

## Retired Navy SEAL officer celebrates first Veterans Day as a veteran

Retired Navy Capt. Brian Drechsler will celebrate his first Veterans Day as a veteran after coming out of 26 years of service as a Navy SEAL.

BY MADELINE YANG  
The Coronado News

After 26 years in the U.S. Navy, retired Capt. Brian Drechsler will celebrate his first Veterans Day as a veteran.

And, with the benefit of hindsight, he offers one major takeaway: If the American public could see what Navy SEALs do, they would all sleep better knowing that those kinds of warriors are out there every day, protect-

ing the country.

Freedom isn't free, noted Drechsler, who retired in June as a SEAL officer.

It's a phrase we've all heard before, but he brings profound gravity to the words, drawing from a distinguished career that included serving on SEAL Team ONE, commanding SEAL Team FIVE, and acting as commodore of the Naval Special Warfare Center for nearly two years.

Throughout his decades in uni-

form, Drechsler's admiration has always been for his fellow sailors.

"I'm honored to have served," Drechsler said, "The opportunity to work with such fantastic individuals, that really are true patriots, and really, I don't mean this to sound cliché, but national treasures that absolutely love their country ... They're very, very high performing people."

» Continued on Page 10



Retired Navy Capt. Brian Drechsler in late 2004/early 2005 as a platoon commander in Iraq. Photo provided by Brian Drechsler.

## Election Day in Coronado

Coronado News staff

**Editor's Note:** Based on the initial unofficial election results posted close to 8 p.m. on Nov. 5, all of the local races were too close to call in time for this print edition. Head to [thecoronadonews.com](http://thecoronadonews.com) to get the most up-to-date information about the races.

Here is the list of candidates:

Mayor Richard Bailey will term out of his seat at the end of the year, and three candidates are vying to fill that position: current council members Mike Donovan, John Duncan and Casey Tanaka.

Six candidates – Mark Fleming, Andrew Gade, Christine Mott, Amy Steward, Mark Warner and Laura Wilkinson Sinton – are running for two open City Council seats. If Duncan, a current council member, wins the mayoral race and leaves his seat vacant, the council will need to appoint someone to fill that seat or hold a special election.

At the same time, the Coronado Unified School District has two trustee seats up for grabs and four candidates are running for those four-year terms – Shawnee Barton Merriman, Renee Cavanaugh, Bill Sandke and Fitzhugh Lee.



Sonya Palacios leaves the Coronado voting center on Nov. 5. Staff photos by Julieta Soto.



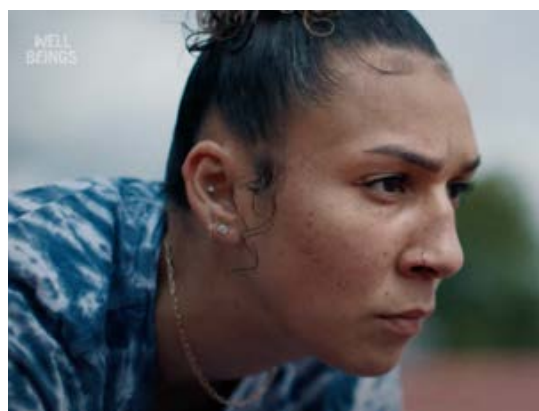
A voter in uniform grabs an "I voted" sticker after he votes in Coronado.



A voter in Coronado places his mail ballot inside the drop box at the library.



A truck driver displays the American flag and red 'Make America Great Again' hat in Coronado.



Paralympic athlete Jaleen Roberts, who trains at the Chula Vista Elite Athlete Training Center, speaks about her struggles with mental health in the documentary, "Out of the Dark." Scene taken from "Out of the Dark."

## San Diego Paralympic athlete opens up in documentary about mental health

"Out of the Dark," a film being shown at the Coronado Island Film Festival, features Paralympic athlete Jaleen Roberts as she opens up about her past struggles with mental health.

BY MADELINE YANG  
The Coronado News

On March 24, 2020, when Japan announced that it would be postponing the Tokyo Olympic Games for a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Jaleen Roberts' heart sank. She had been preparing her whole life as a Paralympic athlete.

Roberts, 25, is the subject of a new short documentary film, "Out of the Dark," that explores mental health crises – especially within a population that isn't talked about as frequently, athletes. It will be shown at the Coronado Island Film Festival on Nov. 7 at 10 a.m. at the Carousel Room in the Hotel del Coronado.

The Paralympian was born with

cerebral palsy, a neurological disorder that affects a person's motor skills, but she quickly found out that despite her diagnosis she thrived in all the sports that she played, especially track and field.

The film follows Roberts' physical journey within the sport,

» Continued on Page 9

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# this week

## 10 • sunday

Balsamico Kitchen is hosting a cooking class on how to make classic lasagna from 2-4 p.m. Chef Michele will guide participants through each step — making the Bolognese sauce, and layering it with pasta and bechamel. Tickets can be purchased on Eventbrite.

## 13 • wednesday

In the Winn Room of the Coronado Public Library at 6 p.m., explore the fascinating history of cookbooks and their cultural significance. Registered Dietitian Lucia Canul will delve into how cookbooks not only preserve culinary traditions but also reflect broader societal changes. Discover how these volumes have shaped our understanding of food, culture, and identity and learn about the ways in which cookbooks serve as valuable historical documents and storytelling tools.

## 15 • friday

The League of Wives will be featured at the Coronado Roundtable meeting in the Winn Room of the library at 10 a.m.

## 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)

# Coronado Island Film Festival presents San Diego premiere of 'Water Brother'

Coronado News staff

Join the filmmakers and Sid Abbruzzi, the East Coast surf legend, for the San Diego premiere of "Water Brother: The Sid Abbruzzi Story" a poignant reflection on a life well-lived and a tribute to surf culture.

This film will show at the Coronado Performing Arts Center on Nov. 9 at 1 p.m. as part of the Coronado Island Film Festival. Tickets can be purchased at <https://coronadofilmfest.com/>

The documentary follows the life of Abbruzzi, an East Coast legend and culture icon. The film explores Abbruzzi's lifelong passion for surf-

ing, skating and his commitment to protecting the sport's history and culture.

Through a mix of archival film, personal interviews and large format cinematic footage, including exclusive interviews with Tony Hawk, Shepard Fairey, and other giants of the surf and skate world, this documentary takes the audience on a journey through the history of surfing and skating: from 1960s Newport, to Santa Cruz, Cocoa Beach, South Africa's Jeffrey's Bay, and beyond.

Abbruzzi will be in attendance for a Q&A discussion with directors Charles Kinnane and Daniel Kinnane following the showing.



Lilia Spiegel's film will be premiering at the Coronado Island Film Festival. Image provided by the Coronado Island Film Festival.

## PETS OF THE WEEK

# Meet Fiesta and Gomez

PAWS of Coronado

A spirited four-year-old German Shepherd whose heart is as big as his playful personality. With a glossy black-and-tan coat, he greets everyone with an enthusiastic wag of his tail and a warm nuzzle.

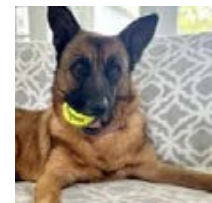
Fiesta is fiercely loyal, always by your side, whether it's on long walks or cozy evenings on the couch. His playful nature shines through in his love for games of fetch and agility training, where he leaps and bounds with joy.

This affectionate pup is not just a pet; he's a cherished companion who fills every day with love and laughter.

Also, meet Gomez. This sweet 1.5-year-old chiweenie has a heart full of love, but his shy nature makes him a little cautious at first.

With his big, soulful eyes and adorable mix of chihuahua and dachshund features, he captures hearts easily. Although he's affectionate and eager to bond, he struggles with separation anxiety, often seeking comfort close to his humans.

Once he feels safe, his playful spirit



Fiesta.



Gomez.

emerges, and he loves to snuggle up for a cozy cuddle session. With a bit of patience and reassurance, he blossoms into a loyal companion who just wants to be by your side.

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).

## CORRECTION

The original version of the story titled, "Campaign finance reports for Coronado school board candidates" published in the Nov. 1 print edition incorrectly characterized the contributions made to Shawnee Barton Merriman from nonprofit leaders. The second contribution from a separate nonprofit leader is not the second largest contribution to her campaign, but rather among the largest out-of-state contributions. The error has been corrected online.



# Get Vaccinated for Fall and Winter

Protect yourself against COVID-19 and the flu. Staying up to date on vaccines is the most important step you and your loved ones can take to be safe.

The Sharp Coronado Community Pharmacy offers COVID-19 and flu vaccines. Visit [sharp.com/coronado](http://sharp.com/coronado) or call 619-522-3996 for more information.





# 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

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LISA BENSON



Taking out the Garbage

OHP IN TRIBUNE CONTENT AGENCY ©2024 11/1

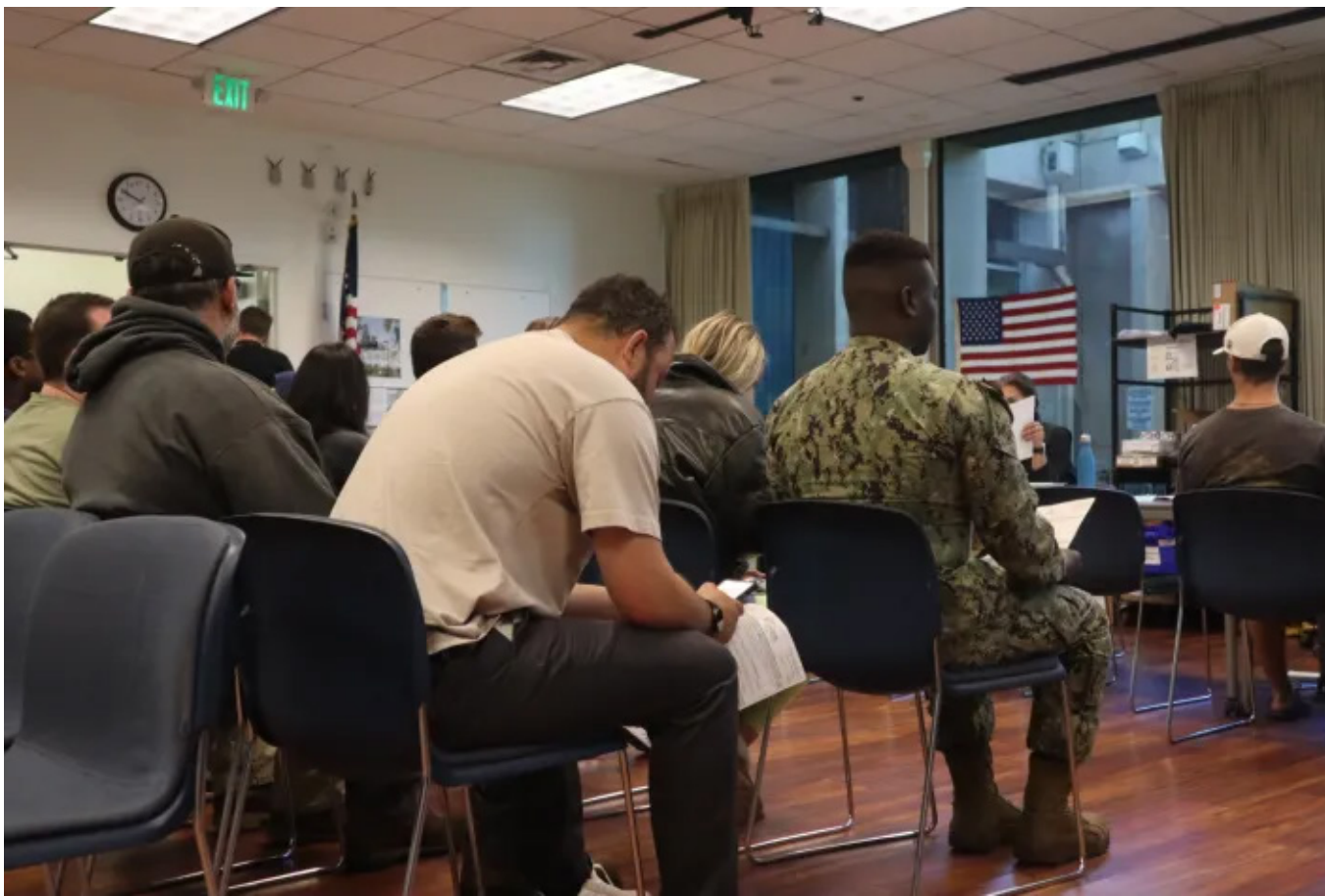


JACK OHMAN

A promotional banner for an Aztec Football game. On the left, a close-up of a football player in a black and red uniform with 'SAN DIEGO STATE' visible. The background is dark with red diagonal stripes. Text on the right reads: 'AZTEC FOOTBALL NEXT HOME GAME', followed by the Aztec logo (a stylized 'SD' with an arrow) and the Lobos logo (a wolf's head). Below that, it says 'NOVEMBER 8 | 7:30PM', 'Snapdragon stadium', 'FLEET WEEK CLASSIC &amp; MILITARY ROTC MARCH-ON GAME', 'FREE MILITARY APPRECIATION T-SHIRTS FOR THE 1ST 10,000 FANS', and 'TICKETS AT GOAZTECS.COM'.

# CORONADO

## Election Day in pictures



Voters wait to cast their votes inside the Winn Room at the Coronado Public Library.



A voter in Coronado grabs an "I voted" sticker after submitting a ballot.



Shawnee Barton Merriman, a school board candidate, campaigns in Coronado on Election Day. Staff photos by Julieta Soto.



Voters in Coronado stand in line to use a booth at the Coronado Public Library.

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## CORONADO

# Marilyn's Millinery Boutique to open in Sand, Beach & Bikini

**Marilyn Feldman's upcoming millinery boutique is as rooted in her family history as it is in her career as a social worker.**

**BY KYLIE CAPUANO**  
The Coronado News

Marilyn Feldman was a practicing psychiatric social worker and teacher for 12 years when she decided to pursue an avocation in millinery, the art of designing hats. Living in Boston at the time, Feldman enrolled in the School of Fashion Design, where she received a degree in millinery design.

Thirty-eight years later, after what she thought was retirement in Coronado, Feldman will be opening Marilyn's Millinery Boutique inside of Sand Beach & Bikini on 10th St.

"What I'm going to bring here is one of a kind, no one else will have it," said Feldman. "You want it, I'll make it."

While her hats are uniquely tailored to her client's needs, her millinery work is as rooted in her family's history and her career as a social worker.

At the age of 77, Feldman dresses in a style that would be called "vintage-inspired fashion." But to her, it's just fashion. Her white lace gloves complement her white-brimmed hat and the pearls around her neck. Growing up in the '40s and '50s, it was typical for women to complete their outfits with hats and gloves.

As a girl, she used to wear the same outfits as her mom and grandmother. Feldman comes from a family of first-generation Americans. Her grandparents immigrated to Ellis Island from Russia when they were 16 years old following World War II. Experiencing life in a new country during that time engrained qualities in her parents that Feldman still emulates herself.

"My mother and father fixed everything themselves and my mom would make all of our clothes," said Feldman. "She would make three of one outfit - one for my grandmother, herself and me. We were like three peas in a pod. Sometimes she would turn my brothers' clothes into girl's clothes, and she would just teach me how to sew."

Yet, it wasn't the process of making clothes that drew her into fashion. Feldman was fascinated by color, texture and design - elements she felt millinery offered creative freedom with.

"Making clothing was too constricting for me," said Feldman. "I'm the type of person where I'm going to just take something and make it. You can't do that with clothes, but you can do that with hats. You can make hats any size, any which way you want, and you can alter it."

Her passion for hat-making was officially brought to life when she founded her company, Diamond Millinery, out of her Boston basement in 1986.

Since the beginning of that journey, she has integrated her work as a social worker into her love for making one-of-a-kind hats. In her early days, she volunteered for the American Cancer Society, going into hospitals and making hats for women who lost their hair.

However, she said the most central aspect to her career has been her decades of volunteer work with the Glamour Project - an organization that is dedicated to bringing joy to disadvantaged women living in shelters by providing them a day of professional beauty services including hair, makeup and fashion styling.

Alongside a group of volunteers, Feldman managed the fashion styling aspect of the program, often incorporating her handmade hats into the outfits.

"The women we help are the most abused of our society," said Feldman.



Marilyn Feldman (right) will be opening her millinery boutique inside of the 10th St. consignment store, which is owned by Sandy Johnson (left). Staff photos by Kylie Capuano.



Marilyn Feldman has contributed her hats and styling services to the Glamour Project for over three decades.



Volunteers provide a full day of glam for the women living in shelters across Los Angeles, Boston and San Diego.

"We want them to feel really special. The message after is always, 'Do you remember what you used to look like?'"

After the glamor process is over, each woman receives a professional photoshoot to show off the new look, alongside a blank key.

"We tell them the key could be for a car or house someday," said Feldman.

The Glamour Project was founded in Los Angeles by Kara Fox and Evvy Shapero, but Feldman expanded it to

serve sheltered women in Boston and San Diego.

As of Nov. 2, upon moving her millinery to a physical store, her hope is to fill a "niche" in Coronado. Drawn to the broad inventory of Sand, Beach & Bikini, a consignment store owned by Sandy Johnson that Feldman will be operating out of, she plans to elevate her millinery to offer more unique services.

While Feldman will be in store twice a week and available by appointment,

*"Making clothing was too constricting for me... I'm the type of person where I'm going to just take something and make it. You can't do that with clothes, but you can do that with hats. You can make hats any size, any which way you want, and you can alter it."*

- Marilyn Feldman

she and Johnson also hope to offer new tailored experiences to shoppers - including styling services for brides and religious ceremonies, in-shop celebrations for special events such as birthdays and children's tea parties, millinery workshops and a shopping experience that captures the essence of "vintage meets modern."

Many of Feldman's hats will appear along the walls of Sand, Beach & Bikini, specifically tailored to match Johnson's curated selection of clothing - an addition that will provide a more in-depth styling experience for shoppers.

Still staying true to her social worker roots, Feldman said she will be donating a portion of the profits from Marilyn's Millinery Boutique to the Glamour Project.

"I look at this stuff, and I say, 'It's what my grandmother did, my mother did - it's handmade, one-of-a-kind, and generational to the times of the '40s and '50s,'" said Feldman. "I could sit here and say my grandmother and my mother would be proud of me doing it this way."

# CORONADO

## Expansion project begins at South Bay treatment plant

The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission announced a years-long project merging design and construction for its South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant on Oct. 29.

BY JULIETA SOTO  
The Coronado News

The U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) announced it has launched a key construction design project on Oct. 29 to double sewage treatment of water flow capacity at the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP).

In August the IBWC issued a \$42.4 million design contract to rehabilitate the plant to allow for a daily treatment capacity of 50 million gallons, with up to 75 million gallons during peak flows. The broken plant's current capacity is 25 million gallons per day.

This \$42.4 million is going toward a bypass system for the primary facilities and in-depth structural assessments. That will be followed with concrete repairs in early 2025, announced the agency.

And on Oct. 29 Commissioner Maria-Elena Giner celebrated "the first of three early work packages that will prepare the plant for the construction."

Giner said the phase of construction under the \$42.4 million contract includes the first package of setting up a bypass system for the primary facilities and performing in depth structural assessments of the concrete structures. The second early package or site preparation will follow along with procurement of equipment as the third early package.

But, the design-build contract is only part of the total \$600 million project.

So far IBWC has secured \$400 million of the estimated total cost, making full construction contingent on available funding.

The "progressive design-build," which is an effort to expedite the construction timeline, has a design projected for May 2026. The IBWC said full rehabilitation and expansion construction will take up to an estimated five years.

The plant will remain in operation throughout design and construction, and the agency has al-



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 file photo by Madeline Yang.

ready begun repairs to a junction site announced on Oct. 1.

IBWC awarded the contract to PCL Construction of Long Beach, which selected Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. of San Diego as the design firm, according to an agency news release.

### Funding still needed

The rehab and expansion project launch follows the Mexican government appropriating \$33 million for the wastewater treatment plant at Punta Bandera, where millions more gallons of raw sewage enter the ocean six miles south of the border, and is then carried north by summer currents.

Late last month, Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo made her first official trip to the Baja California region since taking office. The San Diego Union Tribune reported she toured Mexican federal projects, including the San Antonio de los

Buenos sewage treatment plant at Punta Bandera. A September completion date was announced for the work at the Punta Bandera plant.

According to Coronado Councilmember John Duncan, the Punta Bandera wastewater facility was scheduled to be turned on no later than Oct 1.

"Immediately when that was announced I told pretty much everybody I know that if it's open within six months of that I'll be very happy," said Duncan, noting that Coronado and Imperial Beach could see dramatically lower summer beach closures once and if the Mexican facility opens next Spring.

### State of emergency requests continue

The IBWC's project is designed to fulfill a binational agreement known as Minute 328 while eliminating up to 90% of untreated Tijuana River wastewater reaching the coast.

"The USIBWC anticipates providing more definitive estimates of the full project cost and the construction schedule once the project reaches the 30% design stage in spring 2025 and 60% design stage by fall 2025," says a release from IBWC. "Early construction packages have been issued during the design phase to enable work to start in 2024."

At the South Bay plant launch, Imperial Beach resident and local artist Esmeralda Robles, 46, displayed her "Save IB" mural, a work in progress depicting the sewage crisis with the words, "STATE OF EMERGENCY," written in red across the top.

Robles created the mural for a previous demonstration in Imperial Beach to protest the pollution, but the message in her request is the same, to get the problem fixed.

"It makes me kind of upset because we have to live in this sewage, but if they lived in it ... they wouldn't appreciate this nonstop smell," said Robles about public officials who have power to alleviate a health threat, but refuse to treat it as an emergency.

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## CORONADO

# Coronado teen among 2024 environmental heroes

**A Coronado teen activist, Daniel Vinegrad, is recognized across the 77th Assembly District of California.**

**BY JULIETA SOTO**  
The Coronado News

Coronado teen Daniel Vinegrad has been named an “environmental hero” across California’s 77th Assembly District, which includes more than half a million coastal residents of San Diego County.

Assemblymember Tasha Boerner recognized Vinegrad in her 2024 Environmental Hero Awards this month alongside nine other honorees for helping to preserve, protect and defend the environment.

“We are so lucky to live in a region so dedicated to conserving our planet,” said Boerner in a statement after a ceremony on Oct. 5. “The climate crisis may be a villain in our story, but we have environmental heroes who are taking the challenge head-on in San Diego.”

Vinegrad, 16, who received a “rising star” award for his work to resolve sewage pollution at local beaches, said



**Assemblymember Tasha Boerner presents Daniel Vinegrad the Rising Star award during the 2024 Environmental Hero Awards. Photo credit: The Democratic Office of Communications and Outreach. Courtesy of Vinegrad.**

he was nominated by his mom, Shari Jacobs.

That “rising star” category included three high school students and represents people who are new to the environmental action scene.

Vinegrad said he felt honored to receive the award with others who make him “feel optimistic for the future of the environment.”

Vinegrad loved building sand castles as a kid, he told guests during his

speech at the award presentations.

“Years later, when I first heard about the sewage crisis affecting our coastline and how it impacted our community, I felt a deep sense of urgency,” Vinegrad said. “No longer could any children play in the water and the sewage was negatively impacting our communities.”

Last year, Vinegrad founded the Stop the Sewage Club at Coronado High School to work with local officials and organizations on combating the pollution.

The club initiated letter writing campaigns, organized beach rallies, and lobbied for funds. The club also received an award for school club of the year in June.

Vinegrad thanked his club mentors, members, family, and others who he said have supported the club’s mission.

Vinegrad said the club helped shape his future plans to major in environmental engineering with a minor in business.

“It’s really nice to be able to represent the Stop the Sewage Club ... and show everyone that everyone in Coronado cares too,” added Vinegrad. “I’m grateful to do so.”

## Coronado Golf Cart Rentals to relocate on Orange Avenue

**The family-owned business, which started with a single rental cart, is set to expand to one of the town’s busiest streets in December.**

**BY KATIE MORRIS**  
The Coronado News

Coronado Golf Cart Rentals, a staple of Coronado’s tourist scene since 2013, is moving to a new, larger location on Orange Avenue in December, previously home to Emerald C Gallery.

The family-owned enterprise — helmed by Mike Matheny, founder of Coronado Golf Cart Rentals and its parent company, Sundance Custom Golf Carts in El Cajon, along with his daughter, Maisie Crum — began humbly with a single rental cart.

Matheny’s decision to establish roots in Coronado followed the success of his custom carts, whose appeal quickly grew among island residents through Sundance.

“We started with just one cart,” he said. “When that one was out, we were sold out.”

But demand quickly surged, driven by a steady influx of vacationers, especially from Arizona, who sought rentals months in advance for the busy Fourth of July season.

The company even takes to the streets during the Christmas season for its annual golf cart parade.

“We make up our own map, and cruise around the neighborhoods,” Crum said. “Everybody decorates their carts with lights and big dinosaurs on top — whatever they want.”

Today, it’s evolved into an operation with a dozen carts catering to locals and tourists alike.

The business operates through what Matheny describes as “separate lanes” for each family member, a division of labor that includes three of his five children.

Crum, who began working for her father at 17, is now the manager of Coronado Golf Cart Rentals.

Matheny’s oldest son, Luke, now oversees sundance modifications and sales at Sundance. His youngest son, Addison, supports as a driver and service technician in Coronado.

“Having my children involved in the business has just given me a leg-



**Coronado Golf Cart Rentals is relocating to Orange Avenue. Photo provided by Maisie Crum.**

acy that I love,” Matheny said. “Everything I do is for my kids. It [the business] is nice to have, but the bottom line is that I’m going to be able to leave this to them, and see them take it to another level.”

The decision to relocate came when the Mathenys’ current building on Isabella Avenue was sold, and they learned that the nearby Emerald C Gallery on Orange Avenue was set to close.

The vacant space offered a timely solution, giving Coronado Golf Cart Rentals room to expand on one of the town’s busiest streets.

“We were really able to start small and grow,” Matheny said. “We’ve definitely outgrown [the original location] and we’re ready for a much bigger space.”



**Jaleen Roberts (third from front) sprints to the finish at the Tokyo Games.**

*Scene taken from “Out of the Dark.”*

## San Diego Paralympic athlete opens up in documentary about mental health

» Continued from Page 1

qualifying and competing in World Championships as a para athlete, and then weeks before getting ready to travel to Tokyo for the Paralympic Games in 2020, her mental journey of falling into a deep depression and diagnosis of bipolar disorder.

The documentary, directed by Sarah Klein and Tom Mason, is just over eight minutes. Roberts said they filmed for about three days, with 4-6 hours of filming each day.

“Reenacting, it was definitely interesting,” she added. “It did provoke a lot of emotion.”

Roberts was diagnosed with depression when she was in middle school and she diligently took her medication for the next six years. Right before COVID-19 hit, she decided to stop taking her meds.

“I had actually — which is not good and I don’t recommend to anybody — but I had actually stopped taking my medication pretty cold turkey,” Roberts explained. “It was one of those things where I kind of felt so numb that I was like, ‘Well, even if I start to feel worse, at least I’ll feel something.’”

The documentary reveals that Roberts had tied her purpose to her sport, and without it, she didn’t know what she was meant to do.

Roberts started having suicidal ideations and mentioned in the film that she was scared to be alone because she wasn’t sure what she would do to herself.

She had noticed patterns: not being able to leave her room, sleeping all day, manic episodes of high energy and making rash decisions. She eventually checked herself into a psychiatric hospital and was diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

That was four years ago. Since then, Roberts has won three silver medals and one bronze at the Tokyo and Paris games. She medaled for the 100-meter and the long jump.

She was able to find a balance in

her life.

“It doesn’t even have to be as deep as finding a purpose necessarily, just having other interests outside of track,” Roberts said. “I think that can be a preventative thing for not experiencing burnout or mental battles that stem from, you know, living, breathing track.”

She said she had tied so much of who she was into her identity as an athlete that she needed to find other things she enjoyed and wanted to focus on.

One of those alternatives, for Roberts, is becoming an EMT. She is currently in training while still preparing for the 2028 Los Angeles Games, but her experience with her mental health showed her the importance of focusing on reducing anxieties.

It’s not just a matter of finding other passions in life, but of enjoying the little moments or experiences.

“I’ll do smaller things, like if I am watching a crappy reality TV show that I like, or if I want some ice cream,” she said.

Roberts has consistently been on medication, part of a challenging journey, she said, but she wants others to know through this film that there is always help.

“I would just tell myself that I’m proud of myself for just taking the first step and reaching out,” Roberts said. “I know a lot of people feel ashamed about going to the mental hospital because ‘I feel crazy,’ but it’s just another resource to help you.”

“And, also, nobody has to know about it that you don’t want to know.”

Roberts has been a big advocate for mental health since her own experiences, and doing this film was important for her to reduce the stigma.

She currently does speaking engagements for foundations and companies, but she said her goal is to start a foundation of her own focused on mental health advocacy and help.

Tickets can be purchased to view the documentary on the film festival’s website.

# NAVY



**Cmdr. Anthony Harris, center, a San Diego native, the oncoming commanding officer of the Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Oakland, salutes sideboys during a change-of-command ceremony held on the ship's flight deck on Oct. 25. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Vance Hand.**

## Change-of-command ceremony on the USS Oakland

DVIDS

Cmdr. Andrew Laidler was relieved by Cmdr. Anthony Harris as the commanding officer of the USS Oakland during a change-of-command ceremony held at Naval Base San Diego on Oct. 25.

"As I stand before you today, I am filled with a mix of pride and nostalgia," said Laidler. "This ship has been more than a vessel; she has been our

home, a symbol of our commitment, and a testament to the hard work and perseverance of who has served aboard her."

During the ceremony, Laidler was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal and will be reporting to Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center for his next tour of duty.

Oakland is homeported in San Diego as a part of Littoral Combat Ship Squadron 1.

## Retired Navy SEAL officer celebrates first Veterans Day as a veteran

» Continued from Page 1

Drechsler extends his praise beyond just the SEALs, highlighting the contributions of special warfare crewmen, intel specialists and Navy Seabees. "Everyone believed in the mission. They believed in each other," he noted.

Drechsler said he watched his teammates put themselves last time and time again. Country, the mission, the team – all came before self.

It pushed him to be the best he could. He would never be the best, Drechsler said, but he needed to try. People needed to see him giving his all, especially as a leader.

That drive, within a given mission and the military overall, was constantly inspired by his teammates and by people around him in their daily lives as well.

"That's not just on the tactical side," Drechsler said. "I'm talking about seeing somebody and how they parent, how they were as a spouse ... That's pretty selfless. I need to improve in that area," he reflected.

Those are the kinds of people he wants to celebrate on Veterans Day this year.

"I certainly don't look at the American flag the same as I did before I joined the Navy," Drechsler said. "When you lose friends, it means a little bit more."

"Throughout the nation's history, people have answered the call," he said somberly. "They've protected us ... so people can have their rights and freedoms that they deserve."

He emphasized the sacrifices made by individuals who leave their families behind, missing out on holidays or life events.

"There's just something so righteous about that, just selfless, that I think demands respect. And it will always have mine," Drechsler said.

As Drechsler transitioned to civilian life, he took a job as the Director of Operations at the Navy SEAL Museum in San Diego. And he loves it.

It's not just about telling their stories and their history, he said, but giving back to the community, supporting families and inspiring others.

There is a call to action wall at one end of the museum and Drechsler said it doesn't have to be to join the military, but to just be a part of a cause bigger than yourself.

"That's what makes the country great is it's all volunteer. When you have all volunteers, there's passion behind that," he added.

This Veterans Day, he said he's humbled to be able to continue to serve the SEAL community, even though he's no longer in uniform.

"I'd do it all over again," Drechsler said.



**Retired Navy Capt. Brian Drechsler inspecting an exhibit that will be inside the Navy SEAL Museum. Staff photo taken by Madeline Yang.**

## Training for the USS Somerset off the coast of California



**A U.S. Marine Corps AH-1Z Viper assigned to Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 169 takes off from the flight deck of the San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Somerset during training off the coast of Southern California on Oct. 25. Somerset, whose homeport is in San Diego, is currently underway conducting routine operations in U.S. 3rd Fleet. U.S. Navy photo by Cryptologic Technician Technical Seaman Apprentice Brandon Lopez.**



**With the final departure of the F/A-18 Hornet, Fleet Readiness Center Southwest closes a chapter in its storied legacy, transitioning toward the future of naval aviation. Photo by Christopher D Nette.**

## Bidding farewell to the last legacy aircraft

DVIDS

Fleet Readiness Center Southwest, located on Naval Air Station North Island, bids farewell to its last legacy aircraft — an F/A-18 Hornet.

Introduced in the 1980s, the Hornet has served in major conflicts such as Operation Desert Storm and the Kosovo War.

The Hornet's operational life was extended far beyond

its original limit of 6,000 flight hours.

"The aircraft is old so parts were hard to source, and structural repairs were challenging, but our team's skills and knowledge ensured these aircraft kept flying," said Ehren Terbeek, the tactical air program manager.

The departure of the second-to-last Hornet to Fort Worth, Texas and now the final Hornet returning to Miramar, marks a

bittersweet moment for those who spent their careers ensuring these aircraft remained battle-ready.

"It was bittersweet knowing we were saying goodbye to an aircraft that defined our work for decades," Terbeek reflected.

Fleet Readiness Center Southwest transitions to newer aircraft models like the F-35 and an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, like the MQ-8.



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Worldwide Art and Auction Advisor  
New York, San Diego, Washington D.C.  
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# SPORTS

## Coronado Rugby season underway

**BY CADE CAVIN**  
The Coronado News

Santos Trujillo spent 25 years in the United States as a sailor, reaching a rank just one step below the most senior officer – a SEAL master chief. Now retired, he spends his time on the island coaching rugby.

A rather unorthodox choice of sport, Trujillo says rugby's unique traits drew himself and his sons to the sport almost a decade ago when he created the Coronado Rugby Club.

Santo's son and head coach of rugby at Hampden-Sydney College, Seth Trujillo, said that Coronado has always had ties to rugby, but none immediately available for those who wanted to take part on their side of the bridge.

"The creation of a rugby club that offered the potential to play at any age really allowed for individuals to explore one of the fastest growing sports within the U.S. without having to travel a long distance to practice/play," Trujillo said.

"My son, Seth, and a bunch of his friends started the program his senior year nearly ten years ago," he added. "We added girls rugby the second, and the years following added the younger teams. You can create your own opportunities with rugby and there is a place for every size and type of athlete. All our players have to run with the ball and play defense often without any

*"The creation of a rugby club that offered the potential to play at any age really allowed for individuals to explore one of the fastest growing sports within the U.S. without having to travel a long distance to practice/play."*

- Seth Trujillo, head coach of rugby at Hampden-Sydney College

stoppage in between. In many instances, the best supporting player gets the score which is something you don't commonly see in other sports."

With the season kicking off on Nov. 11, Trujillo will look to lead the program toward winning conference championships.

Despite rugby's seemingly violent nature, and its lack of any helmets or major padding, the Navy Veteran said it is generally a very safe sport.

"We have strict rules to make the game safer, like you have to tackle low, wrap with your arms and there is no driving of players into the ground," he said. "It's a tough sport but we generally get fewer concussions than all of the other contact sports and some of the non-contact sports like soccer."

Trujillo's SEAL background is not the only thing that influences the philosophy of the Coronado Rugby Club: A leadership-

through-rugby program blends his experience in the Navy with some of his own rugby experience and techniques that can be gleaned from the New Zealand All Blacks – the world's premier rugby club.

"We practice on the beach and teach techniques how to recognize when you're out of sorts – Red Head – and use techniques to get back your Blue Head, which is a steady state of optimal performance," he said.

Although Trujillo loves to win division titles, he said his priority is seeing players grow into strong young men and women.

"We recently had our inaugural alumni match and it was great seeing the many great things everyone is doing and getting the chance to play against them again," he said. "It truly was a humbling and proud moment and many of them credited our program for helping them in their lives."



Teddy Hendrickson, pictured here, is competing in a rugby game with the Coronado Rugby Club. Photos provided by Santos Trujillo.



Nessa Hudson is pictured here competing in a rugby game for the Coronado Rugby Club.

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# SPORTS

## Coronado girls varsity volleyball takes home league championship

The championship title comes after a hard fought 3-1 win against Scripps Ranch High School.

BY KYLIE CAPUANO  
The Coronado News

History was made on Oct. 25 for the Coronado High School girls volleyball program when the varsity squad took home the Eastern CIF league championship title for the first time since 2014.

The championship title comes after a hard fought 3-1 win against Scripps Ranch High School, a team the Islanders had previously lost all matches to in the 2023-24 season.

“It feels absolutely amazing,” said varsity head coach Adeile Ahmu. “This year our team played a lot less chaotic. They were very vocal about the opponent’s weaknesses and strengths and we listened to each other and executed. It was definitely a back-and-forth pull but when we found our rhythm, we were unstoppable.”

Ahmu, who has been with the Islanders for the past seven seasons, was coaching the JV squad when she witnessed the varsity girls take home the league title in 2014 – led by her sister-in-law, Leilani Ahmu.

“It was an amazing honor to stand on the sideline and watch it unfold not once, but twice since I’ve been here,” said Ahmu.

Senior outside hitter and co-captain Sadie Proctor, who has been on varsity for the past four seasons, echoed a similar sentiment to Ahmu as she prepares to wrap up her high school volleyball career.

“I couldn’t have asked for a better season,” said Proctor. “To finish off playing with this program

and Adeile this way feels great.”

After defeating their rival, Point Loma High School, in three sets on Sept. 17, the girls had their eyes set on dominating their league matches.

“Our goal every year is to win league, so we had our eyes set on that after our last streak of non-league games,” said Ahmu. “Of the five teams in our league, Scripps Ranch would have been our toughest match, and playing Patrick Henry and University City prepared us for that match.”

The Islanders defeated Patrick Henry High School and University City High School with a final score of 3-1 for both matches in the days leading up to their league championship battle.

“Each game we played the girls’ chemistry got stronger and with each game we won, we played more relaxed – even when plays became challenging,” said Ahmu.

That team chemistry, according to Proctor, came from a successful grouping of new and returning players.

“I think we had a really good mix of seasoned players and younger players on the team,” said Proctor. “The older players were able to sort of lead by example for the newer players and the newer players were able to bring a really strong offense to the team this year.”

Two freshmen joined the team and proved to be a major presence on the court – middle hitter Emily Albin and outside hitter Ashlynn Proctor. Ashlynn Proctor led the team in total kills and kills per set, hitting percentage, total serving aces and aces per set, while Albin led the team in total blocks.



Freshman outside hitter Ashlyn Proctor leads the team in total kills and kills per set, hitting percentage, total serving aces and aces per set.

Photo courtesy of Kelly Moore.

The Islanders head into the Division 2 playoffs with a 35-3 record and a 23-game winning streak.

Of the eight teams in the top half of the playoff bracket, Coronado has played against six of them. Ahmu anticipated Patrick Henry High School and Rancho Buena Vista High School to be their toughest competition, as the girls sat at a 2-1 record against Patrick Henry and a 1-0 against Rancho Buena Vista as of Nov. 2.

With playoffs concluded on Nov. 6, the girls looked to keep the success from the season rolling until the very end.

“The team goal is to make it to the finals and win,” said Ahmu. “The plan is to take one game at a time and focus on one point at a time. When taking leads, trying to keep the other team from going on long point runs. The intention is to continue to play just like we have been.”



Out front in the start of the girls race is Morgan Maske, with Gwynne Letcher on the right. Photo by Phil Grooms.

## Coronado cross country results at Kit Carson Invite

Coronado News staff

The Coronado cross country team competed in the Kit Carson Invitational on Oct. 25, a meet that has been around for around two decades.

In the boys varsity division, the top finisher was Vincent Russo, placing 11th out of 128 finishers, followed by Jack Letcher in 15th place. Letcher’s

time of 17:55 was a two-minute personal record compared to the 2023 course.

Nathan Ayan finished third for the Islanders, 21st place overall. Andrew Buck placed 32nd with a time of 18:25.

In the boys’ JV race, Anton Youngblood had a 2.5 minute personal record. Also finishing were freshmen Ziggy Raunig, Tyler Horton and Austin Litteral.

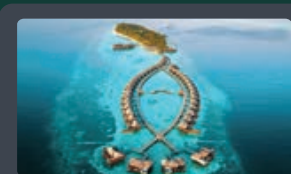
Morgan Maske placed fifth out 93 finishers with a time of 18:14 in the girls varsity race, which was a 52-second personal record. Gwynne Letcher also raced in the varsity meet. She finished 16th with a time of 19:04 and a 56-second personal record.

Freshmen Ava Schlomer, Kate Lyons, Nadia Roos and Maesan Everitt also competed in the girls’ JV race.

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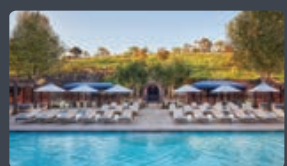


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# SPORTS

## Sierra Leone wins \$7 million Breeders' Cup Classic after suffering close loss in Kentucky Derby

Associated Press

Sierra Leone won the \$7 million Breeders' Cup Classic by 1 1/2 lengths Saturday at Del Mar, ending a frustrating run of recent losses, including the Kentucky Derby.

Ridden by Flavien Prat, Sierra Leone ran 1 1/4 miles in 2:00.78. Sent off as the 6-1 fourth choice, the 3-year-old colt paid \$15.80, \$5.60 and \$3.60 in his first race after a two-month layoff.

"I'm so happy for the horse because he's come up short a few times," trainer Chad Brown said. "I thought he had some excuses, but he's been so consistent and he's such an honest horse, one of the best that I've ever had."

Sierra Leone lost by a nose to Mystik Dan in the Kentucky Derby and then finished third in the Belmont Stakes at Saratoga. That's where he was second in the Jim Dandy and third in the Travers.

"He took a tough beat in the Derby, but we did it with class and respect, and we just went back to the drawing board and worked on getting him straight," Brown said. "He's a great horse, he took to this track and it was his day today."

Brown has 19 Cup wins, leaving him one short of career leading trainers Aidan O'Brien, who won two races Friday, and D. Wayne Lukas.

It was Brown's first win in the Classic on his fourth try. His mentor, the late Hall of Fame trainer Bobby Frankel, won the Classic in 2004 with Ghostzapper.

"At moments like this, I always think about him," Brown said.

Fierceness, the 5-2 favorite, returned \$4.40 and \$3.20. Forever Young of Japan was another 2 3/4 lengths back in third and paid \$3.60 to show. Newgate, trained by Bob Baffert, was



Flavien Prat rides Sierra Leone, right, to victory past John Velazquez, riding Fierceness, in the Breeders' Cup Classic horse race in Del Mar, Calif., Saturday, Nov. 2, 2024. AP Photo/Gregory Bull.

fourth in the full field of 14.

Ireland-based City of Troy, the 4-1 third choice with six wins in seven career starts on grass, finished eighth in his first start on dirt for O'Brien.

"He lost it at the start and obviously I didn't have him prepared to come out quick enough. We thought we did but we didn't," O'Brien said. "He missed it and left Ryan (Moore) with no chance really, the race was over at the start."

Prat made back-to-back trips to the winner's circle, taking the \$2 million Filly & Mare Turf aboard Moira for his 50th graded stakes win of the year.

In the \$2 million Distaff, Thorpedo Anna won by 2 1/2 lengths, helping trainer Ken McPeck snap an 0-for-37 skid in the Breeders' Cup.

She ran 1 1/8 miles in 1:49.10 under jockey Brian Hernandez Jr. Sent off as the 2-5 favorite, she paid \$2.80 — the second-shortest win payout in Breeders' Cup history.

"The expectation with her is so high," McPeck said. "I love the fact that Brian took the initiative and just got it done. For me, it was workmanlike and that's what you need."

Hernandez and McPeck teamed to win the Kentucky Derby by a nose in May.

The victory on a sunny and cool day at the oceanside track north of San Diego capped a sensational season for Thorpedo Anna. She also won the Kentucky Oaks and finished a close second to Fierceness in the Travers. She's in the conversation for Horse of

the Year honors.

In the \$5 million Turf, 9-5 favorite Rebel's Romance held off late-closing 22-1 shot Rousham Park to win by a neck, the ninth European horse to do so in the last 10 runnings.

Rebel's Romance ran 1 1/2 miles in 2:26.07 under jockey William Buick and paid \$5.80 to win. The 6-year-old gelding has been a globetrotter, winning in Qatar, Dubai, Hong Kong, Britain, Germany and the U.S. for trainer Charlie Appleby.

Another horse, 3-year-old France-bred Jayarebe, collapsed on the track after finishing seventh in the Turf and died.

"It was suspected to be a cardiac event," said Dr. Al Ruggles, the on-call veterinarian.

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