

Local

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LOGAN JENKINS
Columnist

With FDR's nod, the Russians were coming to San Diego

If the walls of a Spanish-style cottage overlooking Shelter Island could talk, you might hear 80-year-old Russian voices.

Sue Lorimer Parsons used to wonder how as many as a dozen Soviet aviation engineers and a "female commissar" managed to sleep in her cozy 1,600-square-foot Point Loma home.

"I was awake nights trying to figure out where they slept until I realized they must have worked shifts," she says.

Sixty years ago, the former stewardess, now an energetic 93, and her late husband Dick, a former engineer at Convair, bought the hillside, two-story house on the southern side of Rosecrans Street. The Parsons were told about a Soviet group that lived in the house in the late 1930s while working at Consolidated Aircraft, the predecessor to Convair, a division of General Dynamics.

As a joke, the Parsons liked to say they lived in the former "Russian Embassy."

On the other side of the globe, in the southwest Russian city of Taganrog, a building on the central Bank Square is known as the "American House."

These two dwellings are linked by a largely unknown sliver of San Diego aviation history.

In 1935, President Roosevelt could see the hurricanes of war forming in Germany and Japan.

Though held in check by the strong isolationist mood in his country, FDR worked behind the scenes to counter Japan's expansion in the north Pacific.

Motivated by the principle that the enemy of my future enemy is my friend, FDR resolved to strengthen the Soviet Union's Pacific fleet, based in Vladivostok.

The Soviets desperately needed long-range patrol bombers to perform a broad variety of military duties — reconnaissance, air-sea rescue, disrupting supply lines, sub hunting.

A breakthrough "flying boat" that fit that versatile bill, the PBY (later called the Catalina), was being manufactured in a new plant in San Diego.

Roosevelt, former governor of New York, called the PBY's mastermind, a man he knew well: Reuben Fleet, the founder of Consolidated Aircraft Corp.

Fleet had just moved his company from Buffalo to San Diego.

SEE JENKINS • B6

CRIME RATE SECOND-LOWEST SINCE 1980

Slight climb in homicide, armed robbery amid overall decrease by 4 percent in county, SANDAG reports

BY PAULINE REPARD

San Diego County's crime rate dipped by 4 percent last year, but some violent crime, including assaults on the elderly, homicide and robberies with a firearm, nudged upward.

The overall numbers gave the county its second-lowest crime rate

— after 2014 — going back 37 years, according to a report by the San Diego Association of Governments.

"San Diego County remains a very safe place to live," Cynthia Burke, SANDAG's director of Criminal Justice Research, said in a statement.

The agency has been tracking the number of homicides, aggra-

vated assaults, rapes, robberies, burglaries, larcenies and motor vehicle thefts since 1980.

The county saw a violent crime rate of 3.3 percent for every 1,000 residents, and a property crime rate of 18.6 percent last year.

While national comparisons were not available for 2016, San Diego County came out of 2015 looking fairly good. That year, the local rate of violent crime was 3.3 percent and 18.4 percent for property crime. The national averages were 3.7 percent

for violent crime and 24.8 percent for property crime.

Notable in the county's violent crimes were 101 homicides, 17 more than the prior year and the third consecutive increase.

In the 64 cases where motive could be determined, slightly more than half occurred during an argument, with gangs and domestic violence behind another 25 percent of the cases. A dozen other cases were tied to robbery, burglary, drugs, SEE CRIME • B6



Trisha Bernal and her newborn son, Malachi, were two of the first arrivals at Kaiser Permanente San Diego Medical Center Tuesday. HOWARD LIPIN U-T

TRANSFERS HANDLED WITH CARE

About 100 patients moved by ambulance from Grantville facility to Kaiser's new hospital in Kearny Mesa

BY PAUL SISSON

Ambulance rides usually come before hospital stays, but that was not the case for more than 100 patients who were loaded one by one onto gurneys and transported to Kaiser Permanente's new hospital in Kearny Mesa on Tuesday — the facility's first day of operations.

Trisha Bernal and her newborn son, Malachi, were the first to arrive

on the Kaiser San Diego Medical Center maternity floor. They had made their way from Kaiser's longtime hospital in the Grantville neighborhood — in an ambulance, escorted by a police motorcycle escort.

"You know, I've never had a police escort before ... they were stopping traffic when we got on the freeway and all of that kind of stuff. It was awesome," Bernal said.

Once unloaded at the new hospi-

tal's emergency room, the Bernals received applause from staff on their way to a third-floor room that had a big window to let sunshine in. For Bernal, a mother of four who delivered Malachi on Monday after 34 hours of labor and a Cesarean section, the natural lighting was a plus. Though the Bernal family, which includes father Gustavo Bernal, was the first family to occupy a room in that particular part of the

hospital, they were not the first patients to arrive at the overall facility. That milestone occurred at 6 a.m., when three ambulances pulled up to the new medical building — each bearing a tiny patient from the neonatal intensive care unit at Kaiser's hospital in Grantville.

Jim Malone, chief administrative officer for Kaiser San Diego, was touched by the sight of these in-

SEE CARE • B3

MORE MARSHLAND SOUGHT AT BAY

Environmentalists offer proposals for redevelopment of area in Mission Bay Park

BY DAVID GARRICK

SAN DIEGO

Concerns about sea level rise have prompted environmentalists to revise upward how much new marshland they want included in San Diego's proposed redevelopment of Mission Bay Park's northeast corner.

Three scenarios unveiled on Tuesday would make marshland the

lion's share of that portion of the park, shrinking the acreage available for new recreational amenities.

The scenarios conflict sharply with three significantly more recreation-oriented proposals for the newly available acreage that city officials unveiled in November, setting up a potential battle over the area that could lead to litigation.

The dispute is over roughly 210 acres that includes the 50-acre Cam-

pland on the Bay site, the 46-acre Mission Bay Golf Course, the 40 acres of remaining marshland in the park known as the Kendall-Frost Marsh Reserve, and a 76-acre mobile home park on De Anza Point.

The opportunity to redevelop the site was prompted by the closure of the mobile home park last year after decades of litigation, and the upcoming expiration of Campland's

SEE MARSH • B3

FOUR COLLEGE TRANSFER STUDENTS AWARDED

1 from Miramar earns prestigious Cooke scholarship

BY GARY WARTH

SAN DIEGO

Four local community college students, including three from MiraCosta College, are among only 15 in the country to receive the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke scholarship this year. The scholarship for undergraduate transfer students covers the final two or three years necessary to earn bachelor's degrees and can be as high as \$40,000 annually.

At MiraCosta in Oceanside, the scholarships were awarded to Farshad Soroufifar, Vanessa "Van" Reynolds and Omer Azizi, a native Afghan whose family fled to Pakistan before emigrating to America.

At Miramar College in San Diego, the scholarship was awarded to Ishak Mahamoud, whose parents immigrated from Somalia.

About 3,000 students applied for the scholarship, the largest private scholarship

SEE AWARDS • B6

STUDY FINDS PESTICIDE AFFECTS HONEYBEES' ABILITY TO FLY

UC San Diego researchers find erratic flight patterns

BY JOSHUA EMERSON SMITH

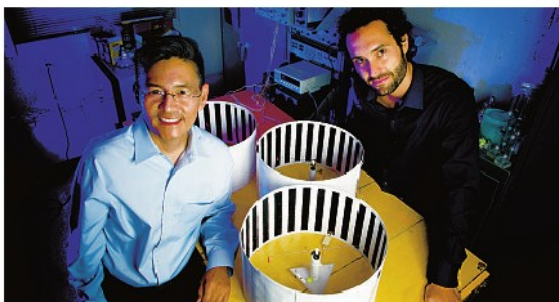
A new study finds that a controversial pesticide, restricted in many parts of Europe but allowed in the U.S., significantly impairs honeybees' ability to fly.

The findings are the latest to link neonicotinoids, a nicotine-related class of pesticides, to harmful effects on bees managed for agriculture — which for years have been subject to high rates of colony collapse around the globe.

The experiment led by UC San Diego exposed honeybees, in a controlled setting, to the chemical thiamethoxan, a commonly applied type of neonicotinoid used on corn, soybeans and cotton, as well as other fruits and vegetables.

Initially, the bees exposed to the pesticide flew faster and longer. But

SEE HONEYBEES • B3



James Nieh (left), a UC San Diego biologist, and Simone Tosi, a post-doctorate fellow, co-authored the study on the effects of neonicotinoids on honeybees. NELVIN C. CEPEDA U-T

REPORT: CAR CRASHED ON PURPOSE DURING CHASE

Driver found with unauthorized immigrants in SUV

BY KRISTINA DAVIS

SAN DIEGO

The suspected driver of an SUV filled with unauthorized immigrants appeared to crash his vehicle on purpose in Chula Vista while being pursued by a Border Patrol agent, a rollover that sent him and six others to the hospital, a passenger told authorities.

The claim is included in a complaint filed in San Diego federal court Tuesday that provides new details about the late-Sunday chase and crash.

The suspected driver, Miguel Angel Tejada Loazia, 21, is being charged with transportation of unauthorized immigrants. He has no prior criminal record, although he is a Mexican citizen without permission to be in the U.S., according to statements made by attorneys in court Tuesday.

The incident began when a sensor went off in an area known as the "Triple Nickel," about a mile east of the Otay Mesa Port of Entry and 2½ miles north of the Mexico border, according to the complaint. A Border Patrol agent went to check it out on his all-terrain vehicle about 11:42 p.m. and saw the lights of a dark Ford Expedition parked along Alta Road.

The vehicle, which had moved slowly, finally stopped, and the agent could hear yelling. While he couldn't hear what was being said, he assumed the driver was telling people to get inside. Other agents, using a night vision thermal scope and surveillance equipment, saw the SUV turn onto Otay Mesa Road.

Supervisory Agent Contreras, whose first name was not provided, was driving east on Otay Mesa and saw the Expedition coming west. He made a U-turn and started to follow it. The SUV started to speed up and drift toward the center median in an erratic manner, and about 11:45 p.m. Contreras tried to stop the vehicle with his emergency lights and

siren, the complaint said.

The driver continued to make erratic moves, such as tapping his brakes as though he would stop but then making a hard right turn onto state Route 125 north, the complaint said. The agent radioed that the SUV was driving about 75 mph toward the toll booths. He requested a helicopter, but one was not available.

Before the SUV reached Birch Road, the driver made a sharp right turn that kicked up a dust cloud, the complaint stated. The SUV crashed into the end of a guard rail and dropped down an embankment.

Contreras requested paramedics, and he and other arriving agents searched the ditch for victims. Two suspected unauthorized immigrants were found face up complaining of injuries, while others were leaning against the wreckage or standing nearby. A boy, whose age is unknown, was found by the SUV with cuts to his face and neck.

All were treated at various hospitals, including two who suffered major injuries, the California Highway Patrol said. The boy and another passenger remained hospitalized Tuesday.

Some of the passengers, who are being held as material witnesses in the case, admitted to being Mexican citizens in the country illegally. They told authorities they were going to pay from \$1,000 to \$5,000 to be smuggled into the United States.

Two of the passengers identified Tejada as the driver and said he had told the group to get into the SUV.

One of the passengers said that when Tejada saw the Border Patrol agent's lights behind him, "Tejada deliberately sped up and purposely jerked the wheel of the vehicle to cause it to roll over," the complaint said.

A magistrate judge authorized Tejada's release from custody on a \$30,000 bond.

Supervisory Agent Mark Endicott said there was nothing to suggest the pursuing agent violated policy during the chase.

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HONEYBEES

FROM B1

After several days of contact with the chemical, their flight distances were more than cut in half and their speeds reduced.

The researchers concluded that honeybees exposed to thiamethoxam are more likely to exhibit erratic flight patterns followed by bouts of lethargy, increasing the likelihood a bee could get lost from its colony or become significantly less productive.

Based upon estimates and mathematical assumptions, we show these exposures could reduce a colony's foraging area by nearly 80 percent," said James Nieh, a biologist at UC San Diego and co-author of the study, which was published in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

"They're going to get far less food, meaning a colony's health could decline further," he added.

For years, honeybee colonies managed for agriculture have suffered from several collapses during winter months. While beekeepers have used labor-intensive breeding and management practices to keep pace with the bee populations are becoming increasingly unstable.

That's particularly worrisome because honeybees directly pollinate about \$15 billion worth of crops a year, from almonds to apples to cucumbers, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

While many studies have found that pesticides have negative impacts on bees, other research, often backed by industry, suggests the parasite varroa mite is the main culprit in colony collapse.

In a report last year, the USDA said the mite was the primary cause of stress for beekeeping operations with five or more colonies.

The new study "shows interesting results, but I'm not sure it claims much in the way of explaining increased loss rates," said Dennis van Engelsdorp, a professor at the University of Maryland who researches honeybees.

"The three major drivers are varroa, poor nutrition and pesticides — varroa being the primary. I think this is the growing consensus view."

Wild bees are far less studied, but several species are at significant risk of extinction, according to conservation groups. Earlier this year, the rusty patch bumblebee became the first wild bee in the continental U.S. to be listed by the federal government as endangered.

"If we are to help restore these struggling populations, we must address key risk factors including the widespread use of pesticides as well as loss of habitat," said Almée Code, pesticide program director of The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation in Portland, Ore.

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CARE

FROM B1

Fans rolling through the doors inside clear plastic incubators that keep them warm and isolated from the outside environment.

"One was sound asleep, and one was looking around and wondering what was going on. It was exciting and emotional to have them be the first patients," Malone said.

Close to retirement and having worked on the project since 2009, Malone was, like many other Kaiser workers on hand Tuesday, a little choked up about the opening. Down on the first floor, June Finley, the Kaiser vice president, responsible for bringing the project home, was literally dancing with excitement, dispensing hugs and grins.

She was dancing in part because so many of her colleagues were taking the patient transfers so very seriously. Two command centers, one at the new hospital and the other at the older facility on Zion Avenue, had worked to determine which patients would ultimately need to be moved and which could be discharged or be kept in their original location.

"It's a big thing for us to pack up patients and move them, even if it's only four miles," Finley said. "We've been practicing this for a year and a half, maybe two years."

It took 19 ambulances, each with its own team of paramedics and an assigned hospital nurse, to carry out the patient transfers Tuesday.

Finley said each patient needed a complex set of safety checks to be completed before being taken for the ride west on Friars Road, then north on Interstate 15 before getting off at the Clairemont Mesa Boulevard exit.

"All of the physicians involved in their care have to sign off that each patient is stable. We have to make sure all of the lab work is done, all the radiology tests and all the pharmaceuticals go with them as they travel over," Finley said.

Once at the new hospital, that information must be

double-checked to make sure all medications and other existing doctor's orders are in place.

Some might wonder why Kaiser bothered to transfer any patients at all. Why not just open the new hospital and start admitting new patients there while existing patients stay at the Grantville site until it's time for them to go home?

The transfer is necessary because some entire departments were moved to the new building on opening day. Kaiser administrators said. It would have been difficult to split nursing teams across two facilities, they explained.

Labor and delivery, head and neck surgery, neonatal intensive care, maternal and child health, neurosurgery, pediatrics, robotic surgery, spine surgery, thoracic surgery and vascular surgery were all moved Tuesday, while hematology, oncology, ophthalmology, orthopedics and plastic surgery stayed put.

Both facilities will offer dermatology, emergency medicine, general surgery, radiology, neurology, physical therapy, nuclear medicine, respiratory therapy and urology services.

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MARSH • Rewild says rising sea level not properly addressed

FROM B1

lease. The city has long planned to restore environmentally crucial marshland in the northeast corner of the park to boost water quality and restore habitats.

The rest of the park will remain unchanged. Marshland dominated nearly all of Mission Bay Park before aggressive dredging after World War II turned the area into the largest aquatic park of its kind in the world.

Rewild Mission Bay, an effort led by the San Diego chapter of the Audubon Society, unveiled eight scenarios for the northeast corner of the park last September that also included more marshland than the three city proposals released two months later.

But the revised Rewild proposals unveiled on Tuesday include even more marshland, primarily because of sea level rise.

"We have a better understanding, based on the modeling we did with our engineering team earlier this year, what sea level rise is going to do to these proposed plans," said Rebecca Schwartz, Audubon's local director of conservation. "Some of whatever we restore today and what already exists today will be lost to sea level rise."

She said increasing the restored marshland was the

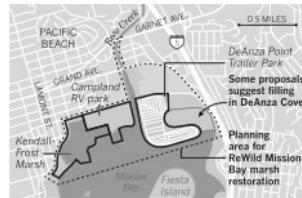
only way to come close to meeting the goal of the Mission Bay Park Master Plan for 120 acres of marshland — the Kendall-Frost marsh plus 80 additional acres.

So the three new scenarios call for between 164 and 240 acres of marshland, numbers that will shrink significantly in coming decades because of rising sea level.

Scenario A calls for 240 acres, which would shrink to 145 acres in 2050 and 85 acres in 2100. And Scenario C calls for 164 acres, which would shrink to 88 acres by 2050 and 44.6 acres by 2100.

Scenario B calls for 200 acres, which would shrink to 124 acres by 2050 and 71 acres by 2100. And Scenario D calls for 120 acres of the 4,500 total acres in Mission Bay Park would be less than 3 percent.

"When you're zooming into the northeast corner, it can look like a lot," she said. "When you take a step back, you realize what a small portion of the bay we are talking about. It's more a nod to the history of Mission Bay than a full-scale transformation."



Source: ESRI

BETO ALVAREZ • UT

When Schwartz and others criticized the city proposals last fall for not including enough marshland, officials said the roughly 70 acres they were proposing would mean more than 35 percent of the park's northeast corner would be restored to marsh.

The city proposals each included playing fields, campgrounds, open spaces for festivals, water sports areas, children's playgrounds and a restaurant cluster.

The also featured varying secondary amenities, such as piers, sand volleyball courts, skate parks, community gardens, bridges, boardwalks and tunnels for cars.

The newly unveiled Rewild proposal calls for roughly 90 acres for recreation and doesn't specify what kind of amenities.

They do, however, call for the wetlands to be bordered by more nature-based recreation, such as trails, overlooks, picnic areas, kayaking, tent camping and nature photography. They recommend more intense activities be located farther away.

Public comments on the

three proposals, which were posted on the city's website on Tuesday, show many people and some environmental agencies criticized the proposals for not adhering to that principle.

City officials say they plan to release revised proposals, based on public feedback, in June. The city's longtime goal has been to choose a plan this year and then begin environmental analysis of it, with final approval from the City Council and the Coastal Commission made in 2019.

Schwartz said compromising with environmental agencies will be a necessary step for the city.

"If you work with us, we can all bring to council and to the commission together to have something really wonderful for the city, instead of a project that's going to be tied up in litigation, lawsuits and fights for years to come," she said.

For details on the proposals, visit rewildmissionbay.org or deanzaenvironmentalplan.com.

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