

Coronado Unified sues Veolia



CUSD is the first school district in San Diego to sue for the ongoing sewage pollution. Staff photo by Julieta Soto.

Coronado Unified School District initiates litigation following the governing board's approval of a district contract with Frantz Law Group, APLC.

BY JULIETA SOTO
The Coronado News

Coronado Unified, a public school district in San Diego County serving 2,747 students, is the first educational institution to initiate litigation for the ongoing sewage pollution affecting Coronado, Imperial Beach and surrounding South Bay communities.

The district became the plaintiff in a lawsuit alleging Veolia, the company

that operates the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant, has breached a contract with the federal agency that owns the plant. The district claims Veolia is contributing to a "public health crisis" and "public nuisance" by "failing to fulfill their contractual responsibility to prevent pollution, raw sewage, hazardous substances from contaminating the

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GHANA'S FIRST WATER POLO LEAGUE



Prince Asante Sefa-Boakye with his water polo league in Ghana. Photo taken by Solomon Jnr.

Ghana's first water polo league

Prince Asante Sefa-Boakye, born and raised on Coronado, started Ghana's very first water polo league. And they are aiming to qualify for the 2028 Olympics.

BY MADELINE YANG
The Coronado News

"The crashing waves, it looks like it's a burning furnace of boiling water."

Prince Asante Sefa-Boakye (Uh-sahn-tee Say-fa Boo-ah-chee) sits in the shade in the Coronado Cays, his skin almost the same color as his hair – a deep black, his dark blue shirt blending in with his complexion. His shoulders are noticeably broad. When he laughs, it's loud and

he shows all of his large, white teeth.

Sefa-Boakye's paternal grandfather was a powerful chief of the Asante people in Ghana. So technically, Sefa-Boakye is a prince. He was born and raised in Coronado but in the last few years has spent a lot of time in Ghana.

He speaks of the ocean as an environmental landmark that many people in Ghana do not dare interfere with; many of them never learn how to swim in it, or even approach it if not to fish.

But Sefa-Boakye did interfere.

In 2021, he started Ghana's first water polo team in Accra, the capital. The players train in pools but also wherever they can find a body of water, including in lakes and the ocean.

Sefa-Boakye would often visit the country



Prince Asante Sefa-Boakye coaching his water polo team in Ghana. Photo taken by Solomon Jnr.

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Are Coronado's elected officials held to an ethics standard?

A question about ethics governing — or not governing — Coronado's local elected officials has been circulating City Council meetings for the past month.

BY MADELINE YANG
The Coronado News

Coronado's city attorney sought to tamp down a petition drive that calls for a code of ethics to govern the mayor and council members, arguing that California conflict-of-interest statutes and other laws already serve that purpose.

The petition, spearheaded by 2024 City Council candidate Christine Mott, has about 300 signatures as of March 10.

Mott notes that Coronado's municipal ethics code does not restrict the city's elected leaders because it only applies to personnel who report to the city manager.

"Of course, the mayor and you council members, you don't report to the city manager, the city manager reports to you," Mott said during a Feb. 4 City Council meeting. "Our ethics code doesn't apply (to you)."

At the March 4 City Council meeting, City Attorney Johanna Canlas,

responded with a sort of rebuttal.

Council member Carrie Anne Downey asked Canlas if there was anything the city employees are held to be responsible for that the City Council is not, to which the city attorney responded that there wasn't.

"There has been some talk that there are no ethics and conflict-of-interest (codes) that applies to the council. That is false..." said Canlas.

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Opinion
Local News

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this week

16 • Sunday

Art in the Park, taking place in Spreckels Park from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., features more than fifty top artists in every genre including oil, acrylic and water-color painting, etching, photography, wood and metal working, stained glass, ceramics and a variety of other unusual and distinctive art forms. The artists whose work is on display reside throughout San Diego County.

20 • Thursday

As part of the 2025 Coronado Community READ slate of programming, a keychain macramé workshop will take place at the Coronado Public Library at 11 a.m. Jordan Sanchez Masters, who runs a macramé business, will be leading the workshop. Registration is required at coronado.librarycalendar.com.

22 • Saturday

Emerald Keepers’ interns will be hosting a free Kids Eco Camp for middle school and elementary school students at the Coronado High School garden. Campers will enjoy exciting outdoor activities, arts and crafts, and interactive lessons on sustainability as they learn about native seeds and pollinators, paint flower pots and plant their very own plant. The morning session is for middle school children and runs from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. The afternoon session is for elementary school children and runs from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Registration is open on eventbrite.com.

CONTACT US

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

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THINGS TO DO

Diane Carlson Evans, the inspiration behind ‘The Women’ will speak at hybrid event

Coronado News staff

Kristin Hannah’s recently released book, “The Women,” is based on real accounts of women who served in the Vietnam War.

On Tuesday, March 18 at 11 a.m., one of those women, Diane Carlson Evans, will discuss her lived experience as a Vietnam War combat nurse with Taylor Baldwin Kiland as a part of the 2025 Coronado Community READ program.

The event is on Zoom, so those interested in tuning in can either do so from home, or at a viewing party at the Coronado Public Library. To sign up, visit coronado.librarycalendar.com.

Evans, who recently received the Presidential Citizens Medal for her exemplary service to the country, will talk about her experiences as a young Army nurse in Vietnam.

She’ll share the challenges faced by returning veterans and her tireless decade-long campaign to establish the Vietnam Women’s Memorial on the National Mall. She wrote of her experience in her book “Healing Wounds: A Vietnam War Combat Nurse’s 10-Year Fight to Win Women a Place of Honor in Washington, D.C.”

Her conversation partner, Kiland, is a writer specializing in military non-fiction who has written, co-authored, ghost-written, or edited eighteen books, including three about our nation’s Vietnam



Diane Carlson Evans stands in front of a de Havilland Beaver.
Photo provided by Diane Carlson Evans.

POWs: “Unwavering: The Wives Who Fought to Ensure No Man is Left Behind.”

PET OF THE WEEK

Meet Violet



Meet Violet, the pet of the week. She’s at PAWS of Coronado and is looking for her forever home. [See all adoptable animals.](#) Scan the QR code with your smartphone camera, and tap on the link.

Graphic/photo provided by PAWS of Coronado.

PAWS of Coronado

Violet is a 6-year-old mixed breed who holds a special place in everyone’s heart, especially since she was found on Valentine’s Day.

Weighing in at 51 pounds, she’s a gentle soul with a beautiful, reserved nature. Although Violet is initially shy, she’s incredibly sweet and is slowly but surely coming out of her shell.

With patience and love, she’s beginning to trust more, and her quiet, tender personality shines through in small moments of affection. Violet may take her time to warm up, but once she does, her loving nature and heartwarming presence make her an unforgettable companion.

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 Violet or other pets, please visit pawsofcoronado.org.

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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

The U.S. Navy and the ‘Hybrid Fleet’

BY GEORGE GALDORISI
Op-Ed

The U.S. Navy stands at the precipice of a new era of technology advancement. In an address at a military-industry conference, then-chief of naval operations, Adm. Michael Gilday, revealed the Navy’s goal to grow to 500 ships, to include 350 crewed ships and 150 uncrewed maritime vessels. This plan has been dubbed the “hybrid fleet.” This plan was embraced by his successor and addressed in the “Navigation Plan for America’s Warfighting Navy.” The hybrid fleet has traction for the Navy going forward.

The reason for this commitment to uncrewed maritime vessels is clear. During the height of the Reagan defense buildup in the mid-1980s, the Navy evolved a strategy to build a “600-ship Navy.” That effort resulted in a total number of ships that reached 594 in 1987. That number has declined steadily during the past three-and-a-half decades, and today the Navy has less than half the number of commissioned ships. However, the rapid growth of the technologies that make uncrewed surface vessels (USVs) increasingly capable and affordable has provided the Navy with a way to put more hulls in the water.

Juxtaposed against this aspiration is the fact that Congress has been reluctant to authorize the Navy’s planned investment of billions of dollars in USVs until the service can come up with a concept of operations (CONOPS) for using them. Congress has a point. The Navy has announced plans to procure large numbers of uncrewed systems — especially large and medium uncrewed surface vessels — but a CONOPS has not yet emerged.

That said, the Navy has taken several actions to define what uncrewed maritime vessels will do and thus accelerate its journey to have autonomous platforms populate the fleet. These include publishing an “UNCREWED Campaign Framework”; establishing Surface Development Squadron One in San Diego and Uncrewed Surface Vessel Division One in Port Hueneme; and conducting many exercises, experiments and demonstrations where operators have had the opportunity to evaluate these maritime vessels.

These initiatives will serve the Navy well in evolving a CONOPS to describe how these innovative platforms can be leveraged. Fleshing out how this is to be done will require that the Navy describe how these platforms will get to the operating area where they are needed as well as what missions they will perform once they arrive there.

An evolving concept of operations is to marry various size uncrewed surface, subsurface and aerial uncrewed vehicles to perform missions that the Navy has — and will continue to have — as the



A T38 Devil Ray unmanned surface vehicle is shown here during a demonstration on April 17, 2021. Photo courtesy of DVIDS.

Navy-After-Next evolves. The Navy can use a large uncrewed surface vessel as a “truck” to move smaller USVs, uncrewed underwater systems, and uncrewed air systems into the battle space to perform important missions such as intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and mine-countermeasures. Further, the Navy does not have to wait for a lengthy acquisition process to field capable medium-sized USVs (MUSVs). Rather, it can use commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) USVs and field them in the near future.

How would this CONOPS for a hybrid fleet evolve? Consider the case of an expeditionary strike group comprising several amphibious ships underway in the Western Pacific. This strike group includes three large USVs (LUSVs). Depending on the size that is ultimately procured, the larger ships can carry a number of medium-sized vessels and deliver them to a point near the intended area of operations.

These vessels can then be sent independently to perform the intelligence and surveillance mission, or alternatively, can launch one or more smaller unmanned boats to perform this task. Building on work conducted by the Navy laboratory community and sponsored by the Office of Naval Research, MUSVs will have the ability to launch uncrewed aerial vehicles to conduct overhead reconnaissance.

For the mine-countermeasures mission, the large unmanned ship can deliver several medium-sized vessels equipped with mine-hunting and mine-clearing systems that have already been tested extensively in Navy exercises. These vessels can then undertake the “dull, dirty and dangerous” work previously conducted by sailors

who had to operate in the minefield.

While the full details of how this CONOPS plays out is beyond the scope of this article, this innovative approach accomplishes an important goal. If the Navy wants to keep its multi-billion-dollar capital ships out of harm’s way, it will need to surge uncrewed maritime vessels into the contested battlespace while its crewed ships stay out of range of adversary systems, sensors and weapons.

To be clear, this is not a platform-specific solution, but rather a concept. When fleet operators see a capability with different size commercial vessels working together and successfully performing the missions presented in this article, they will likely press industry to produce even more-capable platforms to perform these missions, thereby accelerating the fielding of a hybrid fleet.

While evolutionary in nature, this disruptive capability can provide the U.S. Navy with near-term solutions to vexing operational challenges, while demonstrating to a Congress that the Navy does have a concept-of-operations to employ the uncrewed systems it wants to procure as an important part of the emerging hybrid fleet.

George Galdorisi is a career naval aviator and national security professional. His 30-year career as a naval aviator culminated in 14 years of consecutive service as executive officer, commanding officer, commodore, and chief of staff. He is a 40-year Coronado resident and enjoys writing, especially speculative fiction about the future of warfare. He is the author of 16 books, including four consecutive New York Times best sellers.



LISA
BENSON

JACK
OHMAN

CORONADO

Coronado officially declares local emergency for sewage crisis

BY SOFIE FRANSEN
The Coronado News

The Coronado City Council officially declared a local emergency on March 4 in connection with the trans-border flow of Tijuana sewage that has contaminated the local coastline and air.

The council had previously declined to pursue a declaration of emergency, arguing that it would only be a symbolic move, rather than affecting any actual change. However, at the City Council meeting in February, city staff was directed to draft the document that was signed on March 4.

“The environmental degradation from cross-border water pollution constitutes an economic and public health threat that is beyond the control of local resources, services, personnel equipment and facilities, and warrants this declaration of a local emergency,” the document reads.

Coronado beaches have been tainted by sewage outflow from Tijuana for almost a century. In 1934, the United States and Mexican governments instructed the International Boundary Commission to help prepare a report on a cross-border water pollution issue.

But the pollution has worsened in recent years as Tijuana’s sewage overwhelmed U.S. and Mexican treatment plants, flowing into the ocean and causing a public health threat that has closed beaches and endangered public health.

The surrounding cities of San Di-



Caution signs in Coronado warn people to keep out of the water. Photo taken by Madeline Yang.

ego, Chula Vista, and Imperial Beach have already declared local emergencies, and Coronado had yet to join that call – until March 4, when the vote to officially declare an emergency passed 4-1, with Council member Mark Fleming opposed.

“I haven’t changed my feeling on this at all,” Fleming said. “I still feel like declaring a state of emergency is absolutely the wrong thing to do.”

He added that while a declaration itself will not speed up the process of fixing the issue, it could pose harm to the business community.

Council member Amy Steward, who noted a recent report from the Inspector General’s Office that found exceedingly unsafe levels of bacteria in the waters where Navy SEALs train, said she doesn’t know of a greater issue that would be considered an emergency.

“I also know that we have cities across the bay who are looking at Coronado and saying, ‘You’re not a team player,’ and you know what, that is not acceptable in my book. ... We have to be lockstep on this,” Steward said.

Mayor John Duncan said either opinion, whether in favor of declaring an emergency or not, has nothing to do with the council’s commitment to the issue.

“We can have intellectual or factual disagreements on the effect of something,” he said.

The council will review the emergency declaration at least once every 60 days, and it will be terminated at the earliest possible date that conditions warrant, as the council sees fit.

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CORONADO



The Coronado Golf Course's irrigation system is outdated, according to a staff report presented at the March 4 City Council meeting. Staff photo by Madeline Yang.

Coronado City Council considers new irrigation system for golf course, turf reduction

A City Council meeting on March 4 heard from Tim Farmer, the director of recreation and golf services, who gave a presentation on the outdated irrigation system at the Coronado golf course.

BY SOFIE FRANSEN
The Coronado News

Coronado's municipal golf course needs a new irrigation system, according to city staff, but the expensive replacement is anticipated to save money on water bills and cut down on water usage.

Tim Farmer, the director of recreation and golf services, told the City Council on March 4 that golf courses typically replace main irrigation lines every 40 years, yet the system at Coronado's course was installed in 1957.

Other elements of the system, including pump stations and sprinklers, have also been extended beyond their life spans.

Farmer also noted problems with the current system's design, leaving dry areas on the green.

To compensate, Farmer said the golf course staff is hand-watering areas every day.

"We do have staff out there spending about 35 hours a week hand-watering the areas that aren't covered by the irrigation system, and about 8 hours per week fixing the system too," Farmer said. "...This is not the most efficient way of utilizing our labor resources."

The irrigation redesign and replacement to fix all of the outdated issues is anticipated to reduce water consumption by 20%.

"I certainly see the need to do the irrigation replacement in our golf course," council member Mark Fleming said. "It appears as if it's

sadly needed."

Farmer said the city staff is considering a design that would convert around 23 acres of "out of play" turf areas to sandy landscapes. Cutting down on the total amount of grass would result in an additional 20% of water savings.

"I, too, would absolutely advocate for even a little more aggressive reduction because of the water crisis that we're going to be having in the future," said council member Amy Steward. "I would go for at least 30% reduction on those if possible."

The design to cut down on turf area draws inspiration from courses across the country, such as Monterey Peninsula Country Club, Cypress Point Club, Seminole Golf Club and Pine Valley.

The total budget for water used at the golf course this year is \$1.57 million. A new irrigation system alone, without turf reduction, is anticipated to save the city \$300,000 each year in water expenses, Farmer said.

Money would also be saved when the golf course reduces the amount of time employees are spending on hand watering the green. Currently, the 35 hours a week dedicated to that task equates to \$73,000 in spending, according to Farmer.

All five council members voted to have the staff come back with design options to show the 20% reduction in water usage as well as turf reduction options of an additional 20%.

Cost estimates for the project will be presented to the council at a future date.

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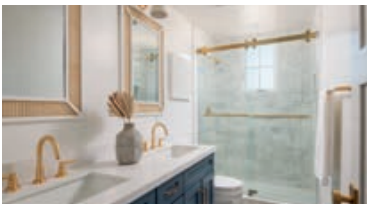


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CORONADO

Coronado job fair returns on April 10

This free community event features Coronado’s largest employers in the hospitality, healthcare, retail sales and customer service industries.

BY JULIETA SOTO
The Coronado News

Coronado residents are invited to learn about job opportunities in the community at Discover Coronado’s job fair on April 10.

Todd Little, executive director of Discover Coronado, said the event is “a chance to earn competitive wages and make new friends as well.”

The free community event features full-time and part-time job opportunities from local employers, including the Hotel del Coronado, Blue Bridge Hospitality restaurants, the City of Coronado, Coronado Ferry Landing shops and other businesses.

“Hundreds of jobs will be available for adults, students over 16 and for seniors hoping to stay active and apply their incredible life experience,” said Little.

Attendees are encouraged to bring a resume and phone to scan QR codes when meeting job recruiters and human resources managers.



Coronado Job Fair attendees interact with representatives from businesses present at the inaugural event in 2023. Photo provided by Discover Coronado.

Last year’s job fair presented 350 local job openings with more than 200 residents in attendance.

“When Discover Coronado planned the first Coronado Job Fair, we had no idea it would be such a success,” added Little. “It has truly become the place for Coronado residents to discover new careers right in their own backyard!”

The event will take place on Thursday, April 10, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Coronado Public Library’s Winn Room, at 640 Orange Avenue.

For more information, visit Discover Coronado.

Student classic film series continues with ‘They Were Expendable’

Coronado News staff

To honor the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII, the 2025 student classic film series, presented by the Coronado Island Film Festival, continues to present a slate of Hollywood film classics made during or about WWII.

On Sunday March 16 at 1 p.m. in the Coronado Public Library’s Winn Room, there will be screening of director John Ford’s “They Were Expendable.” The film stars John Wayne, Robert Montgomery and Donna Reed.

The film screening, which is open to the community, tells the story of General Douglas MacArthur returning to the Philippines in October of 1944 after being evacuated to Australia in 1942. Less than a year later, Japan surrendered, ending WWII.

“They Were Expendable” is based on a bestselling book of the same name recounting the heroic actions of Navy officers and sailors assigned to Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron Three during the disastrous fall of the Philippines in the wake of the Dec. 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor.

WWII-themed screenings will continue through May. The complete student classic series schedule and reservations are available on the CIFF website under the “Year-Round” dropdown tab. All Student Classic screenings are free.

“When Discover Coronado planned the first Coronado Job Fair, we had no idea it would be such a success ... It has truly become the place for Coronado residents to discover new careers right in their own backyard!”

- Todd Little, executive director of Discover Coronado

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A full day of workshops at the 15th annual Storytelling Festival

The 15th annual San Diego Storytelling Festival on March 15, free and open to the public, is slated with a full day of workshops, open mics, panels, concerts and all things storytelling.

For the fourth year in a row, the Storytelling Festival's home base will be at the Coronado Public Library.

of San Diego, said.

McPhie highlighted the event as a full day of storytelling opportunities where attendees can come for an hour, or stay all day.

Several professional storytellers will share a wide variety of stories – personal, historic, fairy tales, and more. There will also be workshops available for those interested in honing their own storytelling skills.

Featured storytellers include Collin Urwin, an author, singer, songwriter and storyteller from Northern Island

in Ireland, and Vicki Juditz, known for her impactful personal stories which have won many awards from The Moth.

A group of teen musicians from the Coronado School of the Arts will join in with musical interludes, and several of the storytellers will add their music — harp and guitar — to the mix.

“Storytelling’ is a word that is on everyone’s lips these days,” McPhie said. “Scientific studies reveal the importance of storytelling as a life skill.

Whether it's in job interviews, public presentations, school reports, family gatherings, or civic meetings, being able to tell an engaging story is essential. Storytelling is entertainment, of course — but it's much, much more."

This year, a section on “Woman and the military” will feature a group of local women sharing their experiences. And, there will be special sessions on stories for kids and stories told by elementary students.

For more information, visit <https://storytellersofsandiego.org/>

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Are Coronado’s elected officials held to an ethics standard?

» Continued from Page 1

“To say that there are no ethics laws that apply is just false.”

The background

Mott originally communicated with the city about what she called an ethical issue in October 2024 during the election season when the previous mayor, Richard Bailey, sent out his election recommendations with a letterhead that resembled the city’s logo. She reported him for state violations as well.

She received a response from Tina Friend, the city manager, saying that the city did not have the jurisdiction to enforce state statutes Mott provided, and that the administrative procedure manual Mott cited only governed city employees under the control of Friend.

Since Bailey was the mayor and not a city employee answering to the city manager, he wasn’t governed by a Coronado ethical code.

Mott also found that in October 2022, another ethics complaint had been filed against Bailey regarding whether he violated certain administrative procedures.

A special counsel serving the city for election matters at the time concluded that municipal administrative procedures do not apply to members of the City Council. In addition, there are no enforcement provisions.

Bailey was thereby found to not be in violation, and the complaint was closed.

Recent developments

A few days before the March 4 City Council meeting, Coronado resident and past City Council candidate Laura Wilkinson Sinton submitted an op-ed to The Coronado News calling for an ethics code and ethics commission to be created on the island.

“Local ethics codes and ethics commissions are the customary and truest guardrails in California cit-



There seem to be no ethics codes governing Coronado’s local elected officials, but there are state laws outlining ethics practices city councils have to follow. *Staff photo by Madeline Yang.*

ies. Coronado currently has neither where our elected officials are concerned,” Wilkinson Sinton wrote.

However, Canlas said something different on March 4.

“To say that there are no ethics laws that apply, is just false,” Canlas argued.

Coronado adheres to AB 1234, the city attorney said, referring to a statute that requires California cities to provide ethics training for elected officials regarding financial compensation.

Furthermore in 2023, a law known as the Levine Act was amended to apply existing state laws to local government agencies, including city councils. The act prohibits public officials from using their position to influence permits, licenses or other government action on behalf of parties who made campaign contributions of \$500 or more in the previous 12 months.

“There is no need to have an administrative policy when there’s state law that addresses it,” Canlas explained. “State law didn’t cover employees, that’s why organizations and public agencies like Coronado needed to have an administrative policy that ap-

plies similar requirements ... to the elected and appointed officials.”

Is state law enough?

Mott and Wilkinson Sinton have argued that, although council members are subject to state laws governing conflicts of interest, those statutes aren’t good enough.

Wilkinson Sinton wrote that the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC), which is tasked with overseeing local elected officials, moves too slowly.

The FPPC only updates conflicts from local officials once a year and, by then, it’s too late, Wilkinson Sinton asserted.

“State ethics laws look good in theory, but in practice the state doesn’t have the bandwidth to be a local watchdog as the last election showed. This is about trust in local government,” wrote Wilkinson Sinton.

In her petition, Mott said that there is a huge gap between state laws and reality in Coronado.

“What we’re trying to point out is ... those state laws effectively become irrelevant for a variety of reasons,” Mott said.

Canlas added that California’s Polit-

ical Reform Act outlines conflicts of interests for public officials. She also said Coronado is governed by Code 1090, a California provision that prohibits conflicts of interest in government contracts.

The city attorney also disputed claims that a local ethics code would be more compelling than the statutes, noting that the state laws provide harsher penalties for violations.

For example, she said, a willful violation of Code 1090 is punishable by jail time, a fine and disqualification from office, which are “consequences not available to general law cities like Coronado.”

Mott said California laws may apply to council members, but getting the state to enforce them locally is challenging.

“FPPC has to cover all of California. The district attorney is overwhelmed with cases,” Mott said. “While an ethics issue in Coronado is critical locally, it will unlikely get state attention unless egregious.”

Mott cited Bailey’s use of what appeared to be city letterhead in a campaign endorsement letter as an example.

“The conduct at issue would have been prohibited by any other Coronado employee,” Mott said.

Wilkinson Sinton also complained that the city attorney’s presentation on ethics was not clearly listed on agendas for the March 4 meeting. “It’s unfortunate that the agenda item did not mention ethics in it,” Wilkinson Sinton added. “Or we might have made arrangements to be there – and by we, I don’t mean just Christine. There’s a lot of people who are looking at this.”

“If the state of California’s ethics codes are so robust, why do several cities in California have their own city code of ethics that apply to their mayors and city councils, complete with an ethics commission to oversee and enforce those ethics codes?” Wilkinson Sinton asked.

Coronado Unified sues Veolia, alleges ‘public health crisis’ of sewage pollution impacts school community

» Continued from Page 1

air, water, and soil in Imperial Beach, and seeking to maximize their own profits without regard to the health, safety, and welfare of those individuals within Plaintiff’s district...”

This lawsuit, filed March 3 in San Diego County Superior Court, follows a separate civil complaint filed by the firm and brought forward by four Imperial Beach residents last November against Veolia. Veolia denies the allegations in the complaint.

James P. Frantz, CEO of Frantz Law Group, said his firm is now representing more than 500 plaintiffs in what he says is a mass tort lawsuit.

A mass tort allows more tailored compensation and assessment of individualized claims where plaintiffs can present their unique case, damages and circumstances.

The firm also represents over a thousand school districts in other litigation in the U.S., he told members of the media on March 5.

“They [CUSD] want to make sure that all options are taken to make sure that this conduct stops by Veolia,” said William B. Shinoff, another attorney representing the district, during a press conference. “They are making sure that they are putting a voice for their community and making sure that their students can be there and be safe and have an environment where they’re able to go outside and be in recess and P.E. and not have to go and do these activities indoors when the wind is blowing in a certain direction or if it’s a hotter day.”

The district’s decision to join was approved by the governing board via a contract with the law firm during the Feb. 20 school board meeting and follows a district-led letter writing campaign to state and federal leaders asking them to address the crisis.

In a statement regarding the lawsuit, the district said it considers overall mental and physical health as important factors in student achievement and staff well-being.

“While CUSD recognizes that the

responsibility for solving sewage and pollution issues is not the purview of the school district, the opportunity to bring attention to issues affecting members of our school community and their ability to thrive, is important,” the statement said. “In joining a mass tort lawsuit against one of the entities which does hold responsibility, the district is part of a broader effort to advocate for this important and complex regional issue.”

The school’s lawsuit was filed and announced the same week the City of Coronado declared a local emergency on the issue, joining the surrounding cities of San Diego, Chula Vista, and Imperial Beach following a council vote on March 4.

The district noted the lawsuit does not influence, affect, or impede the efforts or strategy of the City of Coronado, a separate government entity.

According to the statement, CUSD is only responsible for paying attorneys 30% of any monetary settlement or recovery from the defendants.

“Any financial awards from the lawsuit will help offset past and future costs incurred by CUSD for efforts to monitor air quality, provide air purification, support and staff school health offices, and respond to reports of toxic smells at school sites,” said the statement issued by the district on March 6.

The Coronado Unified complaint is among at least four filed to date against Veolia, each accusing the company of negligence and environmental law violations.

Adam Lisberg, spokesman for Veolia North America, agreed that residents of south San Diego County are deeply affected by Tijuana’s raw sewage crossing the border.

However, Lisberg added in a March 5 statement, “The plaintiffs in this case would be better served if their lawyers pursued the source of the problem instead of the company trying to solve it. The untreated sewage plaguing San Diego comes directly from Mexico through the Pacific Ocean and the Tijuana River, not the

South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant. The claims in this lawsuit are misplaced, and Veolia’s hardworking local employees do not deserve to be blamed for the Mexican government’s failures.”

Meanwhile, Daniel Vinegrad, who founded Stop the Sewage Club at Coronado High School, expressed his support for the litigation.

“We have been advocating for solutions to resolve to the current Tijuana River sewage crisis since our club’s inception,” said Vinegrad in a statement. “We believe that this is another step in the right direction, and we encourage Veolia to comply with all laws and regulations in order to ensure clean air and water for our communities.”

Students and faculty, properties affected

The lawsuit addresses the following defendants: Veolia Environment, S.A.; Veolia Water North America-West, LLC; Veolia Water West Operating Services, Inc.; Mark Wippler, an employee of Veolia; and other officers, directors, and managers anonymously grouped together.

Veolia operates the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant along the border in San Diego under a contract with the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC).

More than \$650 million in federal funds have been earmarked for projects to expand and repair the plant.

“Veolia makes claims that ‘Oh, Mexico is the problem ... the federal government is the problem.’ Well, let’s quit finger pointing,” said Frantz. “Your conduct is punitive. It’s a conscious disregard for the safety of the entire community.”

The lawsuit claims defendants’ mismanagement of the South Bay plant has increased the level of toxic waste and pollution in the Tijuana River “tenfold over the last three years.”

The lawsuit also claims defendants cause “significant environmental harm” by violation of the Clean Water Act’s National Pollutant Discharge

Elimination System Permit and the state’s Health and Safety Code section 5411.

According to the lawsuit, this has exposed plaintiffs to “highly toxic” contaminants and pollutants — like hydrogen sulfide, DDT, benzidine, and polychlorinated biphenyls — often associated with sewage that lead to “headaches, nausea, respiratory issues, gastrointestinal upset, tremors, fatigue and other illnesses.”

A community health survey released in a Jan. 6 report found that 77% of South Bay residents consider the Tijuana River Valley pollution and ocean sewage a threat to public health in the region.

“Defendants consciously risk the health of persons living in local communities, including minors and children, with full knowledge of the dangers their conduct posed,” the complaint reads.

“This is despicable and oppressive conduct, especially considering defendants’ knowledge that plaintiff’s students—vulnerable, innocent, unsuspecting children—would have to suffer the consequences associated with lifelong health issues and experiences in their childhood years that they will never have,” it continues.

According to the complaint, the district has had to hire additional personnel to address the mental, emotional and physical health of students and faculty; educate the district community about the dangers of exposure to contaminants; and spend time and resources determining the long-term effects and decreased value of district properties.

“Hydrogen sulfide has corroded the metals and surfaces within plaintiff’s properties,” the complaint says. “PCBs have settled into the building materials of plaintiff’s properties, including but not limited to the carpets, drywalls, and concrete, and has accumulated to such an extent that the properties are no longer fit for their normal use.”

The district is seeking compensatory damages, to be determined at trial.

NAVY



The recovery site for the Growler crash into the San Diego Bay on Feb. 12. Staff photo by Madeline Yang.

Navy completes recovery of crashed jet

BY MADELINE YANG
The Coronado News

The salvage team working to recover the EA-18G Growler that crashed into the San Diego Bay on Feb. 12 conducted a thorough review of the collected debris and recovery site on March 5 and notified regulatory agencies that they had concluded salvage opera-

tions, according to Commander, Naval Air Forces. Two pilots were conducting an exercise at Naval Air Station North Island when they ejected safely from the aircraft before it hit the water in the bay. The recovery operation began on Feb. 16. The investigation conducted by Commander, Naval Air Forces is ongoing.

Navy commands that assisted in the recovery effort included Amphibious Construction Battalion One, Navy Region Southwest, Naval Base Coronado, Naval Base Point Loma, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Southwest, Naval Safety Command, Naval Sea Systems Command Supervisor of Salvage and Diving, Electronic Attack Wing Pacific and the U.S. Coast Guard.



After rigorous training and evaluations, Rear Adm. Rich Brophy, chief of naval air training, officially certified the team “airshow ready.” Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Terrin Hartman.

Blue Angels are airshow ready

DVIDS

The United States Navy Blue Angels have successfully completed their annual certification in El Centro for the 2025 air show season. After rigorous training and evaluations, Rear Adm. Rich Brophy, chief of naval air training, officially certified the team “airshow ready.” Since 1946, the Blue Angels have showcased the teamwork and professionalism of the United States Navy and Marine Corps through flight demonstrations and community outreach. “As we head into the 2025 airshow season, this team has once again met the Navy’s high standards for safety, precision, and

professionalism,” said Brophy. “After the success of 2024, these men and women have proven they are more than ready to perform as the Navy’s premier flight demonstration team. They continue to inspire and connect with the next generation of Americans. It’s my pleasure to certify them for the 2025 season.” The Blue Angels team consists of 158 active-duty sailors and Marines including pilots, aircrew, maintainers and many other support personnel. The 2025 season schedule is available to view at <https://www.blueangels.navy.mil/show/>. Marine Corps Air Station Miramar will host a show on Sept. 27.

A U.S. Navy landing craft embarks USS Somerset



DVIDS - A U.S. Navy landing craft, air cushion with Assault Craft Unit 5, is guided into the well deck of the USS Somerset during Quarterly Underway Amphibious Readiness Training 25.2 while underway in the Pacific Ocean on March 5. This is a joint training exercise designed to develop and sustain essential amphibious readiness skills for effective operations in maritime environments while reinforcing the Navy-Marine Corps partnership. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Gunnery Sgt. Stephanie Cervantes.



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SPORTS

Coronado swim team starts season with Western League Relays

Coronado News staff

The Coronado High School swim team kicked off the 2025 season with the Western League relays at La Jolla High School on March 4, and the boys’ team placed first in two events.

This particular meet had a unique set up — each regular event was swam as a relay by a group of four swimmers.

The Islanders had a strong start, finishing first in the boys 200 individual medley relay, with a come-from-behind victory by Luca Morocco in the final freestyle leg.

The boys also came in first in the boys 100 butterfly relay with an amazing finish by Gage Everitt.

The girls’ team finished second place in both the 200 individual medley relay and the wild card relay, both anchored by Chloe Quarles.



From left: Ally Fabrey, Luca Morocco, Gage Everitt, and Chloe Quarles are the 2025 Coronado swim team captains.

Photo by Lindy Fabrey.

Ghana’s first water polo league created by Coronado resident, Asante Sefa-Boakye

» Continued from Page 1

to see family. “It just made sense. I played in the U.S., now let’s just make a way to play in Ghana,” he said.

He now has a boy’s and girl’s water polo league made up of seven teams ranging from 6 to 25 years old. They’re called Black Star Polo. And he has a hefty goal: He wants his team from Ghana to make it to the 2028 Olympics, and he believes it will.

Sefa-Boakye, 33, is himself a water polo athlete, and as he competed in America and internationally he never saw many Black players.

“I’m the only one. It’s, like, one (time) every 25 games I get to see another Black person playing,” he said.

And it’s not just water polo, it’s swimming in general.

“In order to play water polo, you have to learn how to swim. Before you have to learn how to swim, you have to be comfortable in the water,” Sefa-Boakye says. “So now, it’s a three-step process with the third step of being a water polo player is honestly just icing on the cake.”

Swimming culture in America and Ghana

In America, there are a few reasons why many Black people never learned how to swim. According to a recent national study conducted at YMCA’s by the USA Swimming Foundation and the University of Memphis, 64% of African American children can’t swim while only 40% of caucasian children can’t swim.

An article by the National Institutes of Health showed that Black people had the highest rates of drowning and a study done by Northeastern Illinois University illustrated that a big reason that was found is the history of treatment of Black people during the Jim Crow era.

A kid might never learn how to swim because their parents don’t know how to swim. Their parents didn’t learn to swim because their parents never had the opportunity to learn.

And they didn’t have the opportunity because African Americans weren’t allowed in public pools. There were “white only” pools and the pools that were provided for Black people were smaller and shallow.

When segregation ended, white people moved away from public pools and there was less incentive for upkeep of the public pools.

However, as a Black man who grew up in Coronado, Sefa-Boakye did have the opportunity to swim and started playing water polo when he entered high school. He didn’t like swimming when he was younger, but his mother put him in lessons around seventh grade to lose weight,



Prince Asante Sefa-Boakye's water polo team during practice. Photos taken by Solomon Jnr.



Prince Asante Sefa-Boakye's water polo team, also known as Black Star Polo in Ghana.

and then his competitive side kicked in.

“I hate losing, more than I hate swimming,” Sefa-Boakye said with a smile. “So, let’s get it together.”

And he got it together. He played water polo throughout high school and continued on to play for California Lutheran University and Whittier College, where he got his degree in psychology.

After graduating, he joined teams in Spain, Germany, France, Italy and Brazil.

In Ghana, he noticed that there are different reasons why they never learned to swim. Sefa-Boakye explained the ocean and lakes are seen as a source of water and food for fishing, and other than that, are powerful and should be respected and ultimately, feared.

“They will just go out to fish but not know how to swim ... you have to walk three miles to get water,” Sefa-Boakye described. “People (look) at the water as a trade, a job, a profession ... it’s not for playing.”

And because of certain areas with poor infrastructure, their villages might flood from the rain and people drown.

“Whether it’s cultural or respect, fear definitely plays a role,” Sefa-Boakye said.

One of Sefa-Boakye’s team captains in Ghana, Ishmael Agyei, said that he almost drowned in a pool when he was 10 years old. He’s 22 now.

“It became a point in my mind that I had to learn how to survive in water in case I find myself in such a situation again,” Agyei said. He called from Ghana and had just gotten off a shift of working as a lifeguard at the high school pool.

“Sometimes we have to call (our parents), try to convince them that instead of being scared of the water, you’d rather learn how to be safe in the water,” Agyei said.

Agyei explained that when the high school pool was built in 2015, water-safety awareness in the community started evolving and they offered free lessons at the pool. Since then, around 15,000-20,000 students have been taught water safety, Agyei said, and from those, around 10,000 have learned how to swim.

In 2017, Agyei began taking swim lessons. Four years later, he joined Sefa-Boakye’s team and also took on a job as a lifeguard.

Black Star Polo

“Training under Asante is never easy because he always pushes you to cross your limits,” Agyei said laughing. “He has a lot of determination.”

“... When we begun, we were very weak. Let me say, we were very weak. If he wasn’t having that level of resilience, you would have said that ‘these people can never be good.’”

But they are good, Sefa-Boakye said, comparable to other teams he’s seen around the world.

“We still get letters, ‘Hey, come to Croatia, come to Europe.’ ... (We have) high level international Olympic caliber referees going to coach,” Sefa-Boakye said. “For them to be toe to toe in Africa and the champions in Ghana, is great for me as a coach.”

To finance the Ghana operations, Sefa-Boakye relies on private donors, including a GoFundMe he set up years ago when he first started that has now reached a total of \$41,000. That money has gone to sending the kids to play in Brazil and South Africa and for their equipment, uniforms, tournaments and practices.

Even now, if they don’t have money to buy weighted balls to practice with, they improvise and play with coconuts.

He also pays for food for about 12 children on one of his teams. Because if they’re not eating, they can’t train well.

Sefa-Boakye has a goal to reach \$50,000 in that GoFundMe. He eventually wants to build his own training pool where he can invite water polo players from other countries to play in Ghana.

On top of the pride he has for his team, he knows this sport has brought them so much more than having an important life skill.

“Those kids have traveled. They scored goals. They’ve seen the world. They got to see a different part of the continent or leave Africa because they didn’t give up on their swimming lessons,” Sefa-Boakye said.

Agyei said that without water polo, the boys on the team might have spent their time involved in bad situations or doing things they shouldn’t.

“So when water polo begun, instead of indulging in bad activities, your energy is turned to the pool-side,” Agyei explained.

He said Ghana’s players have improved physically as well as emotionally. They’ve acquired knowledge and been competitive.

“Everybody wants to win,” Agyei said.

In 2028, if all goes well, they may get a first chance to do so on the Olympic level.

“We will surely get there one day,” Agyei added. “We will surely represent Ghana in the 2028 Olympics.”

SPORTS

Coronado High School track and field season underway

BY CADE CAVIN
The Coronado News

Coronado High School's Lauren Gilhooly won the girls' 100-meter and 200-meter dashes at the Elmer Runge Invitational track meet on March 1, leading a short-handed Islander team and earning honors as the event's top female athlete.

Coach Cameron Gary said about a third of the Coronado High squad didn't make the trip to Patrick Henry High School due to many players not having completed their training programs yet.

Gilhooly, a senior sprinter who already is committed to Cal Berkeley, won the girl's 100-meter dash and the 200-meter dash with times of 12.09 and 24.73, respectively. Both are the fastest times in the outdoor San Diego CIF sec-

tion so far this year.

Gilhooly also participated in the girl's 4x100-meter relay alongside junior Micaela Gistaro, sophomore Maya Wilson, and freshman Claudia Wagner. The foursome clocked a time of 50.44 seconds, the fastest time of the day and the fourth fastest time in the San Diego CIF section.

Gistaro also finished second in the 400-meter dash with a personal record time of 59.67 seconds. For the boys, junior Nathan Ayan placed third in the men's 800-meter with a time of 2:05.

The Islanders boys' relay also saw success, with the 4x100-meter team, consisting of senior David Castillo, and juniors Davin Collins, William Heyen, and Mason Gibbs winning their heat and placing fourth overall with a time of 45.06 seconds.



Lauren Gilhooly, shown here with head coach Cameron Gary, won the 100, 200, and ran a leg of the winning 4x100 team. For her efforts, she was awarded the girls' Track Athlete of the Meet award.

Photo by Brian Gilhooly.

Coronado boys basketball's playoff run ends against Maranatha Christian

BY CADE CAVIN
The Coronado News

Looking back on his team's playoff run this season, the Coronado boys' basketball coach, Anthony Ott, said the team's aggressive style of defense took the Islanders far in playoffs, all the way to the San Diego section of the CIF semifinals.

Coronado lost 54-48 in a hard fought battle against Maranatha Christian High School in the semifinals on Feb. 26.

They finished the season with a 14-17 record overall, 3-7 in City League play.

Overcoming a cold stretch where the team went 1-9 from Dec. 12 to Jan. 17, the Islanders slipped into the

playoffs and rattled off three straight upset wins, including a road victory at rival Point Loma High School to put the team in the semifinals.

Ott cited steals and forced turnovers that were crucial to their playoff run.

"That aggressiveness on defense really led to a ton of steals, which led to a ton of fast break buckets," Ott said. "We were sharing the ball very well and then shooting a high percentage. That kind of overwhelming defensive mentality that we had towards the end of the year translated to a lot of high percentage layups."

According to Ott, junior forward Derick Ritter and freshman guard Ah'Mahn Oliver played big roles in shutting down the Point Loma Pointers' best player, with senior guard

Loxly Johnson rotating over to help when necessary.

On top of the suffocating style of defense the Islanders were able to play, Ott said the team's offensive production took a jump during the Point Loma game, citing multiple players scoring in double figures.

"I think that might've been our season high in assists," Ott said. "Nobody cared who scored, nobody cared who was guarding who, we just really played as a team."

However, against Maranatha Christian, things didn't shake out as well. In a 54-48 loss on Feb. 26, the Islanders simply did not shoot the ball.

"I've re-watched the film of that game and the shots that we took were all really good shots so we just didn't

shoot the ball," Ott said. "We went two for 20 from the three-point line, I think we missed 15 layups."

Despite a disappointing result in the CIF Semifinals, Ott said he was proud of his squad – proud of them for their dedication, work ethic and camaraderie throughout the season.

"We when we break our huddle we always say 'together' and 'family'– those are kind of like little mantras that we've been saying," Ott said. "They really prove that to be true. You saw a lot of leadership development, especially from some of our younger guys that will be returning next year."

The Islanders concluded the 2024-2025 season ranked No. 531 in California, and No. 40 in the San Diego Section.

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SPORTS

Chargers release linebacker Joey Bosa after 9 seasons with the franchise

Associated Press

The Los Angeles Chargers released Joey Bosa on March 5, ending the linebacker's nine-season tenure with the franchise.

The move, which came less than a week before the start of the new league year, was expected due to Bosa's large salary cap number and injury history. Bosa had a cap number of \$36.47 million for the 2025 season, but the Chargers will save \$25.36 million in cap space.

Bosa was the third overall pick by the Chargers in the 2016 NFL draft and was the last player on the roster from when the team played in San Diego. He signed a five-year extension worth \$135 million in 2020 that made him the league's highest-paid defensive player at the time.

Bosa played in 14 games with nine starts this past season after agreeing to restructure his contract. But his five sacks were his fewest in the six seasons during which he has played at least 12 games as he battled hip and back injuries.

After seeing action in 16 games in 2021, Bosa saw the field for only 14 games combined in the 2022 and '23 season. He missed most of 2022 because of a groin injury, but returned late in the year. He was sidelined the final seven games in 2023 with a foot injury.

Bosa's 72 sacks are tied for 10th most in the NFL since he entered the league and are second in franchise history.

With Bosa's release, the Bolts will put a bigger emphasis on trying to re-sign linebacker Khalil Mack, who is an unrestricted free agent for the first time in his 11-year career.

Tuli Tuipulotu, who led the Chargers with 8 1/2 sacks this past season, is expected to move into a starting spot with Bosa's departure.



Los Angeles Chargers linebacker Joey Bosa (97) drinks water before an NFL football game against the Las Vegas Raiders, Sept. 8, 2024, in Inglewood, Calif. AP Photo/Kyusung Gong, File.



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