San Diego avoids more state restrictions for the time being
High coronavirus numbers continue to keep County on the brink of moving to purple tier

By DAVE SCHWAB | THE BEACON

State officials on Sept. 22 stopped just short of ordering San Diego County back into the most restrictive “purple” tier for economic reopening. But state health secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly warned that escalating coronavirus numbers continue to keep San Diego on the brink of being moved out of the less-restrictive “red” tier.

“We had a spike in our numbers and managed to stay below the metrics that would have taken us back a tier,” said Michael Workman, director of the County Communications Office. “We need to stay with it and keep pushing the numbers down. We would have to be back in purple tier numbers for two consecutive weeks to be in danger of falling back again.”

Just prior to the state announcing San Diego County’s health regulations would not immediately be tightened, Fourth District Supervisor Nathan Fletcher said: “We should be fighting COVID-19 for indoor dining limiting indoor operations to 25% capacity or 100 people, whichever is lower. Places people, whichever is lower. Places

“[The fire] took all my boards and irreplaceable memorabilia, when the fire — and it exploded. It just

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See Page 15 for more information

For cleaner streets, residents are being asked to sign a petition to keep the OB Clean & Safe Program.

See Page 10 for the story.

To close down the economy again would crush any recovery we hoped for,”

DENNY KNOX, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF OCEAN BEACH MAINSTREET ASSOCIATION

Recently, the state introduced the new tiered system that allows certain indoor business activities to resume, while requiring them to adhere to industry-specific guidelines. They also must follow hygiene, social distancing, and face-covering requirements.

While many sectors were allowed to reopen, not all can operate at full capacity. Gyms and fitness centers can operate indoors at 10% capacity or less.

Restaurants continue to be open for indoor dining limiting indoor operations to 25% capacity or 100 people, whichever is lower. Places

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Former Navy man to be sentenced for wife’s murder in Point Loma

By NEAL PUTRAM | THE BEACON

Matthew Scott Sullivan will be sentenced Nov. 13 for fatally stabbing his wife in Point Loma, a judge ruled Sept. 18 after he denied his motion for a new trial.

Sullivan, 35, was convicted by a jury March 13 of second-degree murder in the death of his wife, Elizabeth Sullivan, 12, who was found in San Diego Bay not far from where they lived.

The courts are mostly closed now but they should be open by the end of the month.

Understanding the financial burden for both tenants and landlords, the County of San Diego will be accepting applications for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program from Sept. 24 to Oct. 8. Eligible applicants will then be selected at random. Interested people can find more information about the program and apply during the two-week application period at SDRFC.org. Those who apply will be able to check their application status online at any point in the process.

County emergency rental assistance available

By JOSÉ A. ÁLVAREZ | THE BEACON

San Diego County residents who have been economically impacted by COVID-19 could qualify for one-time assistance of up to $3,000 to pay for past-due or upcoming rent.

Due to the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, many residents have been unable to pay rent, which can cause them to be evicted and lead to an increase in homelessness.

Understanding the financial burden for both tenants and landlords, the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors allocated $24 million in funding for an Emergency Rental Assistance Program to ease that burden for thousands of county residents.

The County of San Diego will be accepting applications for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program from Sept. 24 to Oct. 8. Eligible applicants will then be selected at random. Interested people can find more information about the program and apply during the two-week application period at SDRFC.org. Those who apply will be able to check their application status online at any point in the process.

To be eligible, households must be renting and have experienced a financial hardship directly related to COVID-19. This includes a loss of income due to COVID-19 or an increase in medical expenses incurred as a direct result of COVID-19. Households must also fall under 60% area median income to qualify. For example, to be eligible, a single-person household can earn up to $48,540 and a four-person household can earn up to $99,300. The program will be able to assist about 8,000 households.

Residents who live in cities with their own COVID-19 rental relief program would not be eligible for the County program unless their cities’ funds have already been depleted.

Read more online at sdrfc.org.
Midway planners want their say in Sports Arena, Old Town development

By DAVE SCHWAB | The Beacon

In September, Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Group followed two presentations. One was by San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), the region’s transportation planning agency, on proposed Naval Information Warfare Systems Command’s revitalization. That project could include transforming Old Town into a future central mobility hub.

The comments by Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Group followed two presentations. One was by San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), the region’s transportation planning agency, on proposed Naval Information Warfare Systems Command’s revitalization. That project could include transforming Old Town into a future central mobility hub with airport connections.

The other presentation was by Zach Adams of Brookfield Properties, the firm recently chosen by the City to redevelop the Sports Arena area.

“‘The (Midway) community has had no voice up until now (on both projects),’ argued Cathy Kenton, Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Group chair.

“‘What I’m hearing is you’re going to be doing community outreach that’s going to be minimal at best.’

Added Kenton: ‘I have been begging SANDAG, and the Navy, since this (NAWAR) came up, to please give the community a seat at the table. Nobody knows this community better than we do. We’ve fought too hard, and for too long. We’re on the cusp of really doing something great in this community, and you’re just giving us a bunch of lip service.’

“We appreciate the passion and we understand you want to carry out your vision for making Midway an area to be proud of,” responded SANDAG’s Jack Christensen. ‘That’s exactly the type of comments we want to hear.’

Noting the NAWAR revitalization and the possible conversion of Old Town into a mobility hub are in the ‘very early stage,’ Christensen added. ‘We promise to continue to engage the community planning group as the project advances. We hear you.’

Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Group board member Kurt Sullivan agreed with Kenton that the planning group has been left out of the loop in the governmental decision-making process on important community issues.

“There is a long history in this community of City government telling us your voice will be heard, we’ll take your concerns into consideration – and it doesn’t happen,” Sullivan said. He cited an example. “Our group has been dealing with the redevelopment of the Sports Arena for eight to 10 years, it’s in our community plan. And we were never formally asked, ‘What do you think about the City’s selection committee that chose a developer?’ It’s tremendously frustrating.

“The Navy has signed an agreement with the City and SANDAG to redevelop the 70.5-acre NAWAR site adjacent to Interstate 5 just blocks from the Old Town Transit Center. The parties have previously discussed what development at NAWAR might look like: A transit hub with a central terminus for buses and trains, likely with a people-mover or shuttle to the airport.

Regarding former Sports Arena redevelopment, Zach Adams of winning bidder Brookfield said, ‘We know what this project can mean for the area. The way we think about projects is we start with the idea of values, what is important about a project, and how we can incorporate building that for the community.’

Adams promised Brookfield will outreach with Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Group moving forward to collaborate on sports arena redevelopment.
Peninsula planning group skeptical of removing 30-foot height limit

By DAVE SCHWAB | The Beacon

The Yes on E campaign calling for the removal of the 30-foot height limit in the Midway District and the former Sports Arena met with a cool reception in September at Peninsula Community Planning Board.

Cathy Kenton, chair of Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Group, which unanimously endorsed the Nov. 3 ballot measure that needs a simple majority to pass, lobbied for the measure in a PCPB Zoom informational presentation.

But three planning board members, and one spokesperson from a community opposition group, Save Our Access, were highly critical of the proposal. Measure opponents claim it would be precedent-setting eroding coastal height limit protections elsewhere. They also warned it could be used as a tool by developers to increase density in the already traffic-clogged Peninsula.

“This measure is the culmination of 11 years of effort that went into our Midway community plan update, which was approved by the city council in 2018,” Kenton told PCPB. “The Midway Plan Update went through a rigorous and robust process before being approved. The land-use goals within the plan include creating districts and villages with a compatible mix of uses including commercial and residential zones, active transportation, and a healthy environment for a variety of housing types for all ages, incomes and social groups.”

Added Kenton: “An additional benefit in the Midway Community Plan includes improving the (former) sports arena as the gateway to the community providing pedestrian and bicycle access, 16 acres of new park space, improved mobility, and a much-needed new fire station. The Midway community has been asking for this change for several years. We need to build up, not out. This community desperately needs improvement. Prop. E would only remove the 30-foot height limit in the Midway District.”

But some PCPB board members saw Measure E–and its implications–differently.

“I’m against lifting the 30-foot height limit in Midway,” said Mandy Havlik. “This is the start of a slippery slope that will erode the protections of the 30-foot rule that has protected the coastal region from overdevelopment. By lifting the 30-foot height limit, you would be restricting access to the beach by allowing unchecked development west of I-5 on a crucial intersection where I-8 and I-15 intersect, adding over 20,000 residents (at planned build-out) to an area that is already having really heavy traffic problems.”

Added Havlik, “This will further keep, delay and discourage Californians from access to the coastal areas. Finally, the City has not given any guarantees that much-needed infrastructure upgrades will be required for any (new) development.”

PCPB board member Korla Eaquinta concurred.

“There is a Vote No on E Facebook page,” she said adding, “The City did no analysis whatsoever on the height limit, on traffic flow or air quality. The City hasn’t done the homework that they should do. We’re not trying to obstruct anything. We want the City to do the studies that state law requires them to do.”

“When is enough enough as far as the height limit goes?” asked PCPB board member Margaret Viritzino. “Or does the removal of the height limit give them (developers) any acceptable reason to build as high as they can?”

Tom Mullaney, speaking for Save Our Access, suggested Measure E is an end-around planning protections intended to prevent overdevelopment and over densification.

“Is this measure really about achieving the vision in the community plan?” he asked. “What if, instead, it’s about developers grabbing something they’ve wanted for 48 years (following Prop. D passage), which is free reign to develop the coastal communities as they wish. What if this truly is an opportunity to blow open the 30-foot height limit for all six beach communities?”

Added Mullaney: “What if it’s about making a few property owners rich by upzoning? What if, perhaps, Mayor Faulconer is trying to reward some of his developer friends before he leaves office? What if it’s an incentive for the City to get control of federal land, Naval Information Warfare Systems Command, and the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, by lifting their height limits also? Is this (height limit removal) the first step?”

San Diego Unified’s student enrollment shows decline in kindergarteners

Three weeks into the 2020-21 school year, student enrollment numbers released by the San Diego Unified School District show a decline in kindergarteners, underscoring concerns among district leaders who have stressed the importance of early-childhood education.

As of Sept. 16, 100,348 students were enrolled in district schools, 2,474 below the projection issued before the COVID-19 pandemic. The largest group of students not enrolled falls into the Transitional Kindergarten/Kindergarten grade levels, representing 1,682 students, or about two out of every three of all unenrolled students.
Mayor Faulconer endorses removing 30-foot height limit in Midway

By DAVE SCHWAB | THE BEACON

Mayor Kevin Faulconer has endorsed November ballot Measure E, which would remove the 30-foot height limit from the Midway District allowing greater latitude for development in the area. It has been backed by nearby residents and businesses, Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan Group and City Council members. The Sports Arena is outdated and the community around it has stagnated. A vote for Measure E will unlock the potential of the Midway community and turn this eyesore into a San Diego icon.

“Aniwo spoke in favor of the ballot measure on Sept. 14. Kenton said Measure E is about enhancing Midway’s character, not changing it. "We don’t want high rises," she said. "We’re not looking for this to be downtown. You look at the (Midway) C o m m u n i t y P l a n, which calls for a very vibrant, mixed-use community. Show me one other commercial, mixed-use community in the City that has a 30-foot height limit. It doesn’t exist. And you can see what 48 years of a 30-foot height limit has done to Midway." Aniwo concurred. "When I moved here I could tell this community was on the cusp of something," he said. "It took me a few years to realize why nothing was happening. It was because of the 30-foot height limit. I realized we have an opportunity to do something about that." "I’ve heard a lot of feedback from the community-at-large that folks are really excited about the possibility for a new sports arena," said Matt Awbrey, communications director for the Yes On E campaign.

“Measure E gives us the option. Without Measure E, you’re only talking about rehabilitating what’s here. Measure E actually lets us look at the sports arena and say, ‘you can do something brand new if that’s what the community wants.’” Kenton and Aniwo are both optimistic about Measure E passing by a simple majority on Nov. 3. "We’re very encouraged," Kenton said. "We’re campaigning absolutely actively. We intend to be very active to make sure our vision (for Midway) is what actually happens." "We’re getting bipartisan, and a lot of community support, as well as support from the larger San Diego community," said Aniwo.

“We’re getting both institutional and residential support.” "We have a website, midway2020.com, that has a lot of information and FAQs," said Kenton. "It’s even got a spot where you can donate.” On Aug. 29, a City selection committee picked a proposal by Brookfield Properties and ASM Global to redevelop the former Sports Arena property into a vibrant destination that incorporates a mix of entertainment, housing, parks, and office and retail.

Proposition D, the 30-foot coastal height limit, is a 48-year-old voter-approved initiative passed in 1972 to preserve ocean views. Measure E seeks to overturn that in Midway only.

Polling place site managers needed for Nov. 3 General Election

By TRACY DEFORE | THE BEACON

The Registrar is seeking temporary full-time site managers to operate assigned polling places for the Nov. 3 General Election. Site managers can earn $20 per hour. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, polling places will be open for four days instead of one. The Registrar’s office will hire election workers rather than use volunteers because training is more extensive for the expanded time period.

Site managers will be required to train and lead a staff while representing the Registrar of Voters in a professional, nonpartisan manner. The Registrar is seeking people who are team players, exhibit strong leadership skills and display flexibility, patience and the highest level of integrity at all times. Site managers are required to attend a paid five-day training program to learn how to run a polling place and train their election worker staff.

• From Sept. 28 to Nov. 2, site managers must work 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.
• From Election Day, Nov. 3, site managers must work from 5:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Registrar’s office is working with Public Health Services to ensure the health and safety of election workers and voters. Personal protective equipment and sanitization supplies will be provided to workers so they can conduct the election process safely.

English speakers who are bilingual in Spanish, Filipino, Vietnamese or Chinese are also needed. If you are fluent in one of these languages, be sure to indicate it on your application.

Site manager applications are available online at sddvote.com. For more information, call 858-565-5800 or email pollworker@sdcounty.ca.gov.
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West Mission Bay Drive Bridge project on schedule

By DAVE SCHWAB | The Beacon

Work continues at about the midway point of the West Mission Bay Drive Bridge Project to replace the existing 4-lane bridge with a 6-lane bridge having a northbound and a southbound Closed I-Bike facility and pedestrian sidewalks.

The project includes a bike path on both bridges, and roadway widening and improvements along Sports Arena Boulevard, West Mission Bay Drive and the westbound I-9 off-ramp.

Construction on the infrastructure improvement project began in summer 2018. It is expected to be completed in mid-2022. The estimated total cost of the project is $149 million with an estimated construction contract cost of $111 million.

The duration of the project, being performed by contractor Flatiron West Inc., is 57 months. The project is fully funded through the Federal Highway Administration Highway Bridge Program.

By DAVE SCHWAB | The Beacon

West Mission Bay Drive Bridge was constructed in the early 1950s to meet the demands and standards of its time. It was constructed with four travel lanes, five-foot-wide sidewalks, concrete pier walls on timber piles, and a concrete median barrier.

Because the daily traffic volume on the bridge now exceeds its current capacity, the California Department of Transportation evaluated and classified the bridge as functionally obsolete. The existing bridge will be replaced with two three-lane parallel structures for both northbound and southbound traffic.

At present, utility work continues around the northbound structure as crews finish the final portion of soffit (bridge underside) and stem work for the superstructure. In the coming months, the top deck portions of the structure will be poured, creating the final riding surface for vehicle and pedestrian traffic, once the bridge is opened.

Recently, work crews poured the final stem and soffit concrete on the south portion of the northbound bridge structure. This activity, marks the largest concrete pour thus far. Using approximately 1,450 cubic yards of concrete (145 truckloads) and two concrete pump trucks to optimize work efficiency.

Concrete pump trucks provide the means for the concrete to be placed in the bridge structure as the pumps are supplied with concrete from multiple trucks, each delivering 10 cubic yards of concrete. Once the concrete is placed and forms removed, a curing compound is applied, allowing the concrete to continue to cure properly.

For questions or concerns about the project, call the Public Works Department construction project information line at 619-533-4207, email engineering@sandiego.gov or submit your inquiry online. Reference the “West Mission Bay Drive Bridge Replacement Project” in your inquiry.

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Live event promoters' businesses on life support due to COVID cancellations

The San Diego Events Coalition crafting guidelines for safe reopenings

By DAVID SCHWEB | THE BEACON

Laurel McFarlane is spending her son’s college money next year to keep her household afloat.

Sandy Cottrell has had to cancel the ArtWalk she’s promoted at Liberty Station the past 16 years, praying her business will survive to do it next year.

Michelle Metter’s husband’s business has been devastated by COVID, and her efforts to hold her young family together she described as “dire.”

All three women have joined with other live event promoters in a local movement. The San Diego Events Coalition, that is part of a national movement at liveevents-coalition.org.

The three event promoters have a message to deliver: Live events in San Diego are barely alive, and won’t be for much longer without immediate governmental aid and federal financial assistance.

McFarlane, of McFarlane Promotions mcfarlanepromotions.com, who usually promotes about 70 San Diego events a year, is down to only five virtual events this year due to COVID. She characterized her present circumstances, and those of the rest of San Diego’s small-business event industry, as “brutal” and “catastrophic.”

“Promoting a live event takes 100 to 500 people — stagehands, bar staff, graphics designers, lighting crew, insurance reps — the list goes on and on,” McFarlane said. “Everyone is suffering. We’re the only industry that has zero things open.”

Said Cottrell, of ArtWalk San Diego artwalksandiego.org. “We held out hope as long as we could that we would reschedule the art walk in August that has 200 line artists, live music, wine and beer pavilion, art for kids and art displays for November. We tried to come up with something the county would accept with a very different format: no music, no kids, no wine, and beer, just sale of art.

We’d gotten some very positive feedback but our timing was terrible, it was back in July when the big (COVID) spike happened. The writing was on the wall.”

Metter, of Fast Forward Events fastforwardevents.com, annually promotes the week-long San Diego Bay Wine + Food Festival featuring dozens of events and hundreds of domestic and international wineries with a Grand Tasting Finale in November at Embarcadero Marina Park North.

Metter said her “over-riding frustration” is with inconsistencies in which businesses are allowed to operate, and which are not.

“Swap meets and farmers markets are being allowed to reopen,” Metter pointed out. “Yet they won’t allow functions to be held by professional event organizers with professional management companies who have been doing so within the City for many years.”

Added Metter, “This impacts not just the City from the loss of economic drivers from events, but the personal toll taken on the live events workforce, which is now largely unemployed. That segment of the workforce just isn’t recognized by our state legislature. It’s very short-sighted.”

McFarlane warned that the COVID response canceling live events could exterminate the entire industry. “We can’t get anybody to listen,” she lamented. “We need to start gradually getting our industry back so people can still make a living.”

McFarlane noted there’s a considerable lag time in promoting and implementing live events.

“You just can’t open tomorrow,” she said. “We’re at least three months out from getting everything together to do an event with all the permitting and everything required. We’re talking about 2021 now.”

Asked McFarlane, “If people are allowed to go to swap meets and farmers markets, why can’t we be allowed to open and host small live events like art walks, car shows, and food tastings?”

The San Diego Events Coalition has been busy recently crafting a long list of reasonable health guidelines that would allow the industry to reopen before it’s too late to matter.

“We’re just really trying to find a safe way back for the 200,000 people in San Diego who are screaming out for help, and for the $329 million the live events industry contributes to the economy,” McFarlane said.

What happens if live event promotions are lost?

“If we’re not here, all these nonprofit organizations will begin to pay full price for events that have been discounted,” McFarlane said adding, “And no one is saying, ‘Oh my God, they’re wiping out this entire industry.’”

McFarlane said people aren’t aware of just how irreplaceable the live event industry is.

“They show up at an event and it’s magical,” she said. “But they don’t realize how the event planners have worked through the nights to make that happen, and all the hard work by all the people it takes for us to make that ‘magic moment’ for the public.”

“What needs to be done?

“Right now, there needs to be some events opening,” answered McFarlane. “The coalition has developed 30 pages of guidelines for reopening, and elected officials really need to help us.”

Concluded McFarlane, “We’re not getting aid from Congress any time soon. The work I’ve spent the past 20 years doing. 90% of that has been wiped out. At this point, I don’t have a road map back at all. We need help to find a safe way back following the detailed protocols we’ve created. We need people to say, ‘We’re sorry we have forgotten about you. We’re going to help you.’ I don’t think that’s too much to ask.”
While Pomodoro in Point Loma has been open for to-go and delivery during the pandemic, owner Fabio Speziali has been busy remodeling his establishment, updating its rustic-yet-refined atmosphere.

“We have been here a few years, and we just bought the building right before COVID,” said Speziali of Pomodoro Ristorante Italiano. “So we said, ‘What a great time to do some remodeling, and we started to do some work on the property.’”

The restaurant featuring authentic Italian cuisine held a grand reopening Sept. 10.

Speziali has an interest in four other restaurants in San Diego including Osteria Romantica at 2151 Avenida De La Playa in La Jolla Shores.

Of the impact from COVID to his business, the restaurateur said, “Everybody is in the same boat. We were able to manage, keep going.”

Fabio said he never completely closed Pomodoro in part because “I didn’t want to leave everybody (employees) at home. We have a good following of people from Point Loma who like to get together.”

Of his restaurant’s new look and feel, Speziali said, “We kept it open. It’s very quaint. We came out with new décor. It’s cleaner. It’s still a rustic place, but it’s a little cleaner in the look, not so old fashioned.”

Describing his cuisine, Fabio said: “We do very traditional Italian cuisines, the usual things – lasagna, ravioli, and homemade pastas. We have a good amount of salads, chicken, and fish. It’s a big menu with a good variety, a little bit from both the north and south of Italy, a little bit of everything featuring the most popular dishes. We have a very good wine selection.”

A Italian native, Speziali originally came to California on vacation and liked it so much he remained. “I met my wife here and we got married,” he said, adding he’s worked his way up in restaurants from the ground floor.

“I started working as a busboy,” Fabio said. “The last job I had as a waiter was where I met my business partner who is the owner of La Pizzeria Arrivederci in Little Italy.”

Asked what makes Pomodoro stand out, Speziali replied. “The food is fresh, everything is made to order including most of the sauces. We have seafood on the menu, octopus, and fish including halibut, salmon, and sea bass. We also have specials like Argentinian shrimp with homemade pasta.”

Fabio noted he has plenty of seating inside and out.

The Italian restaurateur had a quick answer when asked what he liked most about owning a restaurant.

“For me, it’s a good business because I like being involved with three things: food wine and people,” he said. “It’s a winning combination.”

Open for dinner from 4:30 to 9:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays, Pomodoro is closed Mondays.
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Clandestine cleaners recognized in Ocean Beach

By DAVE SCHWAB | THE BEACON

Most mornings, van dwellers Marc Gervais and David Hendon spend their pre-dawn hours thanklessly picking up trash in Ocean Beach Pier parking lot.

Now, thanks to a webcam on a nearby tattoo parlor, and an out-of-stater who witnessed them doing their “chores” and tipped off local affiliate CBS News 8, which profiled them, the two men have received financial assistance.

That aid has come from a GoFundMe account that to date has netted more than $20,000 to help them in their efforts, and start them on a path toward eventually getting their own place.

Asked what inspired them to help clean up the community, Gervais said it was another anonymous volunteer.

“It was about four years ago and it was this old Obecian named Doug, who walks the beach every single morning,” he said. “He’s 85 years old and he walks from Dusty Rhodes Park and then we'd go to the area, see all kinds of trash in the lot,” he added. “They just feel like, ‘Oh, we can just go ahead and trash. It’s going to get picked up anyway.’ We’re going to do it anyway, but we shouldn’t have to do that much every night.”

Marc said the best part of volunteer trash picking comes afterward.

“The good part comes when we’re all done and we sit down and we drink a hot cup of coffee and we look out and you don’t see all kinds of trash in the lot,” he said.

Concerning keeping OB clean, Marc said: “It’s a respect thing. If you respect the people in the community in your area, and the people next to you, then harmony exists. When you don’t – harmony can’t exist.”

COASTAL CLEANUP DAY ON SEPT. 26

The popular countywide environmental protection event is back for its 36th edition on Saturday, Sept. 26. Produced by I Love A Clean San Diego for the residents of San Diego County, the event has hosted over 970,000 volunteers who have removed over 16 million pounds of litter and debris from communities since 1985. This year, Coastal Cleanup Day volunteers will participate close to home to safely protect and clean-up streets, parks, canyons and beaches within their own communities. Volunteers can learn more and register for free now at CleanUpDay.org. Coastal Cleanup Day typically runs for three hours 9 a.m. to noon. However, organizers want as many people as possible to spend what time they can in their communities, so volunteers are able to participate anytime during the day.

No matter where you live in San Diego County, we all live in one of the region’s 11 watersheds, which need our help to protect the inland environment, creeks, bays and ultimately the ocean,” said Len Hering, executive director at I Love A Clean San Diego.

“This year, we are not organizing specific sites to avoid large group gatherings. Rather, we encourage residents to help their community close to home with immediate family and friends, and engage with us through social media to show their impact.”

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Lighthouse restoration earns SOHO’s prestigious award

By KAREN SCALONI | THE BEACON

Every spring, San Diego’s Save Our Heritage Organisation (SOHO) accepts nominations for its annual People in Preservation Awards.

This year’s recipient of the coveted Preservation Project of the Year 2020 was awarded to contractor Neil Gardis of ‘Ohanan Industries, Ltd., and his team of three — Nick Biler, Ryan Strack, and Kevin Goodman of San Diego — for the restoration of Point Loma Lighthouse. Point Loma’s operational light house stood nearly derelict with a three-degree tilt, rust jacking, and deterioration for the past 20 or more years. The Coast Guard (USCG) admits it is not in the business of restoring lighthouses, but to keep a light on in the tower to mark dangers along the waterway. It was a welcomed surprise when the USCG Finance Office, Oakland, selected San Diego’s lighthouse for restoration because of its historical significance. (Incidentally, the work was done on the lower light house, not the Old Point Loma Lighthouse at Cabrillo National Monument.)

Other SOHO recipients include: for Adaptive Reuse to Donia Yukhong Ackard for work on the Oceanside Daily Blade-Tribune Building, To Dr. Adriana Diakiew and Dr. Hal Melzer, the Gift to Strengthen Historical Restoration of the Florence Palmer House. To Sarai Johnson, the Preservation Leadership honor. For Gifts to Street Commercial Restoration of the John Sinks House and the Meade House went to Dan Flot.

Parish Rye earned Educational Stewardship for the Presidio Park Plant Survey. Finally, Bruce Semelsberger, the Golden Spike Stewardship award for efforts in the Southwest Railway Library. For detailed information on these honors, visit SOHOsandiego.org. Sadly, the usual and beautiful historic-Marston-House garden festivities in the Southwest Railway Garden were gone because of COVID-19. The focus of preservation has grown since 1969 and professionals view it as a specialty. SOHO ought to give itself a preservation award for protecting and highlighting San Diego’s beloved structures and spaces.
Submit a ballot for a chance to Win Dinner for Two ($100 value) at one of OB’s fine restaurants.

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Ballots must be submitted online by October 9th, 2020

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of worship and movie theaters re-opened indoors under those same capacity limits. Museums can open at 25% capacity.

Hair salons, barbershops, and nail salons can operate indoors at full capacity but must follow safety precautions outlined by the state and county.

“Under the latest health order, businesses will be required to implement a sign-in procedure, collecting contact information for patrons served indoors,” said Wilma J. Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County public health officer. “This process will assist disease investigators in case an outbreak is traced to a particular business.”

The news that San Diego has, for the time being, narrowly averted a downgrade to a more restrictive COVID health tier was welcomed by Point Loma residents.

However, a handful of residents and Ocean Beach MainStreet Association representing merchants, surveyed by the Peninsula Beacon indicated some were poised to push back against tougher state-imposed COVID health guidelines.

“Honestly, this is insanity,” said Denny Knox, executive director of OBMA. “The outbreak that led to our higher numbers is clearly defined. We’ve had so few cases in OB overall since March even with lots of people out and about. To close down the economy again would crush any recovery we hoped for. The economic and psychological damage seems to be taking a much larger toll on society.”

Added Knox: “Small-business owners and employees continue to amaze us because they keep taking each challenge as it comes and they work to meet those challenges. This new color-coded grading system is a slap in the face. I don’t see how statistically speaking we could ever get to the bottom tier when we aren’t even considering hospitalization rates as one of the main factors.

“Hopefully, our leaders will come to their senses and allow the economy to continue to roll on without having to shut certain segments down. We deal with a lot of small businesses and it is painful to see them continue to struggle with an avalanche of rules, regulations, and ever-changing goalsposts.”

When asked if the state or local authorities, should be responsible for determining COVID health regulations, Carl Silva, past president of the United Portuguese S.E.S. responded: “Local control.”

Sarah Moga of Point Loma had a similar take.

“When once again we are heading down this path... most kids still aren’t back in school and many businesses are suffering,” Moga said. “Nothing isn’t right here. We clearly aren’t doing things correctly. There must be more strict enforcement of social distancing so that businesses and schools can open, and ‘stay’ open.

“Many of the new cases are from college students at SDSU who are going to parties and not caring about spreading COVID. This is crazy and something needs to be done.”

Point Loman Jerry Lohia blamed leadership at the top for San Diego’s – and the nation’s – current COVID plight.

“The United States would already be recovering from COVID-19 like most nations if the country had as strong and compassionate a leader as most other nations,” Lohia said. “If the president had simply followed the advice of epidemiologists and scientists by mandating masks and social distancing back in March, he would have the United States already recovered and would have prevented most of the 200,000-plus American deaths. A tragic failure of leadership.”

Added Lohia: “The anti-mask folks keep talking about their personal freedom. What they refuse to acknowledge is that in any democracy the flip side of personal freedom is personal responsibility.”

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• If the vehicle is on fire and you must leave it, open the door or window and jump clear without touching the vehicle and the ground at the same time.
Scripps expert urges early flu shot before the season intensifies
VACCINATION IS CRUCIAL DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC TO REDUCE ILLNESS, STRAIN ON HOSPITALS

Being vaccinated against influenza is a smart thing to do every year, but getting the flu shot this year is especially important because the illness will be circulating alongside coronavirus, which could strain health care resources across the country.

“If you normally get the flu shot each year, then now is the time to make arrangements for your vaccination, and if you rarely or never get a shot, then this is the year to start doing it,” said Sin Ming Geary, M.D., an internal medicine physician and vice president of primary care for Scripps Clinic Medical Group. Symptoms for flu, such as fever, coughing, headache and fatigue, are very similar to those for COVID-19, the illness caused by the coronavirus, and both viruses attack the respiratory system. It remains unclear how the two viruses might interact or affect overall sickness when infecting the same person.

Read more online at news.scripps.com

PUBLIC NOTICE
Time-Critical Removal Action
Naval Base Point Loma

The Department of the Navy (Navy) is distributing this public notice to inform the community of the Time-Critical Removal Action (TCRA) that is being conducted for lead-contaminated soil at the Former Small Arms Firing Range, Munitions Restoration Program (MRP) Site 1, at Naval Base Point Loma, Seaside, San Diego, California. The TCRA is being completed in October and November 2020.

The Navy’s Administrative Record (AR) can provide you with important background and site investigation information about MRP Site 1, as well as the Navy’s objectives and approach for the TCRA. The AR includes the MRP Site 1 Action Memorandum and the Remedial Design/Remedial Action Work Plan for the TCRA, which are available for public review.

You are invited to review the documents for MRP Site 1 and provide input. Comments concerning the TCRA at MRP Site 1 will be accepted from Monday, September 28 through Wednesday, October 28, 2020. To obtain a copy of background and site investigation documents or to provide comments, please contact the Navy Lead Project Manager at (619) 532-4399.
Today, 37 dear sailors remain in the burial site at the foot of a tall obelisk erected in 1908 by the Pacific Squadron. (The Post Cemetery was not commissioned Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery until 1934.)

Each July a group of historians places carnations at the Bennington headstones, or holds the commemorative ceremony, to remember one of the worst peace-time disasters in the history of the U.S. Navy.

But what about successive ships being given the name Bennington? Is the wrath of Poseidon incurred in a vessel’s name? Sea lore and superstition have existed as long as men have wrangled the sea. But it is believed that to name a vessel after one that has experienced tragedy is asking for trouble. So it goes with the name Bennington (derived from the 1777 Battle of Bennington in the American Revolutionary War).

In 1905, the gunboat USS Bennington (PG-4) suffered a boiler explosion, as noted above. Three years later, a wrecking barge known as Bennington experienced hull failure, foundered in fair weather while under tow, and took her crew of two to the bottom of Lake Superior.

On May 26, 1954, while cruising off Narragansett Bay, a hydraulic catapult exploded setting off a series of explosions aboard the aircraft carrier OSS Bennington (CVA-20), killing 103 crewmen and injuring 220. She labored under her own power into Naval Air Station Quonset Point, Rhode Island, past horrified witnesses aboard other naval vessels in the area.

Philip Hinshaw of San Diego was aboard the anchored USS Severn. “This is a scene you never forget; it is as clear in my mind now as it was in 1954. Bennington came in on fire, smoke, and flames pouring from every opening. Helicopters were flying overhead. We knew what they were doing. We felt a sense of dread and empathy. Transporting wounded to hospitals in Newport.”

Today, Hinshaw is actively involved in Bennington ceremonies at the National Cemetery. Finally (some believe), on Sept. 25, 1946, the tanker Bennington rolled in heavy seas and suffered an explosion and fire about 225 miles off Savannah, Ga. Seven of her crew died.

Adding insult to injury, three weeks after the explosion in San Diego, the crippled warship, flanked by her flagship, limped past Fort Rosencrans and out to sea tow by the ships headed for the only naval yard on the West Coast, Mare Island, 2.5 miles northeast of San Francisco.

Along the route, Bennington lost her towline in rough seas and slammed into the protected cruiser USS Chicago, causing severe damage to Bennington’s bow. Had the ill-tempered god of the sea raised his trident in warning?

Please see us for more information.

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Perched high on the hill with panoramic white water coastline views! This stunning 4-bedroom/3 bath beauty features remodeled hardwood floors, upgraded kitchen and baths, 2 fireplaces, fresh exterior and landscaping, multiple entertaining spaces and 2 car garage. Perfect entertainers home with pool/patio swimming, spa, outdoor kitchen, wet bar and kegerator. Inseam, unobstructable ocean bay and night light views from living and entertaining spaces. If your at home, you might as well love it!!!

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Ocean Beach • $995,000
Neat as a pint! This OB wonder has a make-over from head to toe. Featuring 2 bedrooms /2 bath, gourmet kitchen, remodeled bathrooms, remodeled hardwood floors, brick fireplace, central heat, tankless water heater, newer windows, fresh landscaping and attached garage. Amazing use of space for outdoor office/guest room! Perfection situated on a corner lot with beautiful front and back yards, large patio for 4 person dining and just blocks to the local market, beach, cafes, bars and dining. Don’t wait, this is rare!!

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Note extensive damage to the fuel tanker Bennington following the 1946 explosion. One among several vessels of the same name to find mishap under Poseidon’s watchful eye.

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