



THE INVISIBLE HOMELESS:



THEY HAVE A JOB,
A CAR BUT NO BED

By Blake Nelson
UNION-TRIBUNE

On a Wednesday morning, Treasure Colladay manned the front desk at a La Jolla hotel. The 29-year-old wore a collared shirt and her hair was pulled into a ponytail. She didn't look out of place in the small lobby, where an ocean breeze drifted through glass doors and pamphlets advertised tours of wineries. Nor would Colladay stand out later when the shift ended and she walked toward her two-door red Mustang. The only detail that didn't match her surroundings was the fact that, at the end of the day, Colladay might have to sleep in that Mustang.

One mother and daughter sleeping in a Mission Bay parking lot do not earn enough money to cover a deposit on an apartment

Since early June, Colladay and her 69-year-old mother, Kaitlan Colladay, have often spent their nights in a Mission Bay parking lot. Before that, the pair bounced between Motel 6s around the county. They are, quite literally, homeless. Yet they've largely remained invisible to the systems meant to aid people like them. "The face of homelessness has changed a lot over the last decade," said Gilberto Vera, deputy director of the Legal Aid Society of San Diego. "It can be really difficult for households who could afford the rent but aren't able to move into units because what they can't afford is that big down payment."

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Above: Parked in a public lot in a local beach area, Treasure Colladay, 29, leans in on the driver's side of the car to speak with her mother, Kaitlan Colladay, 69. On the June 19 evening, the two were preparing to sleep in their cars. **NELVIN C. CEPEDA / U-T**

Critics: S.D. cage-like enclosures fall outside jail norms

Some inmates known for violence kept in isolation during out-of-cell time

By Kelly Davis
UNION-TRIBUNE

Unit 5C inside the George F. Bailey Detention Facility, San Diego's largest jail, resembles a typical jail module: white walls, concrete floors and two levels of cells with sea foam green doors. The unit's large dayroom is dotted with bolted-down metal tables and stools. But the dayroom is largely unused. State regulations require jails to offer every person in custody at least 10 hours of weekly out-of-cell time — seven in a dayroom and three in a rec yard. In 5C, which houses people who've been placed in "administrative separation" due to a propensity for violence, each person spends their dayroom time alone in a small cage-like metal enclosure. The caged area is connected to another cell and a small shower. There's also a hands-free phone. "Because no one is allowed in the dayroom, a person cannot even converse with another incarcerated person through their cell door; the lack of human contact is extreme," wrote Dr. Pablo Stewart, a psychiatrist and expert witness in a class-action lawsuit seeking to improve conditions in San Diego jails.

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Judge OKs sweeping affordable housing deal

70% of such projects to be built in areas of San Diego not considered low-income

By Jeff McDonald
UNION-TRIBUNE

A federal judge has approved a settlement reached earlier this year between the city of San Diego and plaintiffs who accused planners of concentrating their affordable housing efforts in poorer communities. Judge Jinsook Ohta signed off on the agreement late last week and will maintain jurisdiction over the long-running case to make sure the city follows through with implementing terms of the deal. The agreement could fundamentally change the way San Diego locates affordable housing projects going forward. Among other concessions, San Diego agreed to place at least 70% of all future affordable housing projects in moderate-, high- and highest-resource neighborhoods rather than in lower-income areas. Under the deal, the city will use its community plan updates to "increase residential densities in higher resource areas to promote affordable housing in those areas

See **HOUSING** on Page A9



DON HERTEL

ARTS & CULTURE

Belmont Park celebrates its 100th year

The boardwalk playground of shops, eats, rides and amusements known as Belmont Park opened 100 years ago this week. First called the Mission Beach Amusement Center, its name was changed in the 1950s. Check out some historic images of San Diego's iconic seaside fun place. **E12**

Israeli strikes kill dozens in Gaza as truce prospects grow

Talks are reportedly slated to be held this week in Washington

By Wafaa Shurafa & Sam Mednick
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Israeli strikes killed at least 72 people across Gaza overnight and into Saturday, health workers said, as cease-fire prospects were said to be improving after 21 months of war. Three children and their parents were killed in an Israeli strike on a tent camp in Muwasi near the southern city of Khan Younis. They were struck while sleeping, relatives said. "What did these children do to them? What is their fault?" said the children's grand-



Relatives mourn over the body of a loved one killed in Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip on Saturday. **JEHAD ALSHRAFI / AP**

mother, Suad Abu Teima, as others knelt to kiss their bloodied faces and wept. Some placed red flowers into the body bags. Also among the dead were 12 people near the Palestine

Stadium in Gaza City, which was sheltering displaced people, and eight more in apartments, according to staff at Shifa Hospital. More than 20

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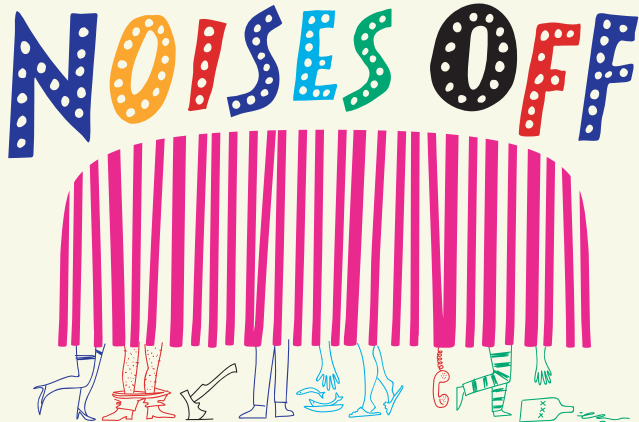
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A PATH FORWARD STEVEN P. DINKIN

This summer, let’s reduce our smartphone obsession

Summer, to me, is a time for restoration.

Sure, it’s been a while since I had a real summer vacation (as in the months-long break between academic years), but the idea has stuck with me. The summer months — with their longer daylight hours and perceptibly slower pace — invite us to replenish our energy, focus and well-being.

Summertime restoration comes in many forms: more time outdoors, enjoying nature; more movement, like walking or swimming; more daylight to (finally) organize the garage. I’ve been playing doubles tennis once a week.

No matter your preference, summer seems like the perfect time to take a break from smartphones. I’m not suggesting we abandon them altogether — just reduce our obsession. I have to believe the benefits (like being more present) will stick with us long after the season ends.

Healthy Screens is a platform built on validated scientific tools for assessing and managing smartphone use. Its global study on smartphone addiction identified the 10 most effective strategies to reduce

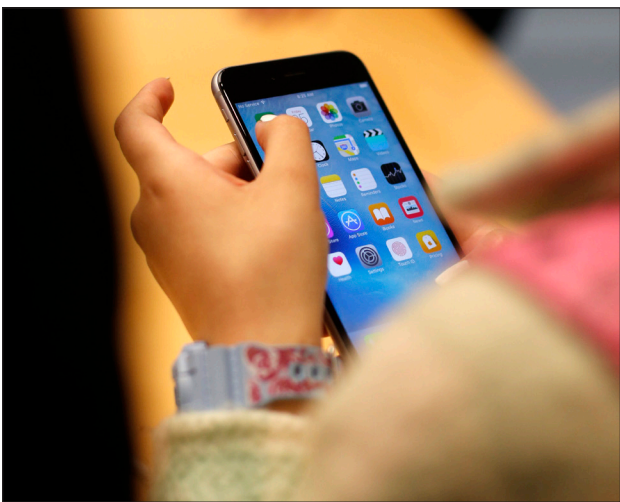
smartphone use. These are the top three: reduce notifications, enable screen time tracking, and put your phone away while sleeping.

You can measure your own smartphone addiction (and compare it to 60,000 people from 195 countries) on the Healthy Screens website: healthyscreens.com.

Whichever habit you want to change, awareness is the first step. Look at actual usage data and set limits for your screen time. If you’re a parent, model the healthy behavior you want your children to adopt.

Among teenagers, there is an uptick in smartphone usage during the summer months, when they have more free time and less structured days — not to mention a desire to maintain social connections. Already, on average, teens spend five hours a day on their phones accessing social media apps.

Authors Jonathan Haidt, Will Johnson and Zach Rausch have been studying the “tensions in technology” playing out in American families. In a recent New York Times article, the trio shared findings from a nationally representative



Teens spend an average of five hours a day on their phones accessing social media apps. **AP FILE**

survey of 1,013 parents with children under 18. They wrote, “We find widespread feelings of entrapment and regret. Many parents gave their children smartphones and social media access early in their lives — yet many wish that social media had never been invented.”

When it comes to smartphones, parents often fall into a “collective action trap” — the feeling that they have to give in because “everyone else” has done so. The authors suggested four norms to counter it, includ-

ing phone-free schools, where students are separated from devices throughout the school day.

Before the summer break, I had an opportunity to meet with high school students in the San Dieguito Unified High School District, where a no-phone policy was implemented last year. (High schoolers are allowed to use their devices during the lunch period, however.) To a person, they said the policy has increased their engagement in learning — in part

because their friends were away from social media, too.

In the same vein, some summer camps have gone device free; at overnight camps, the policy applies around the clock for weeks or longer. For a recent Washington Post article about this trend, author Caitlin Gibson spoke with an expert on adolescent screen use who listed the upsides: stronger relationships with peers and “less bullying, less gossip and less drama.”

Gibson also talked to a young woman, Kate, who treasured the phone-free day she experienced as a 16-year-old counselor in training. Kate said, “We were all together in the party room, just talking, hanging out, playing Uno, having so much fun.” She realized this was happening because no one was on their phone. “I just sat there for a moment, and I thought: Wow, we would never get this close; we would never have these random conversations about our schools or our favorite movies or these funny little moments,” she declared.

Kate identified what I think is the single biggest

benefit of curbing our smartphone obsession: reclaiming the lost art of conversation. In our work at the National Conflict Resolution Center, we hear about the discomfort people feel in their one-on-one interactions — whether talking to a colleague at work or a neighbor at a community picnic.

We saw it last fall, in the loneliness of students on a large university campus.

Conversation is foundational to human connection. As we share our thoughts, experiences and emotions with others — and they with us — we build trust and the sense of belonging. We gain insights into different perspectives and develop empathy, which serves us well when conflict arises.

Simply put, conversation can be as restorative as the summer sunshine.

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 learn about NCRC’s programming, visit ncrconline.com

SANDAG

From Page 1

comment this past week on the arbitration judge’s ruling. They also would not discuss why the case is being adjudicated in private arbitration rather than a public court of law.

“We don’t comment on pending claims,” the agency said in a statement.

Warrem first raised her concerns privately in 2023, alerting bosses and co-workers that data coming from contractor ETAN Tolling Solutions was not matching up at a time they were being asked by outside auditors to confirm that the numbers were accurate.

At one meeting, Chief Financial Officer Andre Douzjdjian purportedly became more upset and “gave

claimant a ‘death stare,’ causing her to fear for her job and stop talking,” the ruling states.

Instead of correcting the problem, Warrem alleged, Douzjdjian disputed her findings and directed staff to tell auditors that the data was sound.

The arbitration ruling quoted Douzjdjian saying he had no faith in his finance director.

“I believe that Lauren is a liability to the agency, cannot be trusted and has very negative motives that could really damage the agency, especially under the difficult circumstances that we are already in with ETAN,” he said.

Days later, Douzjdjian and CEO Hasan Ikhrata agreed to fire Warrem.

The allegations burst into public view once Warrem filed her lawsuit that fall.

It also jump-started

an angry response from SANDAG board members who had not been told about the accounting errors as well as an FBI investigation.

Within months, all of the top leaders of the \$1.3 billion planning agency were gone.

CEO Ikhrata had already announced his resignation by then and left at the end of December 2023.

Douzjdjian left early in 2024, as did senior deputies Coleen Clementson and Ray Major.

Longtime Caltrans official Mario Orso was chosen last year to take over as SANDAG chief executive.

The 29-page order from retired Superior Court Judge Jeffrey Barton, who is supervising the arbitration, also included testimony from other SANDAG executives who agreed that the Warrem termination was unwarranted.



A lawsuit accuses SANDAG of overcharging users of the state Route 125 toll road, which it operates. **U-T FILE**

“Major testified that he believed claimant was retaliated against for ‘exposing things that would make SANDAG look bad in the public,’” the ruling states.

“We were in the middle of

an election year looking to raise another half-cent sales tax, and any bad news that got out about SANDAG is bad for that particular initiative,” it also states.

Barton said he considered

all of the evidence before rejecting the motion for summary judgment.

“Claimant has also pointed to sufficient evidence to support the reasonableness of her belief that failing to provide all relevant information to the external auditors was illegal,” he wrote.

“In opposition to the summary judgment motion, plaintiff identified a number of statutes and regulations that may have been violated.”

The Warrem accusations also sparked a lawsuit filed by motorists who allege they were wrongly billed by SANDAG after driving on the 10-mile toll-road section of state Route 125. That case remains ongoing.

Not long after the flawed toll-road software was made public, the regional planning agency also hired a new vendor to manage the toll system.

CARLSBAD

From Page 1

request, the staff is looking at downtown areas where red curbs can be removed safely to provide additional parking, Frank said.

So far that has the potential to add 10 spaces on streets near the Barrio project.

Also, more could be added by converting some of the wider streets from parallel to diagonal parking.

That wasn’t enough for

the City Council.

“I have previously stated I don’t want any parking spaces lost in the Barrio,” said Melanie Burkholder, whose council district includes the area.

She suggested the City Council postpone the proposed \$5.7 million construction contract with Palm Engineering Construction Co. and bring the issue back with details of possible alternatives such as speed humps.

“I also have concerns about parking space

throughout the Village and Barrio areas,” said Councilmember Teresa Acosta.

In recent weeks, she’s heard from residents opposed to the traffic circles, she said.

“In the last year it seems to be that traffic circles are not in vogue,” Acosta said. “They are not as popular as they once were.”

Carlsbad was allocated a federal grant of \$5 million in 2022 for the Barrio improvements, of which \$4 million was for traffic circles and \$1 million was for improved

lighting as part of the project, said Jason Haber, intergovernmental affairs director.

The city will lose the \$4 million if the money is not spent by the end of September, Haber said, and any changes to the traffic circles would require a redesign that would push the project past the deadline.

The \$1 million for lighting is not in jeopardy.

This month, the City Council voted unanimously to remove two traffic circles, or small roundabouts, installed in 2013 at intersec-

tions on Kelly Drive. Residents there said the circles encourage speeding and create a safety hazard for children walking to nearby Kelly Elementary School. They will be replaced by all-way stops at the resurfaced intersections.

This year, the City Council hit the brakes on the long-planned installation of a roundabout to replace the traffic signals at the beachfront intersection of Tamarack Avenue and Carlsbad Boulevard.

That project also faced

widespread community opposition. The council also has said that sometime soon it will reconsider a still unbuilt roundabout that it approved in 2023 for the intersection of Cannon Road and Carlsbad Boulevard.

Traffic circles are different from roundabouts, although the terms often are used interchangeably.

Traffic circles require less space and generally are placed in residential areas.

Roundabouts are larger and are installed on busier streets and thoroughfares.

SMOLENS

From Page 1

he said.

He suggested there’s a broader dynamic at play for environmental groups, and not just because of Trump’s election.

“The pendulum definitely has swung very far to the right when it comes to the environment,” he added.

On the ground, West has several goals for the local chapter. One of them is a greater focus on air and water pollution in South County, an area he is intimately familiar with, given Imperial Beach is the area most affected by the near-constant cross-border sewage spills from Tijuana.

West noted the Sierra Club chapter has a distinct North County group, but no counterpart in South County.

South County has the worst air pollution in the region, and West said the club is seeking to work more closely with the local Air Pollution Control District to address some of the sources — he specifically mentioned activity at warehouses.

He thought a turning point for public concern about ocean pollution came when the county enacted more strict water testing, resulting in Imperial Beach shorelines being closed virtually every day. Beaches to the north along the Silver Strand and in Coronado also experienced more closures, though far less frequently.

“That really underscored how bad it is,” he said of the new testing standards.

Then came the study by the Scripps Institution of Oceanography that gave scientific backing to what local residents had been complaining about for some time: The sewage spills are fouling the air.

West applauded what “seems to be a resurgence of wanting to do more” on border sewage. He acknowledged the efforts by local leaders that paved the way for getting \$600 million in the pipeline to fix and expand the international border sewage plant.

But he was cautious, recalling that years ago \$300 million in federal funds seemed to be targeted for the problem but “somehow that money disappeared.”

West said the Sierra Club San Diego Chapter has 13,000-plus members and increased around 3% to 4% over the last year. He added that the North County inland area had a

particularly notable boost in members.

But he said much work still needs to be done. The membership is an aging population that tends to be highly educated, wealthy and White. In San Diego and across the country, chapters are seeking diversity.

He noted what he saw as a particular shortcoming not just of the Sierra Club but of environmental groups in general: suspicions by working-class families.

“People have gotten frustrated with environmental organizations,” he said.

From a kitchen-table economics view, too many people see some environmental protections as adding burdens and costs to their lives, he suggested.

“We need to show them how we can be helpful in their community,” West said.

West said the local chapter plans to do more to engage the public, particularly young people and children. He also said veterans

and other groups need to be more of a priority for the Sierra Club.

He hopes to see the club do more outreach at schools, farmers markets, libraries and more. But he said information about and protection of the environment are based on science and education, and “all of that is under attack” by the Trump

administration.

At the end of the interview, West was asked if there’s anything that hadn’t been discussed that he wanted to add. There was, and he was emphatic about it: People need to remember that being in the great outdoors can be great fun.

“We have to have fun. It should be fun to be

outdoors,” he said. “If people aren’t having fun, they’re not going to want to be part of this.”

WHAT THEY SAID
Los Angeles Times (@latimes)
“Veterans advocates warn of low morale amid L.A. deployment: ‘This is not what we signed up for.’”



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