

THE CORONADO NEWS

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Village Theater will remain despite online concerns

The city's only theater is not closing down, but just switching management

BY MADELINE YANG
The Coronado News

The Village Theater is here to stay.

After concerns circulated online about the future of the island's Village Theater, CEO of Coronado Island Film Festival

(CIFF) Merridee Book reassured Coronado residents that the beloved movie house is not going anywhere.

Book explained that the lease was up at the theater at the end of May, and the owners found new operators who will be taking over beginning June 1.

"It's just like any other business going through new management," Book explained. "The theater has owners. It's not under new ownership."

The CIFF CEO said the owners like to stay private and she

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The main theater room in the Village Theater. Staff photo by Madeline Yang.



The Baby Grand

Coronado's loudest new arrival

A lagoon sitting area is positioned next to the Night Hawk outdoor restaurant. Photo by Michelle Armas.

BY MICHELLE ARMAS
The Coronado News

Consortium Holdings (CH Projects), the creative force behind San Diego's maximalist hotel, The Lafayette, is bringing its vision to Coronado with the opening of the Baby Grand.

On May 14, the 31-room hotel opened with a boom. The design, a collaboration with The Post Company design studio, pulls inspiration

from classical eras and epochs: Roman statues ablaze with fire, lobster-patterned cushions, clamshell beds, cheetah-print chairs, and jewel-box bars.

For nearly two decades, the restaurant group has been known for its intricate, playful designs, its adaptive reuse of old buildings, and its carefully curated cocktails, opening venues in urban enclaves such as North Park, Little Italy, and East Village.

So why, this time, did it choose to restore a 1950's hotel, the La Avenida Inn, on a mili-

tary island where tourists come for a peaceful weekend or retirement?

"As I get older, the things I found charming in youth are annoying to me now," said Arsalun Tafazoli, founder of CH Projects. "So downtown, you know, it's not what it was to me in my 20s. As I got older, I was like (Coronado) is really delightful."

The UC San Diego graduate started the company because he was tired of his hometown

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Coronado High School recognizes class of 2026 co-valedictorians Daniel Vinegrad (left) and Dhara Jost (middle) and salutatorian Morgan Maske (right). Photos by Daniel Vinegrad, Peter Jost, and Ashley Wylie.

Coronado High School's class of 2026 co-valedictorians and salutatorian

These Coronado students graduate June 4 and head to college in the fall

BY JULIETA SOTO
The Coronado News

Daniel Vinegrad, a student environmental activist, and Dhara Jost, president of the National Honor Society and a multi-sport athlete, have been named co-valedictorians of Coronado High

School's 2026 graduating class.

Morgan Maske, heading to Pennsylvania as a college dual-sport athlete, was selected as salutatorian.

After four years of balancing academics, sports and extracurriculars, these Coronado High School seniors

learned on May 18 they are among this year's top students.

"Our class is insanely talented, so I really wasn't expecting it, but it was a great honor," said Jost. "It was definitely a surprise."

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this week

7 • Sunday

The Blue Breeze Band will perform in Spreckels Park at 6 p.m. as part of Coronado Promenade Concerts' summer series.

10 • Wednesday

The Coronado Public Library, in collaboration with the Silver Strand Youth Center, will be hosting events for all ages every Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. all summer long. On June 10, participants can enjoy a drum performance, followed by a drum lesson.

11 • Thursday

The Coronado Public Library hosts open chess play on the second Thursday of every month between 3 and 5 p.m. in the Winn Room. Enjoy playing chess with others, or learn to play or improve your game with help from facilitator and local chess coach Chuck McClung. Chess boards and pieces are provided. The event is open to all adults age 18 and older.

12 • Friday

Enjoy an afternoon of live jazz with San Diego vocalist Erika Davies for a summer concert in the Winn Room of the Coronado Public Library. Known for her distinctive vintage sound and captivating stage presence, Davies brings warmth, charm, and elegance to a program of jazz standards and timeless classics.

CONTACT US

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

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



Contest: Vote for '2026 Best of Coronado News'

SPONSORED CONTENT

June 5 is the last day to vote for the "Best of Coronado" competition, hosted by The Coronado News.

The goal of the "2026 Best of Coronado News" is to highlight the businesses in the 92118 zip code that make our island town unique.

Eateries, small businesses, hotels, professionals, general services – you name it, there's a "Best of" category for it, with a total list spanning 100 different categories.

Support your favorite local businesses by voting for them to receive a "Best of" award at <https://bestofcoronadonews.voterfly.com/>.

Nominees are either located within the 92118 zip code or demonstrably serve the 92118 community. Eligibility is verified through the business license database, social media presence and official websites.

Winners will be chosen by the individuals who fill out the online voting ballot. Each person may vote once per category through June 5.

VoterFly uses automated software to detect and prevent fraudulent voting practices. If a business is caught "stuffing ballots" or circumventing security measures, their votes will be flagged and removed.

This competition is meant to be enjoyable for all participants, bringing awareness to the enterprises that make Coronado a thriving community. The contest is driven by community input, as the winners are ultimately chosen through online voting.

For more information and an outline of competition rules, visit <https://bestofcoronadonews.voterfly.com/>

Editor's note: This is an advertisement feature from The Coronado News

PET OF THE WEEK

Meet Shiba

PAWS of Coronado

Shiba, a five-year-old rottweiler, is up for adoption at PAWS of Coronado.

Staff members at the non-profit, which provides adoption and rehabilitation services to animals, said that Shiba is a gentle dog who thrives as the main attraction in a home.

Those interested in adoption can visit www.pawsofcoronado.org. Fostering, donating and volunteering are other ways to support the organization.

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 Shiba or other pets, please visit pawsofcoronado.org.



Meet Shiba, 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.



Don't Let Joint Pain Slow You Down

Whether you are strolling on the beach or kneeling to tie your shoes, chronic joint pain and stiffness can make any activity difficult. If you are looking for relief from hip or knee arthritis, attend a free webinar presented by Sharp HealthCare. You will learn about nonsurgical treatments, joint replacement surgery, and physical therapy to help you safely recover from treatment. A board-certified orthopedic surgeon will talk about leading-edge surgical options available at Sharp Coronado Hospital, including Mako robotic-arm assisted surgery.

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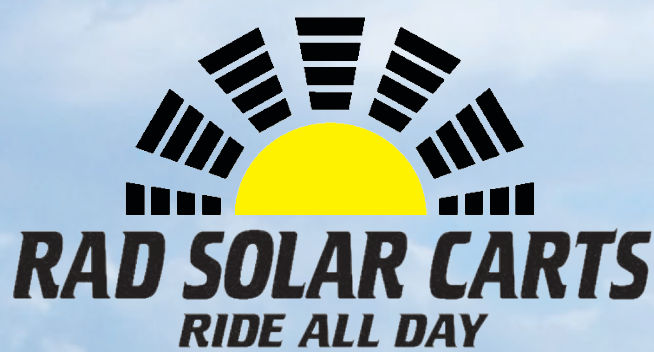
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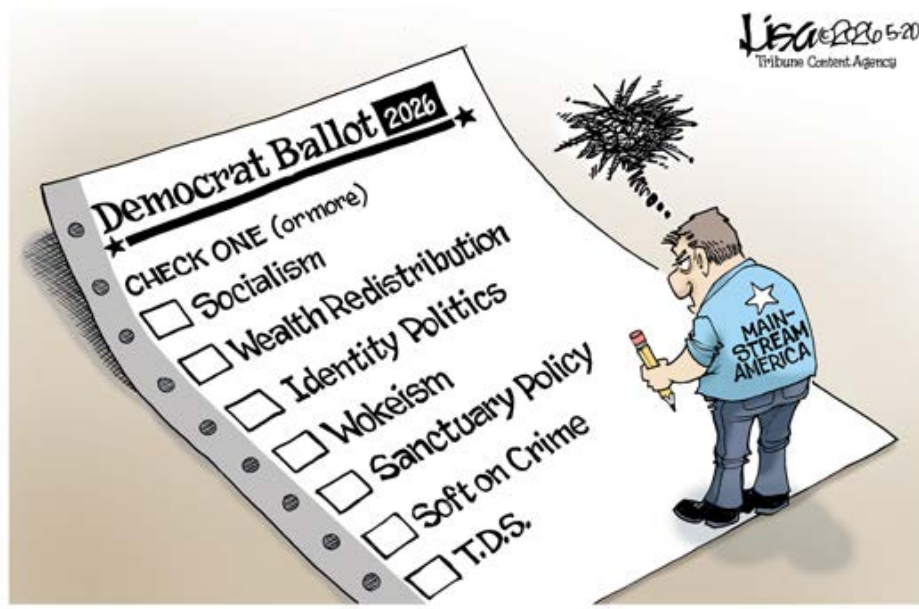
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OPINION

LISA BENSON



JACK OHMAN

How to be a part of The Coronado News:

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- Capture a cool photo of Coronado and send it in for publication consideration
- Respond to an editorial or a news story by writing a letter to the editor

All submissions can be sent to newsroom@thecoronadonews.com

BEST OF CORONADO NEWS 2026

Vote For Your Local Favorites!

Nominations | **Voting**
 April 15 - May 27 | May 1 - June 5

SCAN TO VOTE



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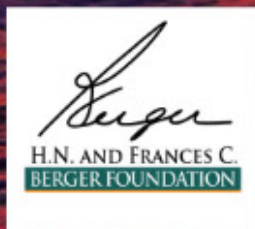
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Questions? Contact our Box Office:
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CORONADO

PAWS of Coronado presents its Animal Mayor Race

The contest for the next animal mayor of Coronado is now open

BY JULIETA SOTO

The Coronado News

Do you think your pet should be the next animal mayor in Coronado?

PAWS of Coronado, a nonprofit organization, has opened up its canine mayor race to all animals. The winner of this year's Animal Mayor Race will serve a two-year term. The event is a fundraiser that helps support the animals at PAWS of Coronado.

"Valkyrie is the current resilient rescue dog that held the term from 2024 to 2026," said Jackie Williams, executive director at PAWS of Coronado.

Through June 8, the organization is accepting nominations of any animal that lives in Coronado or has been affiliated with PAWS of Coronado through rescue. Submissions may be made via an online form at: https://form.jotform.com/paws_marketing/paws-of-coronados-animal-mayor.

The nomination fee is \$50 per animal and candidates may begin campaigning once nominated. The new mayor will be announced on July 3.

"We would love everyone to participate by either voting, nominating an animal, sharing through social media the race updates," said Williams. "Hopefully, the winner will be able to be in the parade on the 4th of July with PAWS of Coronado."

Accepting all animal nominations

According to Williams, the organization will be opening the parameters of another fundraiser next year in search of an animal city manager.



Valkyrie is the 2024-2026 canine mayor. Photo provided by PAWS of Coronado.

Valkyrie, a one-eyed shepherd mix, is Coronado's eighth canine mayor after receiving the most votes out of 15 dog ambassadors in the 2024 Canine Mayoral Race which raised over \$25,000 for animal welfare in Coronado. She has held a ceremonial position in the annual Fourth of July parade.

Williams said the important position of canine mayor was transferred

to animal mayor after PAWS saw an uptick in a wide variety of animals such as ducks, roosters, birds, bearded dragons, guinea pigs, and other animals in need of care.

"The purpose of this change is to open nominations to a larger pool of candidates," said Williams. "As a fundraiser, the more participation we have, the more we can raise for the animals who depend on us."



Animals like two roosters adopted from PAWS of Coronado are eligible to become the city's new animal mayor. Photo provided by PAWS of Coronado.

Williams said the facility is currently full with most of the animals requiring medical support.

Funds raised help cover medical care, including spay and neuter procedures, vaccinations, food, supplies, and other necessities to prepare animals for adoption, she said.

Important dates

The nomination period ends on June 8. Voting begins on June 9 and runs through 5 p.m. on July 3. The new animal mayor begins a two-year term on July 4.

Williams said the animal mayor will be announced on their website, Instagram and Facebook.

"It's a very tight race usually," said Williams.

To learn more, visit: <https://pawsof-coronado.org/>.

Contact: julieta@thecoronadonews.com

California to weigh tighter restrictions on voter registration amid US debate on election security

Associated Press

A proposal that would require California to verify proof of citizenship when a person registers to vote — and require voters to provide identification at polling places — will appear on the November ballot, state officials announced on April 24.

The announcement comes amid a national debate over election security and what type of requirements voters should face to show they are qualified to cast a ballot. In Congress, Republicans are pushing a strict proof-of-citizenship proposal for residents to vote, encouraged by President Donald Trump.

The California plan — also backed by Republicans — is being pitched as a common sense idea to strengthen confidence in voting in a vast state with more than 23 million people registered to cast a ballot. State officials said its backers submitted sufficient petition signatures to qualify for the November ballot.

"We already show ID for everyday activities like flying, opening a bank account and picking up prescription medications. Thirty-six other states and many countries around the world already use voter ID," said state Sen. Tony Strickland, a Republican from Huntington Beach.

"Californians deserve secure, transparent elections," added Strickland, a proponent of the proposal.

If approved in November in the heavily Democratic state, other provisions would require those who vote through popular mail-in ballots would have to give the last four digits of a government-issued ID, such as a Social Security number.

California is among 14 states and the District of Columbia that do not require voters to show some form of identification at the polls or to register to vote.

While California at times has faced questions from critics about the legitimacy of its vote tallies, research



A voter prepares a ballot at a polling place at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library on Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2024, in Simi Valley, Calif. AP Photo/Chris Pizzello, File.

shows voter fraud in the country is rare. Voting by noncitizens has occurred, but reviews of state cases have shown it to be uncommon and typically a mistake rather than an intentional effort to sway an election.

Most California residents vote by mail, and in the pursuit of accuracy, thoroughness and counting every vote, the nation's most populous state has gained a reputation for tallies that can drag on for weeks — and sometimes longer.

The effort to tighten restrictions on voter registration and mail ballots will come in a critical election year, when Californians will be picking their next governor and with control of Congress on the line.

Opponents argued that such requirements make it more difficult for people to vote, especially the elderly, those with disabilities and those without driver's licenses.

The president continues to claim that he was not the loser in the 2020 presidential election — and has long

falsely said the election was marred by widespread fraud. Trump's claims were rejected by dozens of judges, including several he appointed. His own attorney general and an exhaustive review by The Associated Press found no evidence of widespread fraud that could have changed the results. Multiple reviews, audits and recounts in the battleground states where Trump disputed his loss confirmed Democrat Joe Biden's victory, including several overseen by Republican lawmakers.



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SCAN ME



CORONADO

Walk the Southern California coast to support human trafficking survivors

National and local organizations combat human trafficking in a multi-day coastal walk

BY JULIETA SOTO
The Coronado News

GenerateHope, a San Diego-based nonprofit that provides resources and long-term housing for survivors of sex trafficking, is joining forces with the Freedom Challenge ministry to raise funds to support survivors through a 45-mile coastal walk from Oceanside to Coronado over June 12-14.

The inaugural event was inspired by the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage through Spain, which Escondido resident Dawn Hesse completed at the end of 2024.

“It’s really just giving each person an opportunity to spread the word and ask for donations,” said Hesse, a Freedom Challenge ambassador who brought the idea to both organizations. “Part of it’s just making ourselves visible.”

According to Hesse, Freedom Challenge creates physical challenges to raise awareness and money to fight human trafficking globally.

Hesse said she witnessed human trafficking with children in Moldova in the fall of 2018. Upon returning from that trip, Hesse said she found a 2016 university study which estimated that the sex trafficking economy in San Diego totals \$810 million.

“It blew my mind,” said Hesse, 62, and launched her mission to inform people that making humans an in-



GenerateHope and Freedom Challenge partner to walk with human trafficking survivors from June 12-14.

Photo by Jenni Summer.

ventory or commodity is unacceptable.

Entries in the coastal walk may sign up for the three-day trek at a cost of \$400, or participate for one day for \$100.

On June 12, the three-day participants will walk 19 miles from Oceanside to Solana Beach. The group continues to La Jolla Shores on the second day.

On Sunday, the group will hike with one-day trekkers from Old Town to catch the ferry to Coronado, then continue to Carol’s Cottage, a

GenerateHope care center in Coronado.

“The fundraising model from Freedom Challenge is to put yourself into a really difficult, physically challenging situation with the idea that you have to push on and finish and connect that in a lot of ways to the people we’re fighting for where they don’t get choices to quit,” said Hesse.

GenerateHope’s website says the organization serves as the local sponsor and host.

“This walk is a chance to stand

with both,” it continues. “Three days of sore feet and long miles draw us just a little closer to the experiences of the women we serve, who have endured so much more.”

According to Hesse each organization is a quarter of the way to respective goals of raising \$20,000.

“This is the first time doing this event,” said Hesse. “I’m hoping that it can evolve into an annual event.”

To learn more, visit: <https://generatehope.org/walk-for-hope>.

Contact: julieta@thecoronadonews.com

Village Theater will remain despite online concerns

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couldn’t say who they were.

The Village Theater first opened in 1947 and ran until the turn of the century when it was left abandoned for a decade, according to the Coronado Historical Association.

It was taken over by its current owners and, in 2011, Lance Alspaugh

was brought on as operator until he passed away last October. Book said there might be a misunderstanding that Alspaugh was the owner, and with him gone, a fear that the theater status might change.

“It’s not going to be another tragic, vacant scene,” Book reassured, referring to its 10-year closure in 2000. “I think it’s a big trigger for some long-time residents.”

Book acknowledged that the theater could use some big improvements. Until recently, tickets could only be bought at the ticket booth and there were extremely limited showtimes.

She also said the theater at 820 Orange Ave. was never advertised or marketed, and there is a lot of potential for the landmark building.

“I am really encouraged and inspired by the owners that are very committed to keeping this an iconic landmark,”

Without Village Theater, Brook explained, the city’s film festival would not be possible.

“Coronado is a one-theater town – and that theater is the heart of everything CIFF does,” Book said.

The festival requires a “top-of-the-line” facility to screen films in – which would be the theater, she said.

For screening purposes, Book explained, films have to be shown in a digital cinema package, which is the highest-quality format used in commercial theaters, or in eight millimeter, a vintage media type.

The film festival also uses the theater for monthly classics screenings and pre-released private screenings.

“Festivals really build their reputation on being able to offer filmmakers who have invested their life into these films to give them the greatest space possible to screen their films,” Book said.

“This iconic space is our home, and we are fully committed to its future as a vibrant, community-driven destination for film and the arts,” Book said.

“There’ll be some transitions. What those transitions look like might be a disruption in programming, but just rest assured that the theater will remain. There’s owners, they’re real,” she added with a light laugh.

Contact: madeline@thecoronadonews.com

“I am really encouraged and inspired by the owners that are very committed to keeping this an iconic landmark.”

- Merridee Book,
CEO of Coronado Island Film
Festival (CIFF)

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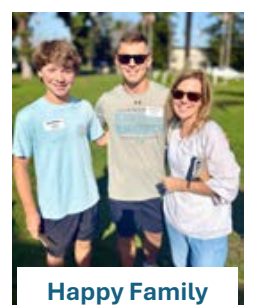


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The Baby Grand: Coronado's loudest new arrival

» Continued from Page 1

being called “Bland Diego.” Tafazoli said the mission hasn't changed; he wanted (and still wants) San Diego to be known for more than just its beaches. In Coronado, his goal remains the same.

“We have really strong opinions on what good art is, what good taste is, and I don't feel like that is being reflected on the island ... It feels like everyone is catering to tourists here. So we took sort of an anti-tourism approach. We're here for the people that live here,” Tafazoli said.

The \$17 million project, which took about five years to complete, includes two restaurants Night Hawk and Fallen Empire. Tafazoli said he took inspiration from his constant consumption of art.

When asked about the Roman-inspired statues, he said, “The most traversed metropolis in the world is Rome because it was done for a higher cause. It's in honor of the gods.... (Now) you still want to be there because it has a soul.”

The sand is from Turkey and the sinks are from Morocco. The clamshell headboards are custom-made from fiberglass, along with the custom wallpaper.

As for the outside bar, Tafazoli took inspiration from the Del's earlier Tent City, which operated from 1900 to 1938 and was designed for travelers who couldn't afford the Hotel del Coronado.

“This is our version of accessible luxury, and we're going to be cheaper than the Del in many ways,” he said.



Roman inspired statue at The Baby Grand in Coronado on May 14. Photo by Michelle Armas.

Rooms start at \$350 per night, while rates at the Del start at about \$600 per night.

Night Hawk is a Mediterranean-inspired restaurant with dishes such as a 14-day dry-aged tomahawk for \$190 and lobster squid-ink linguini for \$38, among many others.

The other restaurant, Fallen Empire, is a hidden oyster-and-champagne bar with seating for about 35 people. Its menu pairs playfully named cocktails with quotes from historical figures.

One drink, “To Be Loved & Hated,” combines Corsican aperitif, lemon, olive oil, honey, chamomile and champagne, followed by a quote from Sun Tzu: “In the middle of chaos, there is also opportunity.”

The rest of the menu includes seafood bites, such as caviar cones for \$32 and Kumamoto oysters for \$24.

Scotland Potter, 19, an opening night diner/guest at along with her mom, said she thinks The Baby Grand has a “Gen Z millennial vibe, the age range

that Coronado is missing.”

However, Tafazoli said his goal is not to attract a particular demographic or bring nightlife to Coronado. Instead, he hopes to create spaces that foster social connection in immersive environments.

“Great art should help you forget. If you do it right, you should get lost,” he said.

Contact: michelle@thecoronadonews.com

Coronado High School's class of 2026 co-valedictorians and salutatorian

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Maske, who had won the CIF championship game with her lacrosse team two days before, said she felt very proud.

“My hands were shaking a little bit because it was just such an exciting thing that had happened,” recalled Maske of the day she learned of the recognition.

Kristen Ereno, the district's lead

counselor, said weighted GPAs and other factors are taken into consideration in the calculation to determine the valedictorians and salutatorian.

According to Ereno, final GPAs are

processed on June 4.

“It was a shock, but at the same time it's just an incredible honor,” said Vinegrad. “I'm incredibly grateful and it's just validating to think that years of hard work have paid off.”

Stanford Engineering

Vinegrad said he hopes people remember him for standing up to protect the environment and making a difference in Coronado.

“Anyone can leave footprints as they move through life as proof that they were there and achieve success,” said Vinegrad. “But the people who have a legacy are the ones who make paths for other people to follow.”

In the last four years, Vinegrad, 17, completed over 500 service hours as an instructor at Blue Wave Surf School, interned for the Emerald Keepers conservation group, and served as an active member of the Junior Optimist Club as well as the Architecture and Design Club.

The Stop the Sewage club Vinegrad founded was recognized as “Student Club of the Year” for the third consecutive year in May.

Vinegrad said he founded the club three-and-a-half years ago to protect fellow students and the Coronado community from the toxic Tijuana River sewage flows into the ocean. Since then, the club has led protests, letter-writing campaigns and lobbied in Sacramento.

“The thing I'm most proud of is just watching younger members of Stop the Sewage grow and take leadership positions and rise up the ranks,” said Vinegrad. “It makes me feel so happy because it shows that I helped spark a legacy of student activism.”

This fall, Vinegrad plans to attend Stanford University majoring in sustainable architecture and engineering and minoring in economics. He hopes to blend passions for environmentalism and engineering to one day establish a firm as an entrepreneurial engineer.

“I hope that, like I've done at CHS with Stop the Sewage, I can continue to make a difference in communities that are facing environmental challenges and maybe I can help engineer solutions to those challenges,” said Vinegrad.

Vinegrad said he took the same capstone class twice and worked with classmates on two projects for a water filter and a trash-collecting robot. He credits his club's teacher advisor Abbie Hartge for fostering his passion for engineering.

“She's literally been one of my favorite teachers at CHS,” said Vinegrad. “She really made engineering seem like something fun and it made me want to come to the class every day.”

Vinegrad said his parents' values and motivation have led him to the present:

“I always just wanted to put my best foot forward and make them proud.”



Environmental science at UCLA

Reflecting on the last four years, Jost said she cherishes her friends, who got her through high school, and community.

“My parents and my sister, they were always a great support system,” said Jost. “We have some wonderful teachers at Coronado High School. Mr. Hoang, Mr. Chao, Ms. Hartge were some of my favorite teachers, and I think they really instilled in me a great motivation to do better.”

Jost was National Honor Society president, an Emerald Keepers intern for three years while serving as president of the club, and conducted research at UC-

SD's Airborne Institute. She also participated on the Islanders' golf, lacrosse and surf teams.

This fall, Jost heads to UCLA to study environmental science, joining her sister, Jaya, who was last year's valedictorian.

In the future, Jost, 18, is considering going into the medical field or law.

“I'm very excited because UCLA has such a strong program for both, so I can definitely look into both options,” said Jost. “Environmental science is just something

that I'm extremely passionate about, so I'm very excited that I get to study it in college.”



Bryn Mawr College athlete

Maske is committed to Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania where she will run cross country and play lacrosse. She plans to pursue studies in the sciences with a humanities minor.

“I kind of have an interest in everything,” said Maske.

In her sophomore year, Maske started the Astrophysics for Introverts club at Coronado High School, encouraging public speaking and discussions about science. She was also president of the CHS book club which she joined her freshman year.

Apart from cross country and lacrosse, Maske took part in the Coronado School of the Arts technical theatre, all of which impacted her in different ways.

“The experiences and the teammates

that I had really stand out to me and really impacted me,” said Maske. “Doing technical theater and the management of that

— and of course all of the people that I met there — those were really important connections to me.”

Maske said her freshman year of college will be key for determining her future plans.

“My mom and dad really were instrumental in providing me both the resources to get these accomplishments ... always being there for me,” she said.

Maske said she has learned a lot about making connections with new people and being more self-confident during her time in Coronado.

“You are the one that defines your success, and whatever that success is, if you work at it, you'll get there,” said Maske.



TOP LEFT: Daniel Vinegrad, a 2026 Coronado High School co-valedictorian, heads to Stanford University this fall. Photo by Daniel Vinegrad.

TOP RIGHT: Dhara Jost, a 2026 Coronado High School co-valedictorian, heads to UCLA this fall. Photo by Peter Jost. Provided by Dhara Jost.

ABOVE: Morgan Maske, the 2026 Coronado High School salutatorian, heads to Bryn Mawr College this fall. Photo by Ashley Wylie. Provided by Morgan Maske.

Contact: julieta@thecoronadonews.com

MILITARY

Dang Van Phuoc, AP combat photographer who lost an eye in the Vietnam War, dies at 91

Associated Press

Former Associated Press photographer Dang Van Phuoc, who was wounded multiple times during the Vietnam War and returned to capture the action even after losing an eye in an explosion, has died. He was 91.

Phuoc died on May 23 in Southern California after collapsing suddenly, his nephew, Van Nguyen, said.

Phuoc was hired in 1965 by AP's former photo chief, Horst Faas, to replace another local hire who had been killed on assignment. He quickly gained a reputation among other journalists and the U.S. and South Vietnamese troops for his uncanny ability to find the thick of the action.

Phuoc was born in a Vietnamese village near Quang Ngai, south of Da Nang, in 1935 and was the youngest of many siblings. When he was about 10, his father was killed by local members of the Viet Cong insurgency. A few years later, his mother died, leaving him homeless.

"He was a really very extraordinary man who grew up from very bad treatment when he was a boy," Nguyen said.

As a young man, Phuoc volunteered to help carry equipment at a Saigon film studio where Nguyen's mother worked as a cook. It was there that Phuoc first picked up a camera and taught himself photography, his nephew said.

Phuoc, who was dubbed the AP's "secret weapon" by his boss, was known for walking with the "point man" on combat patrols, putting him in position to get excellent photographs — but also exposing him to grave danger.

He was wounded at least five times



A wounded soldier is carried during fighting on Highway 13, north of Saigon, Oct. 14, 1972, where government troops are trying to reopen road to the Lai Khe base. AP Photo/Dang Van Phuoc, File.

during his 10 years with the AP in Vietnam, the first time just five months after he was hired. A grenade explosion left him with shrapnel in his chest and leg, but he was back on duty within a few months covering the drawn-out civil war between the Communist forces of North Vietnam and the U.S.-backed South Vietnamese military.

In 1968, he sustained a concussion when he was hit in the head by a rocket while covering street fighting in Saigon. That same year, Phuoc risked sniper fire to carry a wounded U.S. soldier to safety and received a commendation from the Ninth U.S. Army Infantry Division for saving the

man's life.

Phuoc lost his right eye in a grenade explosion in 1969 while on patrol with a Ranger battalion south of Da Nang, along Vietnam's central coast. He learned to shoot with one eye and returned to work.

In a 2011 interview for AP's archives, Phuoc described the difficulty of working with one eye when he had to look through the camera while also watching for silent hand gestures from the soldiers with whom he was patrolling.

His colleague in AP's Saigon bureau, Huỳnh Công "Nick" Út, described Phuoc as fearless and resourceful in the field. Behind the scenes, he was

a giving man and loyal friend who treated Út like a brother.

"Everyone loved him so much," Út said. "When I heard, I cried, 'My brother, he's gone.'"

Despite his reputation for shooting action, the photos that touched Phuoc were those that evoked the plight of civilians caught in the crossfire. In the 2011 interview, he compared himself to a "small grain of sand" who used his pictures to bring their stories to the world.

When Saigon fell in 1975, Phuoc fled with his family with little more than the clothes on their back and a bottle of milk. His family was rescued from a refugee camp in Guam with the help of AP reporter Linda Deutsch, who was covering the tent city, and flown to Camp Pendleton.

Phuoc then returned to Asia and worked briefly for the AP in Hong Kong before leaving the company and settling permanently in Southern California with his family.

He went on to become a professional portrait photographer in Orange County, which is home to Little Saigon, the largest single community of South Vietnamese refugees in the world.

His great-nephew, Kim Nguyen, looked back at the portraits Phuoc shot of him as a baby and reminisced about bringing his own son to see Phuoc's work on display at a museum in Vietnam.

In California, Phuoc was a founding member of The Artistic Photography Association and trained young photographers. He also was a civilian volunteer for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and in 1994 was named the county's volunteer of the year.

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SPORTS

Coronado High School girls' lacrosse wins second CIF title

After defending its title, the team prepares to welcome new players

BY JULIETA SOTO
The Coronado News

For a second year in a row, the Coronado High School girls' lacrosse team secured the CIF title in a 12-9 victory against La Costa Canyon High School on May 16.

"They performed so well in every game to be able to make it to that final," said coach Jada Cade.

Cade, who led the team to a victory alongside coach David Kiefer in their first year with the program, said towards the end, the pressure was building but it was a team effort.

According to Cade, the team's success last year carried over to this season with players already playing at an extremely high level.

"Coach Kiefer and I coached the girls when they were really young so we know them all really well, but we're kind of coming back into their lives at a brand new chapter," said Cade. "He deserves more credit than anyone for all of the thought and the preparation that he put into this season and mentoring young women."

Cade said Sydney Dunn, Breck Dunn and Maria Anaya were instrumental on both ends of the field with the attack and the defense.

"They deserve a lot of credit," she said, noting Sydney Dunn and Anaya were captains.

Cade highlighted Brooklyn Parma as a player tasked with defending the strongest attacker from the opposing team. Senior Morgan Maske, Cade said, is another amazing defender.



Coronado High School girls' lacrosse ends its 2026 season as CIF champions. Photo provided by Jada Cade.

"It was crazy," said Maske. "It was a very stressful game but it was a really, really great experience."

On the attack side, the team relied on senior Grace Elardo for key goals.

While returning players will take charge of next season, Cade said eight seniors, including the captains, will be missed next year.

Carrying the team next year are rising seniors Madie Collins, Avery Hunter, Lilah Cade, Brynn Belong,

Siena Kieffer and Breck Dunn whom Cade said were all starters in 2026.

"They're going to lead the team and they've already proven what incredible lacrosse players they are and we just can't wait to see what they do next year," she said.

The team's roster will also keep attacker Ellie Peterson, new goalie Yeva Sofi Cardoso Ivchenko and Teaghan Carpenito, who is crucial on the defense. Cade also expects some junior varsity players to move

up next season.

Cade said the overarching goal is ensuring Coronado women's lacrosse is one of the most formidable programs in San Diego.

"We love our community and our parents and all the hard work and the effort that everybody's put in to make it a great season," said Cade. "We did not get here on our own."

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Los Angeles Chargers safety Derwin James Jr. walks back to the locker room before an NFL football game against the Houston Texans, Dec. 27, 2025, in Inglewood, Calif. AP Photo/Kyusung Gong, File.

Chargers lock up Derwin James with a multiyear extension

Associated Press

Five-time Pro Bowl safety Derwin James and the Los Angeles Chargers have agreed to a multiyear extension.

The team announced the deal on May 26. James was entering the final year of his contract, and general manager Joe Hortiz had said that keeping the five-time Associated Press All-Pro was a priority.

James has helped the Chargers' defense rank fourth in the NFL in total defense over the last two years, allowing 304.8 total net yards per game. The team led the league in 2024 by allowing just 17.7 points per game.

James, who turns 30 in August, will look to replicate those numbers under first-year defensive coordinator Chris O'Leary, who took over when Jesse Minter was hired as Baltimore Ravens head coach.

He has started all 98 career regular-season games played, with 684 tackles, 19.0 sacks, 12 interceptions and 46 passes defended.

Chargers safety Derwin James turns focus back to football

Associated Press

Derwin James has accomplished plenty with the Los Angeles Chargers, including agreeing to a new three-year contract extension on May 26 that makes him the NFL's highest-paid safety once again.

Success in the playoffs, however, has been elusive during James' first seven seasons. He hopes to address the one gap in his otherwise stellar resume during the new deal, which now runs through 2029.

"Honestly, I want to win, win the Super Bowl so bad, man, so coming out here and just working, working, working hard as I can every day, and I feel like that's what I'm so focused on. The money's good, yeah, it's good, but I can't get my thoughts off being the last team playing," James said after the first day of organized team activities.

James has never reached the AFC championship game, let alone the Super Bowl, in four playoff appearances since the Chargers drafted him in the first round in 2018.

His only postseason win came at the end of James' rookie season when Los Angeles defeated the Baltimore Ravens in a wild-card game before losing to the eventual Super Bowl champion New England Patriots in the divisional round.

To help get over that hump, the Chargers chose to keep James for the long term because of his positional versatility and value as a leader.

In the past two seasons under head coach Jim Harbaugh and former defensive coordinator Jesse Minter, who became head coach of the Ravens in January, James had 187 tackles, 16 tackles for loss, 7 1/2 sacks, four interceptions, one forced fumble and



Los Angeles Chargers safety Derwin James Jr. speaks during a news conference after the NFL football team's practice Wednesday, May 27, 2026, in El Segundo, Calif. AP Photo/William Liang.

one fumble recovery. He was second team All-Pro in both seasons.

James' multifaceted deployment is not expected to change under new coordinator Chris O'Leary, who was the Chargers safeties coach in 2024 before spending last season in the college ranks at Western Michigan.

"I think he's going to let me know, like, whatever you need from me, and that role can change weekly. I feel like I'm a very versatile player, whatever you need from whether it's to guard the tight end, guard the running back, blitz this week, play in the post, play deep. Whatever the game plan, like, requires, I feel like I can help the team, so whatever he needs from me, honestly," James said.

Just as important as his ability to play multiple spots is James' enthusiasm on and off the field. Edge rusher Khalil Mack called James "one of the greatest teammates I've ever played with, just from the standpoint of the man."

"How he treats people, how he wants to be treated, and how he carries himself, he carries himself like that every day," Mack said.

"The energy is there, it's positive,

it's infectious throughout the building. So, yeah, you want to keep a guy like Derwin in any building. I'm sure any team around the NFL would want to keep him for a lifetime."

Justin Herbert back with the team

Justin Herbert took part in on-field workouts for the first time this spring after the Chargers quarterback skipped earlier segments of the voluntary offseason program to spend time with pop singer Madison Beer while she is on tour in Europe. Herbert and Beer took their relationship public in October, and he recently appeared in her new music video.

Harbaugh said he was happy to see Herbert take some personal time by returning support for Beer after she became a regular presence at Chargers home games this past season.

"He told me he wasn't going to be here for those two weeks, and my first reaction was, 'You need a ride to the airport?'" Harbaugh joked. "He's just been somebody that he's just here all the time. I mean, sometimes I wanted to shoo him out of the building."

SPORTS

San Diego Padres' Fernando Tatis Jr. celebrates with his teammates after hitting a home run during the fifth inning of a baseball game against the Washington Nationals, Saturday, May 30, 2026, in Washington.

AP Photo/
Daniel Kucin Jr.



Finally! Fernando Tatis Jr. crushes a 451-foot drive for his first home run of the season

Associated Press

Fernando Tatis Jr. finally connected for his first home run of the season — and boy was it a blast.

Tatis slugged a 451-foot solo shot to left field in the fifth inning against Washington on May 30, although the San Diego Padres went on to lose 9-4 to the Nationals. Tatis, who has five 20-homer seasons in his career and hit 42 in 2021, had not gone deep in 240 plate appearances before this game — the longest drought in the major leagues.

He then singled in the first inning and struck out in the third before his fifth-inning drive off Foster Griffin gave San Diego a 3-1 lead.

"I just knew right away," Tatis said. "About (expletive) time."

Tatis flipped his bat with his left hand and received a joyous welcome from his San Diego teammates after rounding the bases. It was his first homer since Sept. 27 against Arizona. "It was very exciting for every-

body," manager Craig Stammen said. "He's been carrying that burden. The team has been carrying that burden."

For a while it looked like the Padres would be able to celebrate a victory as well. They led 3-1 before the Nationals scored six runs in the seventh.

"There's no off days over here man," Tatis said. "This game will find a way how to still punish you."

Still, it had to be a relief for Tatis to hit a homer, especially such a prodigious one. The wind was blowing in from left field at 10 mph on Saturday, but Tatis' drive carried well into the seats in left, landing a few rows short of the concourse.

"Bet you he'll sleep a little better tonight, knowing that he has a little 'one' on his numbers. He has a lot in his career, but it's different," teammate Xander Bogaerts said. "Everyone knows what the deal is here. Everyone knows he has zero, so I think getting that kind of pressure off his back is nice."

Unsung American Zachary Svajda sweeps into 2nd week of the French Open and pays tribute to late dad

Associated Press

Unsung American tennis player Zachary Svajda is just as surprised as anyone that he's into the second week at the French Open.

After all, he had won only one tour-level match on clay before competing in the main draw at Roland Garros for the first time.

He had never even played on a red clay court until two years ago.

"I'm definitely shocked," the 85th-ranked Svajda said after beating established clay-courter Francisco Cerundolo 6-3, 6-4, 3-6, 4-6, 6-3 to reach the fourth round on Saturday. "It hasn't kicked in yet. It's crazy. I'm just taking it all in."

"I knew I would get good on the clay. I thought maybe in a few years, but I never expected right now," added the 23-year-old Svajda, who took a set off Novak Djokovic at the U.S. Open last year.

Svajda's last match before the French Open was a 6-2, 6-2 loss to 580th-ranked Max Hans Rehberg in the first round of qualifying for the Geneva Open.

So when Svajda finished off the 26th-ranked Cerundolo after slightly more than three hours on Court 14, he dropped down to the clay on his back and covered his face.

In October, Svajda's father and coach, Tom Svajda, died of cancer. May 30 was his dad's birthday.

"The emotions were insane. When I fell to the ground, it was just so special. ... I know he's proud of me," Svajda said of his father, who was a teaching pro at Pacific Beach Tennis Club in San Diego.

After winning the opening two sets, Svajda's legs started cramping as the



USA's Zachary Svajda swings during a first round singles tennis match at the French Open tennis tournament in Paris, May 26, 2026. AP Photo/Dave Shopland, File.

temperatures in Paris again soared above 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 degrees Celsius).

"I didn't want to show it too much, so I just tried to shorten the points a little bit more. He started to up his game, play well," Svajda said. "When I lost the third and fourth, I told myself, 'Just keep trusting, keep believing, and you never know what could happen.'"

"There was great atmosphere out there. The crowd really helped me."

Svajda's previous best Grand Slam result was reaching the second round of the 2021 U.S. Open. He next faces 14th-ranked Flavio Cobolli for a spot in the quarterfinals after the Italian eliminated American player Learner Tien 6-2, 6-2, 6-3.

Svajda has been celebrating his run in Paris in French style, posting a photo of himself on TikTok wearing a beret and holding a giant croissant.

"It's so much fun," he said. "That one is going viral."

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SPORTS

World Cup transit sticker shock hits fans with tickets to matches in some US host cities

Associated Press

Dubbed the “Sommermärchen,” or “Summer Fairy Tale,” the 2006 World Cup in Germany was a widely praised showcase for a modern, unified nation that was welcoming to fans from around the globe. Part of that success was the “KombiTicket,” which gave fans free access to local public transportation on match days.

Since then, World Cup host countries have invested heavily in getting fans to and from matches, especially in Russia in 2018, where even long-distance trains between host cities were free, and Qatar in 2022, where free metro access helped turn stadium-hopping into part of the tournament experience.

Then came the United States.

Already reeling from astronomical ticket prices, expensive flights and exorbitant hotel costs, fans have been outraged to discover that getting to some stadiums via rail will come with another hefty bill: \$98 round-trip train fares in New Jersey and \$80 in Massachusetts — trips that normally cost NFL fans \$12.90 and \$20, respectively.

Officials insist they aren't trying to rip off fans, but are instead just trying to cover the costs of security and expanded train service without being a drain on taxpayers. Yet fans see it as just another way that tournament organizers are burdening fans who are already paying huge sums to visit the U.S., a huge, car-centric country where public transit has long been an afterthought in many locales. Unlike past hosts, some state and local officials have been less willing to swallow the costs, arguing they should be



Fans of Argentina commute at the Moscow Metro on their way to the group D match between Argentina and Iceland at the 2018 soccer World Cup in the Spartak Stadium in Moscow, Russia, Saturday, June 16, 2018.

AP Photo/Ricardo Mazalan, File.

covered by FIFA, the international soccer body that stands to rake in billions of dollars from the event.

Finding a solution from overseas

“Planning for this World Cup has been a nightmare from start to finish,” said Scotland-born Rory Phillips-Hunter, a 37-year-old hospitality worker who lives in northern England. “I think it's the most inaccessible one there's ever been.”

Mystified by the lack of affordable options to travel 25 miles (40 kilometers) from Providence, Rhode Island, to Foxborough, Massachusetts, where Scotland's first two matches

will take place, Phillips-Hunter and some fellow Tartan Army members decided to figure it out themselves.

At about \$50 per person, the Scots have booked about 20 school buses to take nearly 1,000 members of the plaid-clad fan group to each match. They're even getting a police escort, all for just over half the cost of the \$95 bus fare that local officials are offering — a combined savings of more than \$85,000.

The \$95 bus fare was never going to break the bank, Phillips-Hunter knows, but he and so many other Scots are already paying huge sums to see their men's team compete in the World Cup for the first time in 28 years. Phillips-Hunter estimates it will take him two years to pay off the credit card debt he's taking on for his six-day trip to the U.S., including the \$1,350 he spent on a ticket for the Scotland-Morocco match.

Beyond anything, Phillips-Hunter is frustrated that a group of Scots from across the ocean were able to organize transportation for so much cheaper than what local officials offered.

“When I look at that difference in cost, that's just profits you're taking from us,” he said.

Who should pay?

Not every host city is approaching transportation the same way. Atlanta, Houston and Seattle have stadiums linked directly to their rail systems, and regular fares will apply. Miami-Dade County officials recently announced they will offer free shuttles to get fans to and from Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, about 15 miles (24 kilometers) from downtown Miami. Philadelphia, meanwhile, is offering free rides on the way back from the stadium, thanks to funding from FIFA sponsor Airbnb. And Kansas City, Missouri, is running \$15 shuttles.

The relatively high transit costs for the matches at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey and Gillette Stadium in Massachusetts are partly because they're in the suburbs, and many fans drive to the NFL games they typically host. But parking will be extremely limited during the World Cup due to expanded security perimeters, broadcast needs and lots being used as VIP areas, forcing far more fans to use public transit.

David Gogishvili is a senior researcher at Switzerland's University of Lausanne and studies how sports organizers put together big events like the World Cup.

He said it is standard practice for organizers like FIFA to pass much of the cost on to host countries. The difference this time is that the U.S. has “stronger and more independent” state and local officials who have been less willing to take on the cost and “bow to the wills of FIFA.”

“These costs should be borne by the organization that is earning money out of these events, which is FIFA. It should not always be the host

cities that take on all the expenses,” Gogishvili said, noting the soccer body's expected \$13 billion revenue from 2023-26.

New Jersey Gov. Mikie Sherrill, a Democrat, has called on FIFA to cover the transportation costs to matches.

But FIFA pushed back, arguing that no other global event has been asked to absorb such costs and that its initial agreements with host cities called for free transportation for fans to all matches. The agreements were later changed to allow cities to provide transit “at cost.”

The reason transit has been so accessible at recent World Cups is that host nations like Russia and Qatar have viewed the tournament as a “public relations exercise,” and subsidized transit accordingly, Gogishvili said.

Officials' anxiety over transit costs also comes amid growing concern that the promised World Cup economic boon won't materialize, with hotel room bookings not meeting expectations in most of the 11 U.S. cities hosting the tournament. A 2022 study co-authored by Gogishvili found that nearly every World Cup from 1966 through 2018 ran at a financial deficit.

Yonah Freemark, a researcher at the Washington-based Urban Institute think tank who specializes in transit issues, said World Cup fans from Europe and Asia will encounter less-advanced but costlier transit systems than they're used to back home.

Pointing to the transit pricing tied to matches in New Jersey and Massachusetts, Freemark said officials “are trying to get away with murder.” Wait times and transit access, he added, will likely fall well short of what many foreign visitors are used to.

Searching for a way to the stadium

Ynara Correa da Costa, a Brazilian systems analyst who lives outside Sao Paulo, will be attending her seventh World Cup.

Like many, she was stunned when officials initially proposed charging as much as \$150 for train fares from New York City to MetLife Stadium, where Brazil plays its opener against Morocco. The widespread shock and led New Jersey officials to lower the price to \$98 after securing additional funding.

But even the lowered price for a short train ride “is just not acceptable,” Costa said.

Costa was heartened when the local host committee said it had secured more buses to get to the stadium and slashed the price from \$80 to \$20. But there are only enough bus seats for 18,000 fans to get to the stadium, which holds about 82,500.

That seems far more manageable to Costa. Earlier, she wondered whether she and other cost-conscious fans might have to walk to MetLife Stadium, but that isn't possible.

“We'll go to the match, that I know,” Costa said. “But how? Let's see.”

Attention, Coronado Art Collectors and Art Enthusiasts



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