district transfers.

"A lot of our [Coronado High School] graduation requirements align to the A-G requirements," said Ereno.

Four out of five CHS students who graduated in 2024 met University of California and California State University's A-G requirements, according to data reported by Principal Karin Mellina.

The program does not include the school's nursing major, which has a Nov. 30 application deadline.

"[Students] can apply and they're still guaranteed admission," explained Ereno. "If they don't get into the nursing program, they would choose an alternate major."

The agreement also says students are no longer required to take the SAT reasoning test or ACT exam, but those scores could help students place into college math and English courses.

"This agreement opens doors for students who may not have considered attending a four-year university otherwise," added Ereno.

CORONADO

# Coronado Island Film Festival announces this year's winners

Coronado News staff

The Coronado Island Film Festival wrapped its ninth season over Veterans Day weekend and has announced the 2024 winners.

Notable winners this year include Sean McNamara's "Bau: Artist at War" taking the Jury Prize for Best Narrative Film and Lisa Lander's "Giants Rising" winning the Jury Prize for Best Documentary.

The film festival's coveted Emerald Award went to David Allen's "Wilding" from HHMI/Tangled Bank Studios.

Jury Prize winners in the short film categories were led by Eduardo Escribano-Solera's "The Masterpiece" for Best Narrative Short Film. The Jury Prize for Best Short Documentary went to Jacob Krupnick's "Then Comes the Body."

The Audience Awards include "A Real Pain" (Searchlight Pictures) for Best Narrative Feature, "Sugarcane" (Nat Geo) for Best Documentary Feature, "Robert Shields: My Life as a Robot" (My Monkey House) and "I Need You: 53 Years of the Band America" for Best Indie Documentary Feature.

Best Narrative Short went to "Belief" and Best Documentary Short went to "The Final Copy of Ilon Specht" (Breakwater Studios).

In the local category, Best Local Documentary Short went to "You Will Not Replace Us" and "Bootstrap Cafe" took Best Local Narrative Short.

**See the list of winners and read the full story online. Scan the QR code with your smartphone camera, and tap on the link.**

**"The Bootstrap Cafe," a short film written, directed and acted by Sam Ashdown, Natasha Harris and Marco Antonio Vega, won the best local narrative short award.** *Photo provided by Sam Ashdown.*


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CORONADO

# California voters reject measure that would have raised minimum wage to nation-high $18 per hour

Associated Press

Voters in California have rejected a ballot measure that would have raised the state minimum wage to $18 per hour by 2026, the highest in the country.

Opponents, including the California Chamber of Commerce, said it would have increased costs, led to higher taxes and pushed businesses to cut jobs.

"With the economy and costs top of mind for many voters this election, that message appears to have resonated," said Jennifer Barrera, the chamber's president and CEO.

Proponents estimated that the measure would have benefited 2 million workers, including hotel and grocery employees.

"Proposition 32's failure to pass is disappointing for all Californians who believe that everyone who works should earn enough to support their families," said Kathy Finn, president of UFCW 770, a Southern California union representing nearly 30,000 workers in various sectors.

The current minimum wage rates are $16 per hour for most workers and $20 in the fast-food sector. The health care sector will eventually see its minimum wage reach $25 per hour under a law that Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom signed last year and took effect in October.

**College student Jimena Sanchez, right, who studies children's development works as a part-time cashier earning minimum wage at a family store, in Los Angeles on Oct. 11, 2024.** *AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes.*

Hawaii passed a law in 2022 to gradually increase the statewide minimum wage to $18 an hour, but it does not take effect until 2028.

In 2016, California became the first state to pass a $15 hourly minimum wage under a law signed by then-Gov. Jerry Brown, also a Democrat.

About 40 cities and counties already have minimum wages higher than the statewide rate, and six of them require minimums above $18 per hour as of this year.

*"Proposition 32's failure to pass is disappointing for all Californians who believe that everyone who works should earn enough to support their families."*

**- Kathy Finn, president of UFCW 770, a Southern California union**

# Agreement reached between Coronado Unified and teachers union

**» Continued from Page 1**

has been a special education teacher in Coronado for 13 years, said experienced staffers are leaving Coronado for positions with better pay.

Meanwhile, district officials agreed at the Nov. 18 meeting that teachers deserve to be paid more, but said their hands are tied in terms of what the district can afford.

The union's negotiations team did not respond on deadline to provide a comment about the agreed upon 4%.

The 4% salary increase will be attributed to the 2024-2025 fiscal year, meaning employees will have a 3% increase retroactive to July 1, 2024 and an additional 1% increase effective Jan. 1, 2025.

The impact of the agreement will increase the budget shortfall from $2.3 million to $3.8 million. This total reflects the deficit from now until 2027, when the district will shift to a new revenue system known as basic aid.

Until then, the district – with more than 2,700 students and 380 employees – needs to find solutions for additional cuts, which Palacios Peters said will be discussed at the December board meeting.

"Unfortunately, this negotiation cycle came with additional costs: Strained relationships, distrust and time – either from our teachers being out of the classroom or administrators having their focus taken away from their respective sites and departments – legal fees and morale," said Palacios-Peters.

"As we move into negotiations again this spring, I would urge everyone to take time to refocus, mend relationships and find a way to collaborate moving forward," she added. "This prolonged process expended time and money on both sides that could have been spent on our students."

NAVY

# USS Carl Vinson sailors depart San Diego

**DVIDS - Sailors aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson man the rails on the flight deck as the ship gets underway in the U.S. 3rd Fleet area of operations on Nov. 18.** *U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Second Class Analice Baker.*

# US Coast Guard seizes more than $338 million in narcotics

**DVIDS - Crew members of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Munro work on the flight deck of the Cutter during the contraband offload in San Diego on Nov. 19. The Munro crew members interdicted the narcotics in the Eastern Pacific during counter-narcotic patrols, seizing and eliminating 29,000 pounds of cocaine worth an estimated street value of $335.8 Million.** *U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Richard Uranga.*

**The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln prepares to pull into Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for a scheduled port visit.** *U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kassandra Alanis.*

# USS Abraham Lincoln arrived at Port Klang, Malaysia for first time in 12 years

DVIDS

The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln arrived in Port Klang, Malaysia for the second scheduled port call on Nov. 23 on its 2024 deployment.

Marking the first U.S. aircraft carrier visit to Malaysia since 2012, the visit demonstrates the continuation of a long-standing partnership between the two countries, rooted in close people-to-people, economic and security ties.

"This historic visit reaffirms Malaysia's importance to the United States," said U.S. Ambassador to Malaysia Edgard D. Kagan. "It highlights our shared commitment to regional stability and Malaysian sovereignty, providing an invaluable opportunity for collaboration between our navies and key leaders."

"Our visit to Kuala Lumpur is important to the U.S. Navy. It is the first time an aircraft carrier has visited in 12 years," said Rear Adm. Adan Cruz, commander, Carrier Strike Group 3. "I deeply value the opportunity to strengthen the U.S. and Malaysian partnership while providing an opportunity for our Sailors and Marines to experience the amazing city of Kuala Lumpur."

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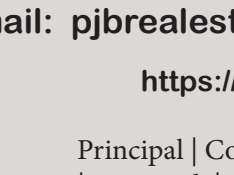

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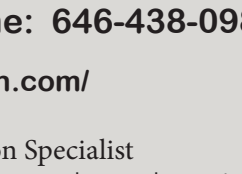

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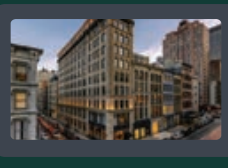

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SPORTS

# With eyes set on 2028 Olympics, this race walker trains on the Silver Strand

**BY CADE CAVIN**
The Coronado News

**Mannozzi placed 5th at the Race Walk National Championships at Santee Trolley Square.** *Photo by Rich Robert.*

Michael Mannozzi wasn't always a race walker, and he didn't always have the moniker, "The Italian Stallion," for his race walking prowess.

Mannozzi started his athletic career as a wrestler and a football player in high school, with dreams of running cross country, although he was never able to because of conflicts with the football season.

"During my senior year I found my father's class ring which had a winged foot on it," Mannozzi said. "I was unable to shake this itch to try. It took much initiative and convincing to the college cross country coaches as well as the track coach, but I was eventually allowed to try."

The winged foot refers to Hermes' winged sandals in greek mythology — a symbol of athleticism that has been adopted by many cross country and track and field teams.

Mannozzi walked on at Notre Dame College in Ohio in 2007 with a rather unorthodox event of choice: race walking. He began competing a year later.

Only the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) – the organization for small colleges – has indoor and outdoor race walking championships, Mannozzi said, so Notre Dame College was the ideal spot to get his start.

Now, almost 15 years later, Mannozzi is training to compete in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. He competed in the The World Athletics Race Walk Championships for the U.S. team in Oman, a country on the southeast corner of the Arabian peninsula, in 2022, and is looking to make the U.S. team yet again.

"I train seven days a week. This is more than to maintain fitness. The act of getting up to train first allows me to better handle whatever the rest of the day throws at me much better," Mannozzi said.

Mannozzi has surrounded himself with other like minded athletes, regularly training with Olympian race walkers Nick Christie and Miranda Melville on the Silver Strand.

"The accountability is helpful for days one may not feel like showing up. We still do and benefit from being pulled or pushed by the other members of the training group. We all have parallel and often the same goals, which is key," he said.

For Mannozzi, the competition is about more than just winning or losing. He lost his father to multiple sclerosis and explained that race walking is a direct way for him to walk for his late father.

"He and my grandfather who died within a year of each other. I had to figure out what being Italian and being a Mannozzi really meant," he said. Mannozzi said the race walking provides him with a very strong connection to his father, a man who was unable to walk.

"I was starting out the least of my teammates and rising to be the most prolific track and field athlete in school history."

Prolific he was, as Mannozzi was inducted into the Notre Dame College Hall of Fame as a part of the cross country, track and wrestling teams. He won the 2010 NAIA National Championship in the men's 3,000-meter race walk and finished third at the 2016 USA Track and Field 50K race walk in Santee.

Now that the 2024 Olympics have passed, Mannozzi has received another assignment as an active duty member of the Air Force. He will be moving 300 miles north to the Vandenberg Space Force Base near Lompoc. He said he hopes to return to Coronado for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

**Michael Mannozzi is training to compete in race walking in the 2028 Olympics.** *Photo by Tom Grantonic.*

## Pirates ace Paul Skenes and Yankees pitcher Luis Gil win Rookie of the Year awards

Associated Press

**From left are baseball players, Milwaukee Brewers' Jackson Chourio, San Diego Padres' Jackson Merrill and Pittsburgh Pirates' Paul Skenes, in 2024.** *AP Photo/File.*

Paul Skenes of the Pittsburgh Pirates was the heralded fireballer who equaled the hype, to the point he started the All-Star Game just two months after making his big league debut.

Luis Gil was an afterthought for the New York Yankees, earning a spot in their rotation only when ace Gerrit Cole got hurt in spring training.

Skenes capped a remarkable season on Nov. 18 by winning National League Rookie of the Year by a wide margin over San Diego center fielder Jackson Merrill and Milwaukee outfielder Jackson Chourio. Gil edged Baltimore outfielder Colton Cowser to take the AL honor, with Yankees catcher Austin Wells finishing third.

It's the first time the rookie awards went to two pitchers since 2011, when Tampa Bay starter Jeremy Hellickson and Atlanta closer Craig Kimbrel won.

"I was super pleased with what happened this year in terms of going out there and competing, but there's more work to be done for sure," said Skenes, who planned to celebrate with his girlfriend, LSU gymnast and influencer Livvy Dunne.

The Pirates and their fans were excited from the moment the team selected Skenes with the top pick in the 2023 amateur draft. He didn't make his major league debut until May 11 this year but the right-hander was such an immediate sensation he was selected to start the All-Star Game for the NL on July 16.

The 22-year-old Skenes finished 11-3 with a 1.96 ERA in 23 starts. He struck out 170 and walked 32 in 133 innings.

He said he's looking forward to pitching a full season next year.

"I think it starts now. The postseason is flying by and I can't wait for spring training to start already," Skenes said. "I think the biggest thing is going to be proving it over a full season next year also. If nothing else it's going to be a challenge and an opportunity to prove it again next year."

Skenes received 23 first-place votes and finished with 136 points in balloting by the Baseball Writers' Association of America, while Merrill had seven firsts and 104 points. They were listed on all entries. Chourio garnered 26 points.

Skenes also is a finalist for the NL Cy Young Award.

"On top of having a dominant first season, he handled the spotlight that came with it extraordinarily well," Pirates general manager Ben Cherington said. "He is constantly searching for ways to continue to get better, learns very fast, and wants nothing more than to win. He is a big part of the future of the Pirates, and we're excited for what's to come from him and our team."

Skenes became the second Pirates player to win the award after Jason Bay in 2004.

Because he finished among the top two in voting, Skenes will be credited with a full year of major league service instead of 142 days, under the collective bargaining agreement. If he isn't sent back to the minor leagues, he would become eligible for free agency after the 2029 season.

Gil received 15 first-place votes and 106 points. Cowser got 13 firsts and 101 points, while Wells received 17 points.

The only closer election since 1980 was when Royals shortstop Angel Berroa beat Yankees outfielder Hideki Matsui 88-84 in 2003.

Gil went 15-7 with a 3.50 ERA in 29 starts for the AL champions. The right-hander had 171 strikeouts in 151 2/3 innings.

"It means so much to me. I'm so happy about being able to win this award," Gil said through an interpreter. "Everybody in my corner, they're so happy for me and so proud. I'm also proud of the opportunity that was given to me by the team. It turned out to be a good season for me, a great experience."

Yankees manager Aaron Boone said Gil "worked so hard to put himself in a strong position heading into spring training after coming back from Tommy John surgery. Without a guarantee of a major league spot, he absolutely kicked in the door this spring and went on to have a phenomenal rookie season."

SPORTS

# Hans Henken back aboard Team USA catamaran 14 months after he was injured in a crash

Associated Press

**Olympic bronze medalists Ian Barrows and Hans Henken of the United States, pose with their medals during the men's skiff medal ceremony at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Friday, Aug. 2, 2024, in Marseille, France.** *AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin, File.*

Hans Henken's sailing career is back at full throttle not quite 14 months after he was knocked unconscious and severely injured when the high-speed catamaran he was controlling in a SailGP race crashed off its foils and nosedived into the Mediterranean waves.

The Olympic medalist, who graduated from Coronado High School, is back as flight controller for the United States SailGP Team, which announced its lineup on Nov. 18 for Season 5 of the global league.

Henken has come full circle. On Sept. 23, 2023, he suffered two broken ribs, a broken sternum, a torn rotator cuff and a concussion when he misjudged the ride height control of Team USA's 50-foot catamaran during a maneuver around a mark in a regatta in Taranto, Italy.

The injuries didn't keep him off the water for long. Some 3 ½ weeks later, Henken, a Stanford-educated rocket scientist, and skipper Ian Barrows won the gold medal in the 49er class at the Pan Am Games.

The duo then won the bronze medal at the Paris Olympics, a breakthrough for a once-dominant sailing squad that had claimed just one medal total in the previous three Summer Games.

Now he's back in SailGP, which, he says, "has some of the best sailors in the world, the coolest boats, the fastest boats," which are known as F50s and can hit highway speeds.

"It's no mystery to find me wanting to be around these boats," Henken, 32, said in a recent phone interview. "They're also an engineering marvel. And having studied aerospace engineering at Stanford, every aspect of the boat is really, really cool — sailing it, the engineering behind it, the culture around it. It's just an awesome, awesome league."

Team USA was sold to a new ownership group two months after Henken was hurt. The Americans are looking to bounce back from an eighth-place finish in the 10-boat fleet, which is up to 11 for the opener and will increase to 12 by the second regatta.

Henken was injured when the American F50 nosedived and buried its leeward hull into the Mediterranean waves at about 40 mph, rose up into the air and came to rest. Henken, the flight controller, said he misjudged the boat's ride height control during a maneuver after rounding a mark.

Then-skipper Jimmy Spithill didn't immediately see Henken and radioed in a man overboard call. A few seconds later, the crew found Henken unconscious and severely injured from the force of the water that slammed him into the back of his cockpit. Spithill called for a medic boat to get Henken ashore and to a hospital.

"These boats require a lot of precision in all movements, in all areas," Henken said. "If one thing is not quite lined up, a lot can wrong quickly. That's part of this sport. It's an extreme sport and I think that goes to show that everyone is pushing incredibly hard and that's just part of racing these boats."

He was determined to continue his Olympic campaign and pushed through the pain during his physical therapy sessions.

He said he wasn't physically ready for the Pan Am Games, "but mentally I wanted to be there, I wanted to campaign. It wasn't a part of our trials system but the type of racing was going to be really important toward preparing for our U.S. Olympic Trials in Miami in January."

Henken has bachelor's and master's degrees in aeronautical and astronautical engineering.

"When I was 5 years old, my big dream was to be an astronaut. My next big dream was to go to the Olympics and win a medal. So, I've done one of those things," he said.

He interviewed with SpaceX but then got a call from Barrow to start campaigning for the Olympics, so he pulled his application.

It's still a goal to work as an aerospace engineer, "but while I'm capable and while I have the skill set to be able to sail these boats, I'm taking any opportunity to sail really, really cool flying boats, I'm not going to turn that down," he said.

Henken said getting back aboard an F50 during a training camp in Bermuda was "kind of like finding an old friend."

Team USA CEO and co-owner Mike Buckley was on the boat that first day and "gave a little fist bump and said, 'Have a good day,' and that was that. You know, I think all athletes are sort of wired to get back up and give it another try."

The American catamaran now features the Liberty Marine colorway to honor the Statue of Liberty. An image of the statue's head is on the wingsail.


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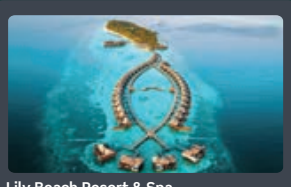

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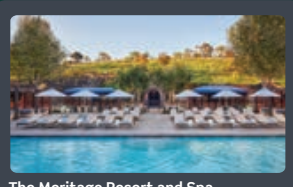

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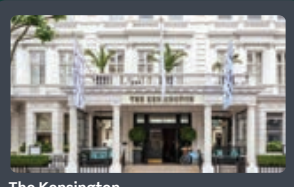

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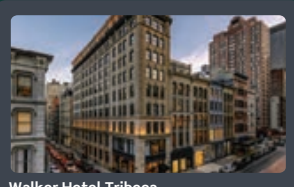

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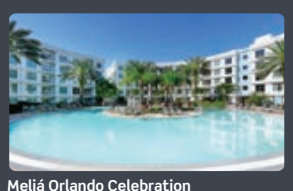

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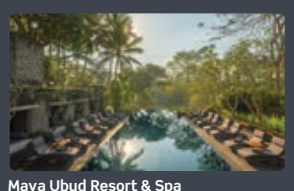

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SPORTS

# Eli Manning, Antonio Gates and Jared Allen headline the 25 semifinalists for football Hall of Fame

Associated Press

Two-time Super Bowl MVP Eli Manning, prolific tight end Antonio Gates and dominant pass rusher Jared Allen are among the 25 modern-era candidates for the 2025 Pro Football Hall of Fame class.

The Hall announced the semifinalists on Nov. 20 after the selection committee cut down a list of 50 nominees made by a newly created screening committee. The list includes six players in their first year of eligibility and 10 players who were finalists last year.

The full selection committee will reduce the list of candidates to 15 finalists who will be voted on at the annual meeting before the Super Bowl that will produce the new class. Players must get 80% of votes to make the Hall, with between three and five players getting in as modern-era candidates.

There also will be votes for three seniors candidates, one contributor and one coach, with between one and three people from that group getting into the Hall.

Leading the group of candidates in their first year of eligibility were Manning, former Defensive Players of the Year Luke Kuechly and Terrell Suggs; postseason kicking hero Adam Vinatieri; three-time Pro Bowl safety Earl Thomas; and two-time All-Pro guard Marshal Yanda.

Gates and Allen headline the group of returning finalists from last year, along with receivers Torry Holt and Reggie Wayne; offensive linemen Willie Anderson and Jahri Evans; defensive backs Darren Woodson, Eric Allen and Rodney Harrison; and running back Fred Taylor also advancing.

The returning semifinalists are receivers Anquan Boldin, Steve Smith and Hines Ward; defensive lineman Robert Mathis and Vince Wilfork; linebacker James Harrison; and running back Ricky Watters.

Offensive lineman Richmond Webb, who retired following the 2002 season, made it to the semifinal stage for the first time. Guard Steve Wisniewski is a semifinalist for the second time, having reached the stage in voting for the class of 2014.

Manning will look to follow his brother Peyton into the Hall following a standout career with the New York Giants. Manning was picked first overall in the 2004 draft and spent his entire career in New York. He led the Giants to an upset win over the undefeated New England Patriots in the Super Bowl following the 2007 season, throwing a game-winning TD pass to Plaxico Burress in the final minute.

**New York Giants quarterback Eli Manning holds up the Vince Lombardi Trophy while celebrating his team's 21-17 win over the New England Patriots in the NFL Super Bowl XLVI football game, Feb. 5, 2012, in Indianapolis.** *AP Photo/David J. Phillip, File.*

He led another late TD drive to upset Tom Brady and the Patriots four years later. Manning is one of 13 QBs to win multiple Super Bowls, with eight of the nine who are eligible for the Hall getting inducted.

Only Jim Plunkett has not been inducted, along with more recent players such as Brady, Ben Roethlisberger and Patrick Mahomes, who aren't yet eligible.

Manning was a four-time Pro Bowler but never made All-Pro or led the league in a major statistical category in a season. He finished his career with 57,023 yards passing and 366 TDs.

His best moments came during those two postseason runs. Manning joined Brady (five), Mahomes (three), Joe Montana (three), Bart Starr (two) and Terry Bradshaw (two) as the only multiple winners of Super Bowl MVP awards.

Gates played only basketball in college before turning into one of the NFL's top tight ends after being drafted by the Chargers. He became an All-Pro in just his second season in 2004. He was an All-Pro again the next two seasons and went on to have a 16-year career with the team.

Gates finished with 955 catches for 11,841 yards and an NFL record for tight ends with 116 touchdown receptions.

Allen was a four-time All-Pro who finished his career with 136 sacks, including a league-leading 22 in 2011 for Minnesota.

Kuechly and Suggs were among the top defensive players of their era, with Kuechly selected as the top defensive player in 2013 and Suggs in 2011.

Kuechly's career was brief but impactful. The first-round pick by Carolina in 2012 was an All-Pro five times, with seven Pro Bowl nods and a Defensive Rookie of the Year award.

Over his eight-year career, Kuechly led all linebackers in the NFL in tackles (1,090), takeaways (26), interceptions (18) and passes defensed (66).

Suggs was one of the top pass rushers in the league over his 17-year career, with his 139 sacks ranking eighth best since they became an official stat in 1982.

Suggs had seven double-digit sack seasons in his 16 seasons with Baltimore, including 14 in 2011 when he was selected as the top defensive player in the league and led the NFL with seven forced fumbles.

Vinatieri was one of the most clutch kickers in NFL history, making the game-winning field goals in the first two Super Bowl titles during New England's dynasty.

He helped launch the run with one of the game's greatest kicks — a 45-yarder in the snow to force overtime in the "Tuck Rule" game against the Raiders in the 2001 divisional round. He made the game-winning kick in OT to win that game and then hit a 48-yarder on the final play of a 20-17 win in the Super Bowl against the Rams.

Vinatieri is the NFL's career leader in points (2,673) and made field goals (599) over a 24-year career with New England and Indianapolis. He also leads all players with 56 field goals and 238 points in the postseason.

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