The San Diego Union-Tribune

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City unveils design for O.B. icon's replacement

By Emily Alvarenga

A new cafe, bait shop and restaurant. Interconnected pathways that curve into the water and split into different levels to let people experience the ocean in different ways.

Preferred plan would extend pier farther into the sea and make room for a cafe, bait shop and restaurant

key design concepts that the city unveiled Satur- design concept was day as part of its efforts to presented to the public And a design that builds on reimagine the iconic but at Liberty Station at the the original and extends crumbling Ocean Beach fourth workshop in a series

determined the aging structure was at the end of its service life. The pier has been shuttered since October because of storm The final, preferred damage.

tion, after a 2018 study

Although the plan is not yet certain, both the community and city prefer to replace the pier because Pier and determine its of community events to get of the ongoing cost of input on a long-term solu-See PIER on Page A9

Gaza war turns spotlight on pipeline of U.S. arms to Israel

Military agreement dating to 2016 guarantees support over 10 years

By Michael Crowley & Edward Wong

Obama administration sealed a major military agreement with Israel that committed the United States to giving the country \$38 billion in arms over 10 years.

"The continued supply of the world's most advanced weapons technology will ensure that Israel has the ability to defend itself from all manner of threats," President Barack Obama said.

At the time, the agreement was uncontroversial. It was a period of relative calm for Israel, and few officials in Washington expressed concern about how the U.S. arms might one day be used.

Now, that military aid package, which guarantees Israel \$3.3 billion per year to buy weapons, along with an additional \$500 million annually for missile defense, has become a flashpoint for the Biden administration. A itative military edge" vocal minority of lawmakers

in Congress backed by liberal activists are demanding that President Joe Biden restrict In the fall of 2016, the or even halt arms shipments to Israel because of its military campaign in the Gaza Strip.

Biden has been sharply critical of what he on one occasion called "indiscriminate bombing" in Israel's war campaign, but he has resisted placing limits on U.S. military aid

The United States and Israel have had tight military relations for decades, stretching across multiple Democratic and Republican administrations. Israel has purchased much of its critical equipment from the United States, including fighter jets, helicopters, air defense missiles, and both unguided and guided bombs, which have been dropped in Gaza. Legislation mandates that the U.S. government help Israel maintain force superiority – or its "qual-See ISRAEL on Page A10

One union spent big on election of influential panel

Laborers group invested \$400,000 on picking county Dems' central committee

By Jeff McDonald

for seats on a political party's central committee were low-key, low-dollar affairs. The candidates were mostly rank-and-file voters whose charge was recruiting newcomers to public office and shaping the party platform in ways that best reflected their worldview, be they Democrats, Republicans or members of lesser-known parties. All of that changed significantly in the run-up to the March primary election, when unprecedented amounts of money were spent to promote favored candidates, including dozens of politicians who already hold public office and their aides. The primary campaign saw public officials like state

Sen. Brian Jones, county Supervisor Joel Anderson Historically, campaigns and San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria all elected to their party's central committee. San Diego council President Sean Elo-Rivera and Councilmembers Stephen Whitburn, Vivian Moreno and Raul Campillo also campaigned for the county Democratic Party central committee.

farther into the sea. These are some of the future.

ABOVE: The nearly 58-year-old Ocean Beach Pier has been closed since October because of storm damage. A rendering shows the final, preferred design concept for a reimagined pier. NELVIN C. CEPEDA / U-T & CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Women lead in Mexico presidential race

But analysts see sexism permeating as polls, others ask: Are Mexicans ready?

By Sara España

Mexicans ready for a female president?

As two women lead in Mexico's presiden-

across Mexico. But it is also a sample of the sexism MEXICO CITY – Are and "macho" culture that continues to permeate Xóchitl Mexico, according to polit-Galvez ical analysts.

tial race, the question has Mexicans are ready - or or, in this case, whether appeared in polls, debates, not - for a female pres- the two female candidates media and conversations ident carries an implicit are prepared to govern the



Claudia Sheinbaum

The question of whether doubt of whether a woman

country, said Julia Zulver, a researcher from the Latin American Centre at Oxford University and the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

"Questioning someone for their level of studies, for their experience, for their public policies, that is valid," Zulver said. "But

questioning two women who have studied, who See MEXICO on Page A8

All but Elo-Rivera won.

Many candidates won with help from the Laborers' International Union of North America Local 89, the brotherhood of construction workers that invested more than \$400,000 in slate mailers, door hangers and other political messages over the first two months of 2024.

The union's strategy is not unheard of, but critics worry the trend could divert See **DEMOCRATS** on Page A8



SPORTS

And then there were two: UConn, Purdue

What started as March Madness is set for a final game Monday. The No. 1 seed in the East, UConn, will meet the Midwest No.1 seed, Purdue, for the NCAA Tournament championship in men's basketball. D1



Centers Zach Edey, left, and Donovan Clingan will lead their teams in Monday's championship game in Glendale, Ariz.



ALEJANDRO TAMAYO / U-T

BUSINESS SeaWorld celebrates 60 years

As SeaWorld San Diego embarks on a yearlong celebration of its six decades in business, much has changed. The marine park on Mission Bay has seen triumphs and tumult through expansion, thrill rides, bad publicity and a pandemic, yet it sees a bright future in a brand that is now worldwide. Cl

DIGITAL ACTIVATION

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LISA DEADERICK COLUMNIST

Psychologist to discuss Palestinian trauma

Psychologists, researchers magnitude of the traumatic and mental health professionals have been working with civilian populations in Palestine for years, documenting the effects of their experiences with dispossession and violence. The latest violence between Hamas and Israel that began Oct. 7 has only exacerbated the harm experienced by Palestinian civilians, particularly those in Gaza.

"As a practitioner in Gaza, my first visit was in 2009, after the first major attack on Gaza (Israeli military operations from December 2008 to January 2009, according to Human Rights Watch). At that time, I was involved mainly as a psychologist and clinical supervisor in a primary school at Jabalia refugee camp, where I used to work with the teachers, and the trauma that the teachers were living with during the attack," says Guido Veronese, a clinical psychologist and associate professor of clinical and community psychology at the University of Milano-Bicocca in Italy. His research and expertise is on extreme and collective traumas in areas affected by political and military violence and human rights violations. "What is quite evident is the huge and impressive

experience for Gaza people. . So the continuous and

the constant presence of traumatic experiences are totally reshaping the lives of individuals and community there in Gaza."

Veronese will be part of an online panel discussion with Marwan Diab, head of research and studies at the Gaza Community Mental Health Program in Palestine, from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday in Warren Auditorium at the University of San Diego as part of the school's "Spring 2024 Gaza@USD Teach-In" focusing on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict with film screenings, panel discussions, and other events. This week's discussion will center on "Colonial and Collective Trauma: The Invisible Wounds Among Generations in Gaza,' featuring their years of field research and reporting on the mental health needs of Palestinian civilian adults and children in the region. Veronese took some time to talk about colonial and collective trauma, shifting from Westernized tools for addressing mental health to those incorporating human rights and social justice, and why he says the health system in Gaza is near collapse. (This interview

has been edited for length and clarity. For a longer version of this conversation, visit sandiegouniontribune. com/sdut-lisa-deaderick-staff.html)

Q: Can you talk a bit about your work with trauma patients in Gaza? What have you been seeing/hearing as a result of doing such work?

A: From 2009 to now, we have about 15 years of work there and at least three major wars and attacks (I'm excluding this last one where, of course, all of my work has been interrupted.) Take into consideration that kids who are now 14 years old have experienced at least three or four major wars. I totally transformed my work from the beginning to now, even suggesting that the (mental health treatment) instruments that we are exporting from the global north are not effective with people traumatized there. The major difference is that we work in mainly a clinical manner to try and solve the so-called post-traumatic reactions to traumatic events. If you look at the Palestinian context, mainly the Gaza context, you cannot ever reason in terms of "post" – it's always a continuous, ongoing experience of threat and

they are not post-traumatic experiences. So, the fact that there is no "post-" is totally making our instruments very ineffective and sometimes even dangerous if we export them in very standardized, Western-informed ways.

What I learned is that we need a continuous exchange in cooperation with the local experts, moving from an individual idea of healing to a more collective one. Taking into consideration the traumatic experiences of at least three generations of Palestinians since 1948 (the war that led to the declaration of Israel as an independent state in Palestine), these are transmitted generationally and require thinking of an effective intervention in Gaza that comes from a collective and generational perspective.

Q: You'll speak on "Colonial and Collective Trauma: The Invisible Wounds Among Generations in Gaza" this week. Can you talk about what colonial and collective trauma each look like? A: There are three

dimensions that are reshaping the construct of trauma, which is not related to our evidence-based and scientifically informed perspective on trauma. When

we talk about collective trauma, it means that the Palestinian suffering cannot be considered just in terms of individual psychological reactions to traumatic experiences. In fact, the Palestinian society is collectively bound by a long-term experience of oppression, dispossession and a sense of collective insecurity that the Palestinian suffering is a social suffering. Even the individual reactions are connected to a history of suffering, which is not just implying the present, but it's something that is totally inscribed in the past and it will inform the future of the Palestinian population in general.

Colonial trauma is because of the sense of dispossession, the fact that the majority of the Palestinian population is a displaced population. They are not living, anymore, in their original towns, but they had to move in three major waves (because now there is a third wave of displacement). The first is in 1948, when at least 700.000 Palestinians had to leave their homes and move when the first attack was supported by the British army and was pushing the Palestinians to leave their homes and to move to concentrate in the

territories that nowadays are known as the West Bank of Palestine. The second wave of displacement was during the Six Days War in '67 when, from the Jerusalem area and surrounding, a huge number of Palestinians were pushed in the territory now known as the Gaza Strip. This was another experience of dispossession. Then, the third one, what happened in the past six months when at least 1 million or more people were moved from the northern Gaza Strip to the southern part of the Gaza Strip.

The third one is transgenerational trauma; the fact that this sense of dispossession, this sense of insecurity, this sense of unsettlement is transferred from generation to generation. Nowadays, the people that have to flee their homes from the north of Gaza are reexperiencing something that, generationally, has been transmitted by the grandparents to the parents, and from the parents to the new generation of kids. That's a way that is expanding the sense of uncertainty and unsettlement in the native Palestinian population.

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STEVEN P. DINKIN A PATH FORWARD Youth-led movement confronts homelessness in San Diego

According to psychologists, the human brain is wired to stereotype, as a way to categorize and process information. Given the inputs bombarding us daily, I understand the desirability. But when we stereotype, what we gain in convenience comes at a cost: We lose the nuance and texture that define each of us, enriching the human experience.

Generational stereotypes lead us to believe that all boomers (born in 1946-1964) are selfish and stuck in their ways. Generation X (1965-1980) is cynical and disaffected. Millenials (1981-1996) are entitled and lazy. Generation Z (1997-2012) is screen-addicted and void of interpersonal skills

A group of San Diego high school students is dispelling the Generation Z trope. The Lucky Ducklings are committed to giving back

for assurances we'll be fine. The National Conflict Resolution Center selected the group as this year's Local Peacemaker Award winner.

When they're not in school, the Ducklings are working to alleviate homelessness in San Diego. The idea was hatched three years ago, when Lucky Duck Foundation board member Jason Levin imagined a youth contingent connected to the cause.

To the board's surprise and delight, the idea has turned into a movement. Today, there are 10 Lucky Duckling chapters in high schools across San Diego County, with 150 student volunteers

Will Shea is the Ducklings' senior program manager. He says it's all about engaging the next generation of "difference makers" and instilling the importance of philanthropy. Ducklings' activity calendar, you wonder how they manage to get their school work done. They serve meals at local shelters; sort and distribute clothing and supplies; and conduct online fundraising campaigns.

When the Ducklings aren't doing hands-on projects, they are thinking about strategies to address homelessness. They hosted three events last year: an innovation competition, part of their annual symposium on youth homelessness; and two leadership workshops, along with the Lucky Duck Foundation. The featured speaker was Stedman Graham, author of "Identity Leadership."

One of the workshops was delivered to a group of more than 50 youths who have experienced homelessness, in partnership with the Youth Assistance

Heather Lezon is the executive director and founder of YAC and a member of their board. She applauds the Ducklings' involvement with YAC and is impressed by their talent, commitment and willingness to work hard. Lezon shares my optimism, saying the Ducklings give her hope for the future.

Jack Levin, a junior at La Jolla Country Day School, will be accepting the Local Peacemaker Award on behalf of the Lucky Ducklings. He will be accompanied by Dani Lotzof, a senior at Canyon Crest Academy. The pair are amazed and inspired by the other students who have joined the movement, eager to "share their luck" with their less fortunate neighbors

With guidance from the Lucky Duck Foundation, the Ducklings are learning about the causes and impacts of homelessness. The reality seems especially harsh when they interact

with kids their own age, seeing the effect on their lives and learning how easy it can be to slip into homelessness.

The numbers are significant: According to San Diego Youth Services, more than 2,000 youth experience homelessness in San Diego County. They make up about 20 percent of the county's unsheltered population.

I asked Jack and Dani what advice they have for San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria, who has implemented a comprehensive strategy to address the homelessness crisis here. Jack believes we need a "laser focus" on the mental health of families. He says, "It all begins with how a person grows up. Most people living on the street now once had a home and family."

To Dani, it's all about

into shelters.

You can call it youthful optimism, but neither student declared the problem insurmountable.

The Ducklings will be accompanied on stage by Will Shea and Drew Moser, executive director of the Lucky Duck Foundation. Board member Dan Shea will join the group; in 2018, NCRC honored him, along with the late Peter Seidler, as peacemakers for their pioneering work to address homelessness in our city. It will be a full circle

moment.

NCRC's Peacemaker Awards dinner honoring the Lucky Ducklings and other peacemakers will be held Saturday at 5:30 pm. For information, or to register, visit ncrconline.com.

Dinkin is president of the National Conflict Resolution Center, a San Diego-based group working to create solutions to challenging issues, including *intolerance and incivility.*

to the San Diego community. If you wonder about our country's future, you can look to the Ducklings

It's not hard, Shea notes, as "they are so compassionate to start with."

When you look at the

Coalition. Shea says they appreciated Graham's message: to lead others, you must first lead yourself.

resources: dedicated efforts to create safe space for all, in part by turning empty buildings and warehouses

EXAMINER From Page 1

tigated by the office in 2022 and 4,161 cases in 2023.

The workload surge hit particularly hard because it came at a time when the found itself short staffed.

By May 2022, the county's 5 thousand-----Public Defender complained to the Union-Tribune that the delays were gumming up the court system.

"It takes at least six months to get medical examiner reports. Which makes investigating and negotiating homicides almost impossible within that time period," then-Public Defender Randy Mize said at the time.

At a public hearing that 3 month, a woman waiting to learn details about her brother's death complained to county supervisors about how painful it was to not have answers for months.

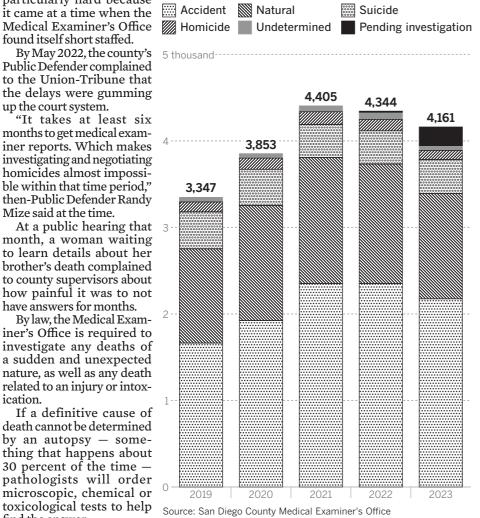
By law, the Medical Exam-² iner's Office is required to investigate any deaths of a sudden and unexpected nature, as well as any death related to an injury or intoxication.

If a definitive cause of death cannot be determined by an autopsy – something that happens about 30 percent of the time pathologists will order microscopic, chemical or toxicological tests to help find the answer.

In cases where toxicology tests and autopsy reports aren't completed promptly, the office issues death certificates with the cause of death listed as "pending" – a detail that could cause delays if, say, an insurance policy has a clause denying payment if the insured person dies from jobs.

Medical examiner caseload by manner of death The Medical Examiner's Office reached a peak caseload

in 2021, largely due to a rise in accidental drug overdose deaths, causing a backlog in processing time. Since then cases have slowly receded.



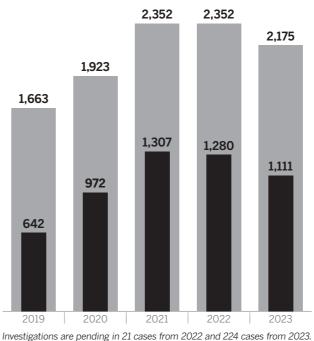
suicide within a certain time frame. The past two years, Chief

Medical Examiner Steven Campman sought help from the Board of Supervisors, seeking more staff and pay increases to help fill vacant

Drug and alcohol deaths

Illicit drugs, medication and alcohol are attributed to causing roughly half of all accidental deaths in recent years.

All accidental deaths Drug-medication-alcohol



Source: San Diego County Medical Examiner's Office

64 of the jobs were filled, with four employees in the county also hired a toxicology lab manager and increased lab staffing from five to 11 funded positions, a county spokesperson said. of late February.

complaints about the slow turnaround, county managers turned to an outside laboratory — NMS Labs, hired under a one-year contract that need such testing. Moving forward, officials not to exceed \$98,560 - to hope the in-house toxicology get hundreds of toxicology tests completed.

At the peak of the toxicol-

As of late February, a ogybacklogin January 2023, county spokesperson said there were 1,678 cases waiting for results.

By late February, the process of being hired. The department was able to complete more than 90 percent of its testing within a standard 90-day window,

Its backlog was down to 471 as of early March, In 2022, in response to however, a spokesman cautioned that number changes. The county gets around 240 cases monthly

> lab becomes more efficient and effective by using grants to purchase new equipment *sduniontribune.com*

that will allow it to update procedures.

A county spokesperson said the new methods and processes will allow the lab to detect a wider range of drugs using a smaller sample, will increase its testing sensitivity and will improve turnaround times.

A contract with an outside lab, in effect in 2023, will remain in place through June, and is available if needed, the spokesperson said.

Campman turned down requests to be interviewed for this story. In a statement he said he welcomed the improved turnaround times. "We still have work to do but are progressing and I am pleased," he said. "I am proud of all our staff and am grateful for the support from the County."

While there remains an ongoing nationwide shortage of pathologists, Campman said the county is attracting candidates and has leveraged contracts where needed.

The county District Attorney's Office acknowledged prosecutors sometimes have to wait months for autopsy and toxicology reports to be completed, but a spokesperson said the office is able to meet deadlines in homicide cases in the court system.

"We know that like all of us, they have been working tirelessly in the pursuit of justice," spokesperson Tanya Sierra said in a statement. "Their work is a critical part of homicide cases and the Medical Examiner's Office has been timely with cases that have a court deadline."

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MICHELLE GUERRERO U-T The department had 60

budgeted positions in fiscal year 2022 – although at one point, seven of the jobs were vacant. Its budget grew to cover 66 positions the next year and currently stands at 77 positions, county officials said.

nine of which were filled as

MICHELLE GUERRERO U-T