

The San Bernardino County Sentinel

News of Note
from Around the
Largest County
in the Lower
48 States

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County Pension Liability To Zoom To More Than \$200 Million This Year

San Bernardino County's contribution to its employee pension system, which has seen steady and significant increases over the last several years, will escalate to beyond the \$200 million mark in 2014-15.

While previous increases in the county's contribution reflected the growing number of surviving retirees, next

year's increases will include an escalation of the percentage rate now being employed in the contribution formula as a consequence of a new state mandate under the Public Employee Pension Reform Act. That law requires that a governmental entity's pension contributions be consistent with actuarial projections.

Accordingly, the county board of supervisors authorized increasing, effective June 28, 2014, the county's contribution rates for its two tiers of employees.

In response to concern that escalating pension costs would threaten the county's solvency, retirement benefits were reduced for county employees who began par-

ticipating in the San Bernardino County Employees Retirement System on or after January 1, 2013.

San Bernardino County's scheduled contribution to the county employee retirement fund in the current fiscal year was \$179,068,000. By taking advantage of a provision of state law contained in Gov-

ernment Code Section 31582, which allows the county to advance pay part or all of the county's estimated annual retirement contribution within 30 days after the commencement of the county's fiscal year, the county was provided with a discounted simple interest rate of 3.68 percent, translating into a savings of **See P 5**

County Avoids Low Bid In Contract For Recorder Docs



Dennis Draeger

The county of San Bernardino will pay a Sun Valley-based company a cool \$5 million to micrograph and index documents filed with the assessor/recorder/county clerk's office over the next two years.

In 2010, San Bernardino County in a reorganization transferred the county recorder's function to the county assessor's office and the auditor-controller was made the county treasurer-tax collector.

Since that time, the office of the assessor, recorder and county clerk have been held by a single individual overseeing those departments.

At its last meeting in 2013, the board of supervisors approved a \$5,000,000 contract with PFA, Inc. of Sun Valley to provide micrographics, film conversion, indexing, and redaction services for the assessor-recorder-county clerk-recorder's division from January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2016, with two one-year options to extend the term of the contract.

According to San Bernardino County Assessor-Recorder-County Clerk Dennis Draeger, "The assessor-recorder-county clerk [will] utilize the services of PFA, Inc. to provide micrographics, film conversion, indexing, and redaction work for a three-year term, with two **See P 9**

Jon Mikels, Rancho Cucamonga Founder, Mayor & Later Supervisor, Dead At 66

Jon Mikels, one of the founders of the city of Rancho Cucamonga and a member of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors for four terms, died this week after an extended illness. He was 66.

In 1977 Mikels was working for the California Youth Authority when he successfully ran to become a member of



Jon Mikels
the charter Rancho Cucamonga city council

at the conclusion of an incorporation drive that melded the communities of Cucamonga, Alta Loma and Etiwanda into a municipality.

After he was on the city council, his political clout redounded to professional advantage when then-Second District County Supervisor Joe Kamansky successfully lobbied the presid-

ing judge of the county to appoint Mikels, who possessed a degree in psychology from Cal State LA, a masters degree in behavioral science from Cal State Dominguez Hills and a masters degree in public administration from USC, court coordinator at the West Valley Courthouse, which was then located at Sixth

Street and Mountain Avenue in Ontario. After several of his older council colleagues rotated into the position of Rancho Cucamonga mayor, Mikels was chosen for that honor in 1982. In 1986, he successfully vied against incumbent San Bernardino County Second District Supervisor Cal McElwain.

The then-38- **See P 4**

Adelanto PC Chairwoman Hit With School Vandalism Charge



Lori Yuan

ADELANTO—Adelanto Planning Commission Chairwoman Lori Yuan has been charged

with felony vandalism stemming from a June 26 incident on the campus of Desert Trails Elementary School.

Allegedly, Yuan's action and that of another parent of a child attending the school, Chrissy Guzman, was prompted by their dissent over the successful parent takeover of Desert Trails Elementary by a group of parents and their out-of-community supporters using Califor- **See P 6**

County Appeals Ruling Letting State Seize Loan To RDA For Cedar Glen Fire Repairs

The county of San Bernardino has struck back at the state of California and its Department of Finance over a ruling the latter made which called for the distribution of the \$9 million dollar remainder of a county loan to the county's redevelopment agency to other governmental agencies in 2012.

That move came after the state shuttered redevelopment agencies throughout the

state. The county had not gone along with the diversion of all of the county redevelopment agency's money because \$10 million had been loaned to the county redevelopment agency by the county to redress devastation in the Cedar Glen area of the San Bernardino Mountains in the wake of so called Old Fire in 2003, which destroyed 345 homes.

Following the fire and its devastation, the

county created a disaster project area and a disaster recovery plan. The county then loaned the county redevelopment agency \$10 million from the county's general fund to pay for infrastructure improvements.

As the county and the redevelopment agency were working toward the implementation of the plan, the state dissolved redevelopment agencies statewide and the California Depart- **See P 2**

Steinorth In Bid To Replace Morrell In 40th State Assembly District

Rancho Cucamonga Councilman Marc Steinorth has declared himself a candidate in the anticipated contest to succeed Mike Morrell as assemblyman in the 40th District.

Morrell has not departed from the position he first captured in the lower chamber of the state legislature in 2010. The 40th Assembly District stretches

in an arc from Rancho Cucamonga on its western end through unincorporated portions of San Bernardino County along the foothills to a portion of the city of San Bernardino, the city of Highland, and into Redlands and Loma Linda.

Morrell has declared his intention to vie to replace State Senator Bill Emmerson in a special election to be held later

this year. Emmerson resigned from his post as state senator in the 23rd Senatorial District effective December 1.

Four others are competing with Morrell - Yucaipa Valley Water District Board Member Lonni Granlund, a Republican; Calimesa Councilman Jeff Hewett, a Libertarian; San Jacinto City Councilwoman Crystal Ruiz, a Republi-



Marc Steinorth

can; and Ameenah Fuller, a Rancho Cucamonga

Democrat who unsuccessfully sought election in the 25th State Senate District in 2012.

Given his incumbency in the Assembly and his superior fundraising capability, Morrell is considered the odds-on favorite to prevail in the race in the 23rd, in which 41 percent of the voters are registered as Republicans and 34 percent are affiliated with **See P 5**

County Appeals Sacramento Court's Ruling On State's Seizure Of Loan Made To RDA *from front page*

ment of Finance blocked the actual initiation of the disaster recovery plan.

In accordance with the 2010 legislation that closed down the state's redevelopment agencies, the California Department of Finance had jurisdiction in determining how money that remained in the pre-existing redevelopment agency accounts was and is to be disbursed. The California Department of Finance made a determination that all the money in the county redevelopment agency's accounts, including the \$9 million remaining from the county loan, would be allocated to local taxing entities.

The terms of the leg-

islation shutting the redevelopment agencies required that any legal challenge to the California Department of Finance's determination had to be filed in Sacramento Superior Court. The county indeed challenged the Department of Finance determination with regard to the Cedar Glen loan, filing suit on February 27, 2013. On May 24, 2013, the judge hearing the case, Sacramento County Superior Court Eugene L. Balonon, held a hearing on the matter. On July 24, Balonon entered a judgment upholding the California Department of Finance.

On December 2, 2013 the successor agency to the county redevelopment agency under protest remitted the unspent county loans.

On December 20, 2013, attorneys for San Bernardino County and the successor agency to the county develop-

ment agency – County Counsel Jean-Rene Basle, assistant county counsel Michelle Blake-more, and attorneys Amy Hoyt, J. Leah Castella, Susan Bloch and Nicholas Muscolino with the Oakland office of the Burke, Williams and Sorensen law firm – filed an appeal of Balonon's ruling with the Third District Court of Appeal. Michael Cohen, in his official capacity as director of the State of California Department of Finance, is named as the respondent.

According to the legal brief filed on December 20, "The Department of Finance's determination that the \$9 million county loan must be allocated to local taxing entities is unconstitutional. The Department of Finance's determination violates Article XIII Section 25.5(a) of the California Constitution because it changes local agencies' pro rata shares of prop-

erty tax revenue. The Department of Finance's determination violates Article XIII Section 24 because it reallocates the county's general fund money to other local agencies."

The brief further states, "This case involves the county's efforts to construct infrastructure that would provide basic services – water, roadways, and fire protection – to the residents of Cedar Glen, a community devastated by a catastrophic wildfire in 2003. The Department of Finance has thwarted those efforts through an arbitrary and capricious determination that a \$10 million loan that the county made in 2005 from its general fund to the county redevelopment agency to finance the infrastructure improvements and that remains largely unspent cannot be used for its intended purposes and instead must be distrib-

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uted to local taxing entities. This determination delivers a one two punch to the county: the county urgently needs the funds to complete the improvements to protect the community from the next wildfire. It will only recover those funds, if at all, over a protracted period. Meanwhile, the Department of Finance has given a windfall to other local taxing entities that have no entitlement to

money from the county's general fund. The loans are enforceable obligations that must be spent in accordance with the loan agreement and repaid to the county. The reallocation is plainly inequitable because it gives the other taxing entities a windfall of county general funds to which they have no claim whatsoever. The loan is needed to undertake the improvements that are required before most property owners can rebuild the homes destroyed in the Old Fire since most roads are now unusable and without a dependable water system owners do not want to take a chance at building without fire service protection."

The brief maintains "It is unjust for the Department of Finance and taxing entities to receive the unspent \$9 million from the county loan. The county accumulated the vast majority of the \$10 million loan from its own property tax revenue and local sales and use taxes. In its zeal to implement the [redevelopment agency] dissolution law, the Department of Finance has gone too far. It has ordered the transfer of county general fund money that the county loaned to the county redevelopment agency years earlier to finance sorely needed fire, water and road improvements for an area devastated by wild fires."

As of press time, Cohen had not been in his office for two consecutive days and was not available for comment.

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Glimpse Of SBC'S Past Needles to Demolish Route 66's Overland Motel

By Ruth Musser Lopez

Less than one month after meeting with a new government and grass-roots Route 66 (RT66) coalition formed to manage and protect the historic RT66 corridor in the wake of its resurgence as a world class visitor attraction, the six-member Needles City Council voted to take action towards demolishing one of the route's newer assets: the classic 1960s era Overland Motel at 710-712 West Broadway/Route 66 in Needles.

Dwarfing other motels during the 1960s and early 70s, the glitzy Overland represented increasing traffic along Route 66 and a respectable climax of the "mother road." However, after Interstate 40 was built, traffic patterns in Needles changed with larger hotels being constructed at freeway exit ramps drawing over-nighters away from the downtown corridor. Some twenty years after the Overland was constructed it was already struggling. The restaurant closed in the early 1980s. Laughlin and

its hotel-casinos just 35 minutes away also posed competition for Needles area lodging facilities and restaurants.

The 44-room, two-story motel with a lobby and large central parking area once sported a restaurant and swimming pool that could be seen while driving along the main street in downtown Needles. Currently it is being marketed as a Route 66 attraction 35 minutes from Laughlin, where potential "theme rooms would create another 'destination' for the reported 30 million Route 66 travelers last

litigation which the city of Needles has brought against Keith Enterprises, the assumed current owner, in case number CIVNS 1100085.

The reality of the historic preservation issue is that cost to the owner currently outweighs benefit to the owner. Generally it can be said that the cost burden of preserving historic structures along Route 66 is now on the back of just the property owners instead of spread over the entirety of those potentially benefiting from the maintenance and continued es-

ing the motel.

However, according to local internet blogger, Zach Lopez in his "ZachNews Service," city attorney John Pinkney reported unanimous votes in executive session on both authorizing the city manager and staff to initiate a Chapter 8 tax purchase of the property and authorizing legal council to obtain a court order permitting the property "receiver" to demolish the historic motel structure.

According to the county website, the next San Bernardino County tax sale is tentatively scheduled for May 2014.

ZachNews Service expressed the sentiment, "After years of sitting abandoned, collecting dust and trash, and a hangout place for vandals [to] do drugs inside, the old and abandoned Overland Hotel may be next to becoming demolished...This was good news to those in the community who have been sick and tired of seeing nothing done onto this property and being an eyesore to those driving into Downtown Needles, California to

the pitch to demolish crumbling service stops on Route 66 is contrary to the dialogue of stalwart Route 66 coalition members who are determined to develop a "Corridor Management Plan" (CMP) for the "Mother Road." The CMP currently being developed has been made possible by a \$103,000 grant for the project acquired from the Federal Highway Administration in 2012 at the behest of James Kemp, California state director of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). An 80/20 matching grant in services from the California Route 66 Association supplements that funding. This CMP would not just be used as a management tool but also as the first step toward designating Route 66 as a National Scenic Byway in need of preservation and federal funding to implement the management plan.

The coalition including representatives and stakeholders from the California Route 66 Association, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), county

- Jim Lopez and Linda Kidd, its mayor Edward T. Paget and his wife Jan, the city manager Rick Daniels, a representative of the Chamber of Commerce, Sue Godnick, and a representative of the Needles Downtown Business Alliance, Jan Jernigan, as well members of the Needles public at large, Robert and Lana Shaw, Linda Fitzpatrick and myself, who were informed of the possibility of funding that may soon be available to rescue declining historic properties along the historic site's linear corridor should a National Scenic Byway designation be approved.

While passing through the Needles historic district of Route 66, the bus tour participants of the coalition viewed numerous structures also considered important to the Scenic Byways designation, including: the El Garces Harvey House and train depot, the Claypool building and the many historic motels, storefronts and residences along its course which are yet to be inventoried and described for the management plan.

Monitoring, putting deterioration in check, reversing the decay, restoring, retooling, resurrecting, rehabilitating abandoned and deteriorating historic properties and "ghost" structures along the corridor between Needles and Barstow was said to be an important goal of many of the Route 66 coalition participants. Demolishing was not.

During 2013, the city of Needles destroyed, approved the destruction of, or turned their eyes while two other important historic structures along the portion of RT66 through Needles were razed: the historic green castle that once housed the Needles Dairy creamery (see Glimpse 9-13-13) and "Mansker's" two story railroad tie cabin (see *Sentinel's* Glimpse 7-12-13). This demolition

Continued on Page 12



The Overland Motel today.

year." It is advertised and listed for \$89,000 by Caleene Williams, the broker and listing agent. The asked for amount likely does not include the cost of back taxes owed and probably does not reflect the cost of

establishment of the entire package of assets and resources along RT66's corridor. The question remains: How many heritage structures can be demolished before Route 66 loses its character and charm?

After a little over an hour of deliberation behind closed doors, the Needles City Council, meeting in executive session on December 10, 2013 at a regular council meeting voted on "Whether to purchase property through San Bernardino County tax sale and price and terms - Negotiating Parties: County of San Bernardino through tax sale." The agenda item did not mention demolition of the motel.

On the open session agenda, action was scheduled to be taken to authorize the purchase of the property identified as Assessor's Parcel No. 0186-106-26-0000 (Overland Motel) via Chapter 8 Tax Sale. No further background, fiscal impact, timeline or environmental review was provided in the background information packet and no mention was made of demolish-



The Overland Motel in its heyday.

follow the historic and world famous Route 66 highway...Overall, many hope that those abandoned homes and properties get cleaned up or knocked down so to keep the community safe and clean." Eleven local Facebook readers gave that review a thumbs up. This, however, is not necessarily the sentiment of the wider Route 66 community who have yet to weigh in on the subject.

With "ghost" structures considered to represent imagery assets,

of San Bernardino, the National Park Service's Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, chambers of commerce, CalTrans, various tourism bureaus, local businesses, museums, grass-roots organizations and other Route 66 advocates were aboard the bus tour of Route 66 through Needles on December 4, 2013.

The evening before, on December 3, 2013, at Juicy's Restaurant in Needles, the coalition had met with members of the Needles City Council

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Jon Mikels, 1947-2013 from front page

year-old Mikels rapidly moved to become one of the dominant political figures in the region, ascending to chairmanship of the board of supervisors in 1990. While he was yet Rancho Cucamonga mayor, Mikels acceded to a regional political leadership role, that of chairman of Southern California Associated Governments. He was reappointed to the post of chairman after he became county supervisor.

Mikels held the chairmanship of a second regional planning agency, the South Coast Regional Air Quality Management District Board.

Throughout his quarter of a century as an elected official, Mikels oversaw what was the most dynamic period of growth for both of the entities he headed. Rancho Cucamonga, which consisted of 30,000 residents upon incorporation, saw accelerated growth during Mikels' tenure on the council, nearly tripling in population by the time he departed to become supervisor. That frenzied pace continued for the duration of the time Mikels represented the Second District – consisting of the western portion of Fontana, Wrightwood, Lytle Creek, the unincorporated frontier between Rancho Cucamonga and Fontana, all of Rancho Cucamonga and Upland, San Antonio Heights and Mt. Baldy. San Bernardino County, which had eclipsed the million population mark at about the same time Mikels became supervisor, maintained its explosive pattern of growth while he remained in power at the county seat. His district in the later portion of his tenure included Crestline and Lake Gregory and a portion of the San Bernardino Mountain Community extending nearly to Lake Arrowhead. Today, eleven years after Mikels left office, Rancho Cucamonga boasts

nearly 170,000 residents as the third largest city in the county. San Bernardino County's population today exceeds 2.1 million.

Even with the aggressive land use policies that occurred under his watch, Mikels nevertheless maintained a reputation as a moderate in terms of growth, whose accommodation of development extended only as far as the willingness of project proponents to participate in defraying a major portion of the cost of the infrastructure needed for that development.

Mikels' educational background in psychology, behavioral science and public administration equipped him when he was a Rancho Cucamonga official with the tools to get along with others, and handle the onslaught of growth that was emanating further inland from Orange and Los Angeles counties, and the accompanying self interest and influence of developers. He sought to temper the growth and maximize concessions from project proponents with design and land use intensity standards that were more exacting than were then current in other communities. He also successfully pushed for historical preservation and tree-saving ordinances. This approach did not endear him to some elements of the building industry, who saw such measures as ones that interfered with their profit margins.

While he evaded scandal, Mikels was subject to controversy.

In 1986, as he was putting on an energetic campaign against McElwain for supervisor, he was deposed as mayor by his city council colleagues who sensed that his political ambition might leave him vulnerable to being influenced by campaign donors. As supervisor, Mikels became estranged with the political leadership in Rancho Cucamonga over development issues involving land in the city's sphere of influence as well as the divided

city council's decision, in 1989, to fire city manager Lauren Wasserman, who had headed city staff throughout Mikels' tenure there.

In particular, Mikels was embittered when a prominent developer, Joe DiIorio, who had relocated from Orange County to make heavy investments in and around the area that became Rancho Cucamonga, saw a large scale project by his development company, the Caryn Company, falter in the early 1990s because of difficulty he encountered in dealing with the city of Rancho Cucamonga. DiIorio had named his company after his daughter who was killed in a traffic accident and he had been one of the sponsors of the drive to incorporate Rancho Cucamonga. Early on, while Mikels was still serving as an elected official with the city, DiIorio experienced success with his development projects and was in seeming consonance with the higher design standards Rancho Cucamonga was insisting upon to distinguish itself from its surrounding cities.

A few years after Mikels left the city to become supervisor, however, DiIorio saw his financial empire collapse when he became embroiled in litigation with the city of Rancho Cucamonga over issues related to his entitlement to proceed with his project. This created a technical default in more than \$20 million in outstanding loans secured by the property he was developing. One of the loan requirements was that there be no lawsuits encumbering the project. The loans defaulted when the suit was filed. The lawsuit held up the project. As the project stalled, DiIorio, who had been one of Mikels' major political backers, took his own life.

In the late 1990s, Mikels was seen as a rising star in the Republican Party. But two of his family members – his wife, Marjorie Musser Mikels, and sister-in-law, Ruth Musser-Lo-

pez, began to actively campaign against then-Republican Governor Pete Wilson's effort to site a nuclear waste repository in Ward Valley at the northeastern end of the county. Though the county, including Jon Mikels, initially endorsed Wilson's plan, a petition drive against the nuclear dump proceeded. Eventually, Mikels and his colleagues on the board endorsed opposition to the project, ultimately resulting in the project proposal being abandoned. The break with Wilson, then the most powerful Republican in California, curtailed Mikels' political advancement.

As Second District Supervisor, Mikels opposed having the county's flood control division undertake at taxpayer expense stormwater diversion infrastructure improvements at the Colonies at San Antonio and Colonies Crossroads projects, which were

developed on what had formerly been regional flood control and water recharge property in northeast Upland. His colleagues on the board of supervisors deferred to Mikels' judgment with regard to this issue within his district. This led to wrangling with the developers of the property, the Colonies Partners, who bankrolled in large measure the 2002 election effort by then-Rancho Cucamonga Councilman Paul Biane against Mikels. Biane ousted Mikels as supervisor, bringing the curtain down on Mikels' political career. Simultaneously, the Colonies Partners sued the county over flood control issues at the Colonies developments. That lawsuit was settled in 2006 with a \$102 million payout to the Colonies Partners by the county.

Dennis Stout, Rancho Cucamonga's first directly elected mayor after the city went to

direct mayoral elections in 1986 and later a two-term district attorney, was close to Mikels. In the maiden 1977 Rancho Cucamonga municipal election, Stout had been with Mikels one of the 36 candidates for the five-member city council. Stout ran thirteenth in the race, losing out to Mikels, who placed fifth; along with Jim Frost, the city's first mayor; Phil Schlosser; Mike Palombo; and Charlie West.

"I first got to know Jon through my wife," Stout said, "before the city incorporated. His wife and mine worked in the department of social services at that time as social workers. That is how I met him.

"I liked Jon," Stout said. "He and I were friends. He was beneficial to the city. He was bright. You usually do not find people in local politics who are as educated as he was. He had

Continued on Page 6

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Steinorth from front page

the Democratic Party.

Steinorth, who was elected to the Rancho Cucamonga City Council 2012, is an active Republican. In the 40th Assembly District, 38.3 percent of the voters are registered Democrats and 36.7 percent are registered with the GOP.

With the slight Democratic registration advantage and Morrell's narrow 1,018 vote victory over Democrat Russ Warner in November 2012, the 40th is considered one of the most targeted legislative districts in the state.

Steinorth believes he can energize the 40th District's voters in the same way he did with voters in Rancho Cucamonga two years ago.

"I bring to the table 20 years of private sector business experience," said Steinorth, who runs an advertising and marketing firm in Rancho Cucamonga, Atlas Buying Group. "In addition to understanding the daily challenge of running a small business, I also have public sector experience on the city council. I have seen the impact of the state gov-

ernment's action on the business community. I am equally aware of what many in the private sector and in the general public do not realize, which is the degree to which local governments are challenged by having to deal with mandates by the state, every bit as much as small businesses must deal with mandates by the state. I am convinced that the state government does not have enough private sector business representation. It is easy to say you want to go to Sacramento and create jobs. That is the mantra we have heard for the last four or five years from our politicians. What is different about my candidacy is I have actual experience in helping to create and grow businesses."

Steinorth said that to be effective as an advocate for the private sector within the context of serving in government, one has to be prepared to tirelessly promote the application of common sense to the regulatory function of government. Steinorth addressed the impact of state mandates on local government.

"AB 109, the public safety realignment or prison realignment to re-

duce prison overcrowding was not intended to be a threat to my family's safety but that is the end result," Steinorth said. "The state has simply ignored the prison overcrowding problem for more than 20 years. This most recent emergency is really nothing more than an example of poor planning by our legislative leaders.

"As the state funneled money toward other priorities, our local court system, has received \$600 million less in funding," he continued. "In dealing with that in the only way she can, our county's presiding judge, Marsha Slough, is reducing services to the point where we no longer have the full service court system we enjoyed. The Rancho Cucamonga Courthouse is now going to be devoted entirely to criminal cases. The Fontana Courthouse will handle civil and traffic cases. Most of the civil cases and some of the criminal cases will be handled out of the San Bernardino Courthouse. This is a tremendous challenge beyond being an inconvenience to our population in this county. You have residents, especially ones in the far

reaches of our county, out in the desert communities who will have to travel four hours one way to get to court. A Rancho Cucamonga resident who for one reason or another does not have access to a car and must use public transportation to get to court in San Bernardino will need to spend upwards of two hours travelling one way to court. That is the result of decisions made at the state level where the impact on us is tremendous."

Steinorth did not shrink from expressing himself as a dyed-in-the-wool Republican. He said the numbers are against his party statewide, but that the principles and values the GOP embraces are sorely needed in Sacramento. He said he believes many voters are beginning to see that the Democratic supermajority in the state capital is contrary to balanced governance.

"I see the pendulum starting to shift," he said. "[State Republican Leader] Jim Brulte is leading us. The Republican Party has to pick up two seats to break the two-thirds majority Democratic control in Sacramento. Single par-

ty control has not proven to be a healthy process of governing. Divided government, with its checks and balances, was how the system was designed to function. As Republicans we need to hold onto the 40th. I think my candidacy can be the start of a dialogue about all this. We can start the change right here."

He has a familiarity with the district that extends beyond Rancho Cucamonga, Steinorth said.

"The way the 40th is configured, it contains roughly three-fourths of Rancho Cucamonga," he said. "It stretches to cover San Bernardino and Highland Loma Linda and Redlands. When I was a kid, I lived in San

Bernardino and went to elementary school there. I attended St. Thomas Aquinas High School in San Bernardino my freshman year before my family moved to Ramstein AFB in Germany while my father was in the military. When I was attending college at U.C. Riverside, I bought my first house in Highland. One of the first businesses I started was in Highland."

Steinorth now hopes to take his long developed roots in the community, experience in private business, and service on the city council to Sacramento to represent the people of the Inland Empire in the Assembly.

County Pension Cost Hits \$200M from front page

\$6,589,943. Thus San Bernardino County actually paid \$172,478,057 into the retirement fund for this year.

In the fiscal year commencing on July 1, 2014, the county is due to see its pension liability zoom up by \$23.37 million to \$202,438,000.

The county's pension contribution costs have been escalating by an average of \$20,107,480 per year over the last two years.

In 2011, the county made a \$132,263,097 prepayment to the board of retirement to cover the cost of pensions for retired employees during the 2011-12 fiscal year, reflecting a prepayment discount of \$5,299,603 from the \$137,562,700 owed by the county as its annual contribution to the retirement fund that year. In 2012, the county made a \$154,626,037 prepayment to the board of retirement to cover the cost of pensions for retired employees during the 2012-13 fiscal year, reflecting a prepayment discount of \$5,907,863 from the \$160,533,900 owed by the county as its annual contribution to the retirement fund through June 30, 2013.

Pursuant to the board of supervisors' action on December 17, the retire-

ment contribution rates for the county's first tier (i.e., long term) general employees will increase from 18.96% to 20.24% of compensation earnable. The retirement contribution rate for second tier [i.e., hired since December 2012] general employees will escalate from 16.53% to 18.02% of pensionable compensation. The county's contribution rate for first tier safety employees will increase from 39.99% to 43.15% of compensation earnable. The county contribution rate for second tier safety employees will go from 32.9% to 37.02% of pensionable compensation. The Superior Court retirement contribution rate for first tier general members will jump from 19.87% to 21.75% of compensation earnable. The Superior Court retirement contribution rate for second tier general members will rise from 17.44% to 19.53% of pensionable compensation. The non-county/special districts retirement contribution rate for first tier general members will increase from 27.69% to 29.91% of compensation earnable. The increase in the retirement contribution rate for non-county/special districts general second tier members will entail a change from

Continued on Page 11

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Jon Mikels
from page 4

a degree in public administration. During the infancy of Rancho Cucamonga he was innovative, and instigated some of the things that made the city unique. He was instrumental in attracting other people with good ideas. He wasn't as threatened as some other elected officials by having people on the planning commission who might prove to be future candidates for city council."

Among those were Stout, whom Mikels first appointed to the Rancho Cucamonga Municipal Advisory Committee and later to the planning commission. It was from the platform of being a planning commission member that Stout successfully ran for mayor in 1986.

It was a feather in Rancho Cucamonga's

hat to have one of its young lion's accede to the board of supervisors, Stout said.

After Mikels moved on to the county, DiIorio became involved in a protracted dispute with the city over his large planned residential subdivision, which was to be built on land that lay both within the city limits as well as north of the city in the unincorporated county area. DiIorio, a graduate of Harvard Business School, sought to use his status as one of the city's founders and his connection to Mikels to make headway in his negotiations with the city. When the city and DiIorio did not iron out their differences, Mikels sided with DiIorio.

"After Jon got on the board of supervisors the relationship between the county and the city became somewhat strained over what should be going on in the county area

within the city's sphere of influence," Stout said. "The differences were over what the density should be there and we weren't in agreement over some design specifications as well. The city wanted tile roofs and a few other things. There was some tough discussion while I was still mayor and as a city we took the position that we wanted our design and density criteria if that property was going to be brought into the city. We took the position that if they did not build to our design standards and density specifications, they could build but we would not annex the property. It would have to stay in the county. What occurred, in the end, was they built to our design standards but at greater density than we would have allowed. The property was eventually annexed. So there was a compromise."

Stout said Mikels had strength of character. "He was able to stand up to people who had money, big money" Stout said. "It takes courage for a politician to be able to do that."

Moreover, Stout said, "There are others who have not given him the credit he was due. The consortium that came about so that the Etiwanda storm drain system near the I-15 Freeway could be built was almost entirely his doing. It involved the cities of Fontana, Rancho Cucamonga, and Ontario, along with the county and the federal government which consisted of the Army Corps of Engineers. It was very involved and required intense cooperation and coordination. It took someone with his skill and patience and vision, his political ability and negotiating capability to make that work."

Stout said Mikels' talent as a political leader was beneficial at a regional level.

"He also deserves credit for protecting the right-of-way for the 210 Freeway," Stout said. "Other cities allowed development in the area where the freeway had been planned because they did not think, after years and decades of delay, that it would actually be built. It took foresight and courage to protect that right-of-way. People do not realize how much more difficult it would have been to build the 210 Freeway if that corridor had not been protected."

As a relatively young man in office in Rancho Cucamonga, Mikels was looking ahead toward long term goals that will be appreciated by future generations, Stout said. "He was part of the leadership in the city that set aside 100 acres obtained

from Lewis Homes for Central Park," Stout said. "At that time the city had no park land and the breakthrough the city achieved in having set aside 100 acres was a major accomplishment."

Despite Mikels' considerable accomplishments, Stout said, he probably did not reach his full potential when his political career was foreclosed in 2002. Mikels never ran for office again.

"My belief is he grew frustrated with politics at the county level," Stout said. "At that point it had turned into a vicious bloodsport."

A lifelong smoker, Mikels was felled by lung, prostate and bladder cancer. He is survived by his ex-wife, three daughters and seven grandchildren, his brother, sister and mother.



Yuan from front page

nia's controversial "Parent Trigger" Law.

The Parent Empowerment Act, authored by former state senator Gloria Romero and passed by the legislature in 2010, enables a majority of parents at a school at

which students score as low-performers on state academic tests to force a district to implement significant reforms, ranging from replacing the principal and up to half the staff to reopening the school as a charter academy. That process is known by the colloquialism "parent trigger."

At Desert Trails El-

ementary School, which falls within the Adelanto Elementary School District, a significant number of the students there had parents whose first language is not English. For the seven years between 2004 and 2011, Desert Trails students had the lowest scores within the district on state standardized aca-

demic tests. The school's students have also collectively scored in the bottom 10 percent of all California elementary schools. In the school's 2011 graduating sixth grade class 72 percent of students were not proficient with the English language and 70 percent were not proficient in math. Since 2007 Desert

Trails has been classified as a failing school.

Pursuant to the Parent Empowerment Act, a parent union was formed by parents at Desert Trails Elementary in 2011, in large measure at the instigation of the Los Angeles-based nonprofit Parent Revolution, which is devoted to challenging the traditional authority

of school districts.

On January 12, 2012 the parent union submitted 466 signatures on petitions asking the district to undertake a set of what the parents union maintained would be reforms at the severely underperforming school.

Those petitions, which called upon the district to sack the school's principal, David Mobley, and surrender to the school's parents authority in hiring his successor, infuse in the new principal hiring authority for the school's faculty, reduce class sizes and increase the number of school days and instructional hours, and include more science, history and art in the curriculum, were sufficient to meet the requirements of the Parent Empowerment Act, parent union members believed. The parent union subsequently modified that agenda to request that the school be converted to a charter academy, offering an intensified curriculum.

A group of parents opposed to the parent takeover of the school formed, including Yuan and Guzman, and went

Continued on Page 7

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Bloody End To 2013 And Inauspicious Start Of 2014 With 8 County Murders

2013 closed out and 2014 embarked with a spate of murderous mayhem across San Bernardino County. From approximately mid-day on December 30 to just after 1 a.m. January 1, there were at least six homicides, one suicide and one attempted murder in the cities of San Bernardino, Highland, Chino and Fontana. Five of those involved murders by close family members.

At about 8:30 p.m. Monday December 30, Fontana police officers were summoned to a residence in the 7300 block of Palmetto Avenue, where they discovered the bodies of Ramon Miranda, 38, and Silvia Miranda, 34, and their son Ramon Jr., 12, and daughter Rayna, 10.

Investigators had been alerted to the situ-

ation by Silvia Miranda's 16-year-old son, who did not live with his mother and stepfather and half-



Chino New Year's Eve homicide suspect

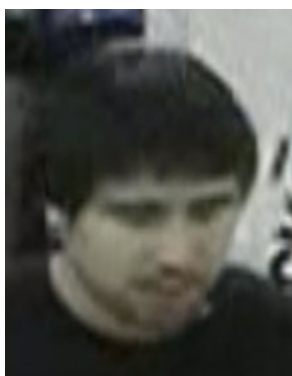
brother and half-sister. The 16-year-old had discovered the bodies after he came to the house that day after being unable to reach his mother by phone.

Investigators believe that all four died at the hand of Ramon Miranda. A handgun was found at the scene. Silvia Miranda and the two children sustained multiple gunshot wounds, and Ramon

Miranda expired from a single gunshot wound to the head, according to Fontana Police.

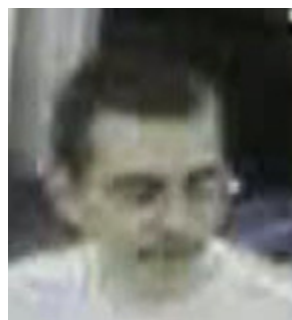
No motive in the suicide murders has been established.

Around 9 p.m. on December 31, Robert Sanchez and another unidentified man were wounded in a hail of gunfire near the 2800 block of Benson Avenue in Chino, proximate to Chino High School. Of-



Chino New Year's Eve homicide suspect

ficers responding to a call found Sanchez and the other man prone in an alley with multiple



Chino New Year's Eve homicide suspect

gunshot wounds. Both were transported to Chino Valley Medical Center, where Sanchez, 28, was pronounced dead.

The other man remains in critical condition at press time.

The Chino Police Department has released photos of what are described as three suspects. Those photos were taken from a security camera at a nearby busi-

ness at a time just prior to the shootings. The three men in the photos are described by police as adult Hispanics who were said to have fled on foot northbound on Benson Avenue.

Detectives investigating the case appealed to anyone with information regarding the shootings to contact the Chino Police Department at 909-628-1234.

At about the same time that Sanchez was gun down, an as-yet unidentified 38-year old man in San Bernardino narrowly escaped with his life when he was confronted by 22-year-old Jose Lopez outside the Stater Bros. grocery store at 977 W. Kendall Ave in North San Bernardino.

According to police, Lopez was driving a red Chevrolet Suburban

and fired upon the victim multiple times before driving off. Shortly thereafter, a Cal State San Bernardino police officer spotted the Suburban and pulled Lopez over. A weapon was found in the vehicle. Witnesses subsequently identified him as the shooter. He was arrested and charged with attempted murder and is being held at Central Detention Center in San Bernardino on \$1 million bail.

Less than two hours after 2014 had commenced, a 26-year-old woman was found dead with upper body trauma in Highland after police were notified of a disturbance in the area.

The sheriff's department was called at 1:54 a.m. Wednesday, Jan.

Continued on Page 12

Adelanto Planning Commissioner Charged With Vandalism from page 6

to work obtaining rescissions of many of the signatures on the petitions.

In February 2012, the school district, to whom the parent trigger petitions had been entrusted, announced that it had validated the signatures of only 317 of the 466 signatures on the petitions. The Desert Trails Parent Union, represented by a law firm on retainer with Parent Revolution, Los

Angeles-based Kirkland & Ellis, demanded a recount and reconsideration of that invalidation of the petition effort. After the district conducted that recount, the board, on March 28, 2012, voted unanimously to give a final rejection to the reconsideration of the parent trigger petitions, finding they fell 20 signatures short of the 321 signatures needed.

In response, Mark Holscher, an attorney with Kirkland & Ellis, filed on behalf of five of the members of the parents union – Doreen Diaz, Kathy Duncan, Teresa Rogers, Olivia

Zamarripa and Bartola Del Villar – a petition for a writ of mandate and a complaint in Victorville Superior Court seeking a court order that the district verify the signatures and allow the Parent Trigger process to advance, as well as asking for the recognition of the educational rights of students at Desert Trails.

Judge Steve Malone, to whom the case was assigned, restored 97 of the signatures tossed out by the district, ruling that the district did not have the authority or a basis in law to discount signatures that proponents

gathered and the district had abused its discretion in doing so. By his ruling Malone raised the number of qualified signatures to well above 50 percent. He ordered the Adelanto Elementary School District to accept the petition as filed by the parent union within 30 days and seek proposals from charter school operators to take over Desert Trails.

The ruling made the Desert Trails Parent Union the first group to successfully enact California's 2010 Parent Empowerment Act, although the district did not get the reorganization in place in time to charterize the school in the 2012-13 school year.

Subsequently, LaVerne Preparatory Academy was accepted as the operator of Desert Trails, and beginning in September has been operating the school.

Less than three months prior to that, according to the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office, Yuan and Guzman caused in excess of \$8,000 worth of damage to a classroom at the school by spraying ketchup and mustard on

the carpet and walls of the room. Both Yuan and Guzman had served as parent volunteers at the school while it was still under the control of the Adelanto School District and as such, according to the district attorney's office, had access to several of the school's classrooms, including the one that had been vandalized.

Yuan and Guzman were not alone in opposing the parent trigger effort. Many parents of students at Desert Trails Elementary and within the Adelanto School District as well as observers outside the district considered the drama in the Adelanto School District to be an unseemly spectacle, with agitators in the parent trigger movement seeking to exploit large numbers of parents at Desert Trail Elementary School whose own educational shortcomings, including a lack of facility in the English language, contributed to the poor academic performance of their own children.


The district discovered the vandalism on June 26 and contacted the Adelanto Police De-

partment, which is a subdivision of the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department. An investigation was conducted.





It has not yet been publicly disclosed how sheriff's department investigators came to the conclusion that Yuan and Guzman were involved or what evidence exists to support that conclusion. It is unknown, as well, whether there were other suspects considered during that investigation.

On December 2, the district attorney's office preferred electronically filed PC 594(B)(1) charges, felony vandalism entailing damages of more than \$400, against both Yuan and Guzman. The complaint seeks restitution equal to the damage done. They are scheduled for arraignment on January 13 in Victorville Superior Court Department 9.

At press time, Yuan, who serves on the planning commission at the pleasure of the Adelanto City Council, had not been removed from her appointed position.



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Eleven Bald Eagles Seen In Southern California During December Count

SAN BERNARDINO December 21, 2013—On Saturday December 21st, the first bald eagle count of the winter was conducted by local Federal and State biologists and volunteers around



several lakes in the southern California.

A grand total of 11 eagles (7 adults and 4 juveniles) were observed at the lake areas during the 1-hour count. Six eagles (2 adults, 4 juveniles) were observed in the Big Bear/Baldwin Lake area; 2 adult eagles at Lake Arrowhead; 2 adult eagles at Silverwood Lake; and 1 adult eagle at Lake Perris. Juvenile eagles are distinguished

by a brown head and tail; adults are recognized by the famous white head and tail - it takes 4-5 years to acquire full adult coloration. Juvenile eagles are the same size as the adults.

Approximately 99 observers participated in the 1-hour eagle census (41 at Big Bear area, 6 at Lake Arrowhead, 30 at Silverwood Lake, and 22 at Lake Perris. The count coordinators from the Forest Service and State Recreation Areas would like to thank those volunteers for their dedication in getting up early and participating in the eagle census. The success of the eagle counts are entirely dependent on the volunteers!

The remaining bald eagle counts for this winter are scheduled for the following Saturday mornings: January 11, February 8, and March 8. No experience is needed. Signing up ahead of time is unne-

cessary. Those participating can just show up at the designated time and location, dressed warmly, with binoculars and a watch.

Big Bear Lake area volunteers will meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Forest Service's Big Bear Discovery Center on North

weather conditions – an outgoing message will be left by 6:30 am on the morning of the count if it has to be cancelled. Contact the Discovery Center (909-382-2790) for information about Eagle Celebrations. There will also be a free slideshow about bald ea-

farr or 909-382-2816) for more information. Please call 909-382-2832 for cancellation due to winter weather conditions – an outgoing message will be left by 6:30 am on the morning of the count if it has to be cancelled.

Silverwood Lake

information about volunteering or taking an eagle tour (760-389-2303 between 8:00 and 4:00; or email: khwilliams@parks.ca.gov).

Lake Hemet volunteers should plan on meeting at the Lake Hemet Grocery Store at 8:30 a.m. for orientation. Contact Anne Poopatanapong (apoopatanapong@fs.fed.us or 909-382-2935) for more information.

Lake Perris State Recreation Area volunteers should plan to meet at the Lake Perris Regional Indian Museum at 8:00 for orientation. Contact the office for more information at 951-940-5600.

See websites for additional information about the San Bernardino National Forest (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/san-bernardino/>) and the California State Recreation Areas (www.parks.ca.gov).



Shore Drive for orientation. Contact Drew Farr (dpfarr@fs.fed.us or 909-382-2816) for more information. Please call 909-382-2832 for cancellation due to winter

gles at 11:00.

Lake Arrowhead/Lake Gregory volunteers will meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Skyforest Ranger Station for orientation. Contact Drew Farr (dp-

State Recreation Area volunteers should plan to meet at the Visitor Center at 8:00 a.m. for orientation. Contact Kathy Williams or Mark Wright for more

Scott Markovich Candidate for Assembly District #33

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Assessor's Office Document Contract from front page

one-year options to extend the term of the contract. This contract is necessary to support assessor-recorder-county clerk's current and future information management plans and will allow assessor-recorder-county clerk to function in a fiscally-responsible and business-like manner."

Draeger continued, "This contract includes four distinct types of work, all of which are vital to the daily operation of the recorder division. The first type of work, micrographics, involves converting scanned images to microfilm and vice versa. More than 550,000 documents were recorded by assessor-recorder-county clerk in

calendar year 2012, and all of those documents were received in image form or were scanned in-house. Those documents are then converted to microfilm to preserve permanent county records as mandated by state law. The second type of work, film conversion, places digital, microfiche and film images of documents on silver or Diazo film for more durable preservation. The third type of work consists of indexing fields on recorded documents that can then be used to retrieve the document images within the recorder's system. The fourth type of work, redaction, involves creating a public record version of each official record by redacting the first five digits of each social security number found in an official record, as mandated by Government

Code Section 27301. All four types of work will involve current documents; in addition, documents dating back to January 1, 1980, will be redacted as mandated by Government Code Section 27301."

According to Draeger, PFA has had the county contract for these services since 2006. He said the county sought bids on the service in April, obtaining bids from seven interested vendors, HOV Services of Carson; CSI Computing System Innovations of Apopka, Florida; Extract Systems of Madison, Wisconsin; American Cadastre LLC of Herndon, Virginia; Xerox ACS Enterprise Solutions of San Ramon; PFA; and Midwest Micro Imaging of Golden Valley, Minnesota.

"Staff from the assessor-recorder-county clerk's office and the

purchasing department reviewed all of the proposals and independently evaluated each proposal's merit based on technical ability, cost and references," Draeger said. "To determine technical ability, the evaluators took care to note minimum vendor and proposal requirements and rated the vendors on understanding of the assessor-recorder-county clerk's needs, accurate and complete description of technical processes, ability to handle sensitive data, ability to meet timelines, and experience. The vendors were asked to provide costs per unit of service instead of estimating an overall contract amount. Requesting costs per unit of service is more realistic than requesting an overall contract amount because the work is very technical and involves

many components, the amount of work required will fluctuate with the activity of the real estate industry, and the vendor will be completing additional preservation projects of county records. Estimates of an overall contract amount could have resulted in a vendor significantly over- or under-bidding the contract.

Providing costs per unit of service also reduced the likelihood of unanticipated costs developing during the contract."

According to Draeger, "The evaluation committee recommended PFA for a contract to provide micrographics, film conversion, indexing, and redaction services to the assessor-recorder-county clerk's office based on the cumulative decision that their technical ability exceeded the ability of the other vendors and

their references were superior. PFA was not consistently the lowest or highest bidder when comparing vendors' costs. However, due to the technical nature of the work involved, accuracy was felt to be more critical than cost. PFA provides an accuracy rate of 99.95% with quality assurance controls at no additional charge. Due to a previous protest regarding redaction services, great effort was taken to assure uniformity and fairness during the evaluation process. Despite staff's effort, an appeal to the decision to award the contract to PFA was received by the purchasing department. The purchasing agent communicated with the vendor and addressed the questions put forth in the protest."



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San Bernardino County Coroner Reports

Coroner case #701400012 & #701400013 — At 5:53 AM on 01/01/2014, the San Bernardino Police Department received a 911 call from a male stating he just killed his wife and daughter. Officers responded to the 300 block of W. 29th St. and found a male at the residence who had attempted suicide, but survived. Also found at the scene were Miraflor Durante, age 51, and Jaira Sartorio, age 6, who were pronounced dead at the scene. The deaths are being investigated by San Bernardino Police Department. An autopsy will be done to determine the cause of death on both females. [12012014 1906 CN]

Coroner case #701400003 — At 1:54 AM on 01/ 01/2014, the San Bernardino County Sheriff Department was called to the 7000 block of Elm Avenue, Highland, for a disturbance. Upon arrival they found that Tyisha Carrell, a 26 year old resident of San Bernardino, had suffered upper body trauma. Carrell was declared dead on scene by Cal Fire Department personnel. The incident is being investigated by the San Bernardino County Sheriff Department Homicide Division. [12012014 1859 CN]

Coroner Case #701309855 — On 12/31/2013, at 8:58 PM, Chino Police Department officers responded to a 911 call for shots fired in the 1200 block of Benson Ave, in Chino and found 28 year old Robert Sanchez, a resident of Chino, with trauma to the upper body. Sanchez was transported to Chino Valley Medical Center where he was pronounced dead at 9:35 PM. An autopsy will be conducted to determine the cause of death. Chino Police Department is investigating the incident. [01012014 0445 EM]

Coroner case #701309568/701309569/701309570/701309571 — On 12/30/2013, at about 8:00 PM, Fontana Police responded to the 7300 block of Palmetto Avenue reference four people found deceased inside a home. 38 year-old Ramon Miranda, 34 year-old Silvia Miranda, 10 year-old Rayna Miranda, and 12 year-old Ramon Miranda Jr., were confirmed deceased at 8:38 PM. Fontana Police Homicide is handling the investigation. [123113 1430 TC]

Coroner Case #701309563 — On 12/30/2013, at 9:20 PM, a White Female adult, 30-40 years of age, was walking in the area of 14 Street and Yucaipa Blvd. when she was struck by a pick-up truck. Paramedics transported her to Redlands Community Hospital where she was pronounced dead at 9:56 PM. Her name will be released pending identification and notification of the next of kin. An autopsy will be conducted to determine the cause of death. The San Bernardino County Sheriff Department is investigating the collision. Name released: Vivian Saucedo, age: 33 a resident of Yucaipa. [12312013 0120 EM]

Coroner case #701309498 — At 5:35 PM on Sunday morning, 12/28/2013, Redlands Police were called to a residence in the 400 block of Doyle Ave., for the report of an assault. Police and Redlands Fire arrived at the scene to find 46-year-old Ines Hernandez dead in her home. The incident is under investigation by the Redlands Police Department. [12/28/13 CN 2046]

Coroner case #701309485 — At approximately 11:26 PM on Friday, 12/27/2013, Dominic Sierra, a 38 year old resident of Highland, was killed in a traffic collision during a law enforcement intervention with Redlands Police Department personnel. Sierra was traveling northbound on Orange St., when he failed to negotiate a left curve in the roadway approxiamtely .5 mile south of Boulder, in Highland. He was transported to Loma Linda University Medical Center where he was pronounced dead at 12:19 AM on December 28, 2013. The San Bernardino Sheriff's Department Major Accident Investigation Team (MAIT) is investigating the collision. [12282013 CN 0524]

Coroner case #s 701309456-701309457 — On Friday, 12/27/2013, at 5:20 AM, officers from the California Highway Patrol were called to the area of Interstate 10 at the Cedar Avenue off ramp, Bloomington, for the report of a single vehicle rollover collision. Upon arrival they found that a black 2009 Honda had been traveling eastbound

Continued on Page 11

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Coroner Reports from page 10

on the Interstate 10, when it left the paved road near the Cedar Avenue off-ramp. After leaving the paved road the vehicle rolled. David Thomas Navarro (701309456), a 36 year old resident of San Bernardino, and Anna Sylvia Gonzalez (701309457), a 36 year old resident also from San Bernardino were pronounced dead on scene by San Bernardino County Fire Department Personnel. The California Highway Patrol is investigating the incident. [12272013 1710 GB]

Coroner case #701309428 — On Thursday, 12/26/2013, at 9:00 AM, Daniel Ruvalcaba, age 32, a resident of San Bernardino and a female friend were walking on the shoulder of east bound Rialto Ave, near Santa Fe Way in San Bernardino. A 2006 Toyota minivan traveling east bound in the number #1 lane lost control, drifted to the right and struck both walkers. Ruvalcaba was transported to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center where he was pronounced dead at

9:32 AM. The San Bernardino Police Department is investigating the incident. [12272013 1710 GB]

Coroner case #701309431 — On 12/26/2013, at 10:00 AM, the California Highway Patrol responded to Interstate 10 and County Line Road, Calimesa, for a vehicle collision. They found Hyanyu Wang, a 51 year old resident of Hacienda Heights, had been traveling westbound on Interstate 10, when he lost control of his vehicle, left the paved road and struck a tree located on the northern shoulder. Wang was transported by ambulance to Loma Linda University Medical Center emergency room where he was pronounced dead at 10:52 AM. The California Highway Patrol is investigating the incident. [12262013 CN 1920]

The Coroner Reports are reproduced in their original format as authored by department personnel.

By Diane Dragotto Williams

Our first introduction to Wood Ducks was in 1998, when a clutch of orphans was rescued as a result of a hunting incident taking the lives of their mother and father. Twelve fluffy and precocious ducklings invaded our bathtub, and



repeatedly wrecked havoc jumping in and out of the water, endearing themselves to our hearts. Protected by the U.S. Migratory Treaty Act, Aix Sponsa, is one of the most stunningly beautiful water birds.

With ornate patterns



on nearly every feather on its body, the male adult sports a glossy green and purple head with red eyes, bold black and white face patterns, a multi-colored bill of red, white, black and yellow, a burgundy-chestnut breast speckled with white, and a long down-swept crest reaching its iridescent blue-green back and buff flanks! Unfortunately, due to its incredible array of col-

County Wildlife Corner Perching! Wood Ducks

ors, the Wood Duck is widely hunted, but also, photographed by many wildlife enthusiasts. The female, distinct in profile with its own quiet beauty, is predominantly brown with a greyish head and crest, white streaks on its sides and flanks, with a noticeable white teardrop formation

size waterfowl, they are approximately 20" long and can weigh up to



1.5 pounds. Like most ducks, they are diurnal, sleeping on the water. Their average lifespan is 3-4 years due to hunting, and predators like great horned owls, raccoons and foxes.

But the most notable behavior is the preparation and building of their preferred place to lay eggs and hatch offspring in deciduous trees. Their strong claws are



capable of gripping bark and perching on branches. Making their nests in trees usually 50 feet or more high, they choose an opening as small as 4" across and about 2' deep lined with soft down from the females breast, adding grass and dirt to protect the eggs and nestlings from marauding enemies. In early spring, 9-15 creamy white or dull buff eggs are incubated up to 32 days. However, there

may be up to 29 eggs found due to "egg dumping", when other females visit the wood duck cavities, lay eggs and leave them to be raised by the house female. After hatching, the fun begins, as the female calls the nestlings (recently dried and fluffed from liquids) to jump out of their nests and follow their mother to the mile trek to nearby water. What a sight to behold!

Recalling our experience with the original wood duck nestlings, we are in awe of their ability to jump fearlessly out of a very high, small, secure place down to a great, unknown world,

offering them new adventures. If only we humans could have faith with that kind of trust and abandon to welcome life as a whole!

Wildhaven Ranch is a wildlife sanctuary in the San Bernardino Mountains specializing in educating the public about wildlife in our ecosystem. Visit them at www.wildhavenranch.org or call for tours at (909) 337-7389.

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County Pension Cost Hits \$200M from page 5

23.83% to 25.44% of pensionable compensation. The non-county/special districts retirement contribution rate for first tier safety employees will shoot from 57.82% to 59.65% of compensation earnable. The non-county/special districts retirement contribution

rate for second tier safety members will decrease from 50.87% to 50.73% of pensionable compensation. The South Coast Air Quality Management District retirement contribution rate for first tier general members will rise from 25.22% to 27.76% of compensation earnable. The South Coast Air Quality Management District retirement contribution rate

for second tier general employees will increase from 22.86% to 25.36% of pensionable compensation.

In addition the general member employee survivor benefit contribution rate for employer and employee will go from \$1.34 to \$1.85 per pay period.

Despite the overall escalation of the cost of pensioning its employ-

ees, the county is beginning to see a decrease in the rate of its escalating costs in that the contribution for second tier general members is a reduction of 4.22 percent the county would have paid under the previous rate and 6.13 percent for second tier safety employees compared to what is being paid to their first tier counterparts.

California Style High and Low

By Grace Bernal

So long 2013 and 'tis the golden SoCal winter weather that rang in 2014. Not sure if it's the age or a serious case



of global warming but dressing up is hard to do these days. So, what do you wear in this indecisive weather? Layers



should be the best way to fit into the fashion scene these days here in San Bernardino County. How do you wear layers? Don't be afraid to stack your clothes for fear of looking bigger. The key is mastering the art of overlapping. A perfectly layered look will compliment you and create

some neat illusion to your silhouette. A perfectly layered outfit starts with a basic, lightweight top like a solid, something



neutral, or striped. You then add another layer such as a soft cardigan or sweater. If you're into



color, this can be a great opportunity to mix in a bold pullover to give your outfit more intrigue and depth. Then add a jacket or coat. Again, I suggest a basic color: camel, black, navy, or even olive green. Next,

add a scarf. It's like the frosting on a cupcake. A must! Sprinkle on your accessories: a bracelet or watch. If you're concerned about your waistline, try to top off your look with something belted. With that said, it's your turn to layer together



er your best look. Try to have fun in this weather and the whole year for that matter. Enjoy 2014!



"Each age has deemed the new-born year the fittest time for festal cheer." - Sir Walter Scott

As always, if there's anything you need, I'd love to hear from you: Greygris@aol.com or visit my page I Love Your Style on Facebook Copyright Grace Bernal all rights reserved

Rash Of Murders ring In New Year from page 7

1, and told of an incident in the 7000 block of Elm Avenue. Upon arrival, deputies discovered 26-year-old Tysha

Carrell dead from upper-body trauma.

The sheriff's homicide division is investigating her death.

In San Bernardino, Jordan Sartorio phoned police Wednesday morning to inform them he

had cut his own wrist after killing his wife and daughter.

Sartorio, 42, had gotten into an argument with his ex-wife, Mirafior Sartorio, 51, and then used a knife to stab her multiple times. The com-

motion roused the one-time couple's 6-year-old daughter, Jira. Jordan Sartorio then stabbed her to death before seeking to kill himself by slashing his own wrist.

Sartorio was alive when at 5:40 a.m. police



Jordan Sartorio

arrived at the home located in the 300 block of West 29th Street, and he was transported to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center for medical treatment.

Overland Motel from page 3

tion is billed as an effort to "clean up blight." The

homeless retreat to vacant, unprotected structures in Needles from time to time.

The consequence

of the countrywide economic downturn is the need for affordable or publicly assisted temporary housing in Needles.

The Overland Motel represents a structure that could potentially be retooled for government housing for the temporarily homeless or reinvented as a private assisted living facility as has been discussed for years. Some residents of Needles believe it wasteful and inhumane to destroy the stock of extant housing without a plan for replacement, particularly when there are so many people in need.

Edward Mejia, a groundskeeper at a church across the street from the motel, related his experience with the homeless in Needles. "There's no place for the homeless here. They're

sleeping wherever they can in this cold of winter. Why is no one giving them direction as to where to go? They are being harassed at night

by the police without direction as to what to do. We are supposed to be Christ like. It's ridiculous."



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