

Ramos To Fill New Third Assistant DA Position With His Mistress

By Mark Gutglueck

District Attorney Mike Ramos is maneuvering to create a third assistant district attorney position in his department, into which he intends to promote his live-in mistress, multiple sources within the district attorney's office have told the *Sentinel*.

Ramos's move, coming just after last week's



Mike Ramos

2014 General Election, and six months after Ra-

mos was himself reelected to a fourth term as the county's top prosecutor in the June primary election, has shocked and angered a wide cross section of the professionals employed by the office he heads. While several of those prosecutors expressed themselves in strong terms while commenting about the situation off the record, none



Mary Ashley

was willing to speak for attribution, given the

absolute authority the district attorney has in operating his office.

Ramos' effort to promote Mary Ashley to the assistant district attorney's post has been taken as a particular insult to five of the department's most seasoned and advanced prosecutors, each of whom has considerably more courtroom and supervisory **See P 2**

Adelanto To Consider Jail For Holding L.A. County Inmates



Buck Johns

A development agreement for a 3,264-bed prison that will handle the overflow inmate population in Los Angeles County's jails will come before the Adelanto City Council for a vote on November 19.

Orange County developer Buck Johns and Corrections Corporation of America Founder Doctor Crants of Nashville, Tennessee in May presented the plan to alleviate crowding in Los Angeles County's detention facilities to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. Johns and Crants told the board the project would save Los Angeles County \$674 million in capital costs and could be in place to receive inmates in two years.

Johns and Crants are asking Los Angeles County for no capital contributions toward the project, but want a commitment from the county that it will house its overflow inmates there for 20 years at a cost of \$88 per inmate per day, or roughly \$104 million per year.

The project proposal is the marriage of two needs on either side of the Los Angeles/San Bernardino County line.

Los Angeles County, the largest county population-wise in California, has been **See P 8**

Upland Lawn Watering Prosecution Points Up Contradiction With State Policy

The Book of Matthew says that "No man can serve two masters." The Book of Mark counsels "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is God's." The lawmakers and the lawgivers say that the law should be obeyed, no matter what. But what is one to do when two different levels of government give

two commands which contradict one another, such that only one can be obeyed? On Monday, at 10:30 a.m. at Rancho Cucamonga's West Valley Courthouse in Division R-9, Judge Jon Ferguson will oversee an attempt to answer that question.

Coming before Ferguson is Fernand Bogman, who has been charged criminally under the

Upland Municipal Code with letting his lawn die. Bogman will not come to court armed with an argument that he did not do as he is charged. He acknowledges his lawn has turned brown.

Nevertheless, he insists he is, given the totality of the circumstance, innocent and acting out of principle and in compliance with

the state of California's dictates. Moreover, Bogman asserts, when he attempted to comply with the city of Upland's demands, City Hall evaded and ultimately would not answer his well-intentioned inquiries that would have allowed him to make compliance.

"My yard is well maintained," Bogman said. "Starting in Au-

gust of 2012, I stopped watering my lawn. California was in the middle of a drought. I continued to water my trees and plants and shrubs. Upland is located in a desert. Grass is not a native plant in Southern California. Growing grass here is fine if there is sufficient water. But ethically, morally and **See P 11**

Environmentalists Dismayed By Cook's Flip On Cadiz Water Exporting Project Opposition

Congressman Paul Cook, who had previously gone on record as opposing the Cadiz Water Project, in September wrote a letter to Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, recommending against any further environmental review of the project.

Cook's action angered and disappointed environmentalists who had previously endorsed him and his continued tenure



Paul Cook

in office.

Known by the abbreviated name Cadiz

Water Project, the Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery, and Storage Project is a proposal by proponent Los Angeles-based Cadiz, Inc. to extract an average of 50,000 acre-feet of water from the East Mojave Desert annually and convey it via pipeline to Orange and Los Angeles counties for use there.

The Santa Ana Margarita Water District in Orange Coun- **See P 4**

Business Associate Charged In McStay Family Murder Case

The San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office late last week took action on a sheriff's department investigative team's conclusion that it was a business associate who murdered Joseph McStay, his wife and the couple's two children before burying them in the desert near Apple Valley.

The McStay case baffled investigators in San Diego County, where the



Chase Merritt

McStays lived in a home in Fallbrook until they mysteriously **See P 7**

No Bang, Just A Whimper As Sheriff's POST Cheating Prosecution Ends

The once grandly touted Police Officer Standards and Training (POST) Cheating Scandal Prosecution, which entailed criminal charges against seven current and former Sheriff's Department employees alleged to have defrauded taxpayers by falsifying training and pay records, was quietly closed out on Halloween when the figure at the center of

the case, retired sheriff's captain Hobart Gray, pleaded no-contest to a single count of "aiding in a misdemeanor."

An indictment unsealed in March 2011 charged Gray; his wife, sheriff's training specialist Angela Gray; sheriff training specialist Sallyann Christian; retired sheriff's lieutenant Bill Maddox; sheriff's lieutenant Russell Wilke,

sheriff's corporal David Pichotta; and former assistant sheriff Michael Stodelle with falsifying records for the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, the state agency which certifies law enforcement officers with regard to skills and specific technique qualifications. By earning certificates, officers qualify to retain their jobs or can have

their pay level increased or otherwise qualify for advancement or promotion. According to the indictment, Angela Gray and Christian added the names of Pichotta, Wilke, Stodelle, Hobart Gray and Maddox to the rosters of training classes they never attended, enabling them to claim higher pay and retirement benefits.

Preceding the filing of

charges, there were persistent and wide-ranging reports of training completion certification fraud involving scores of the department's personnel.

At the case's initiation, a high-powered press conference was held in which then-sheriff Rod Hoops, district attorney Mike Ramos and the deputy district attorney pros- **See P 4**

Gonzalez Pulls Ahead Of Prieto In Colton Council Race

In Colton, the electoral results in the District Four council race have shifted significantly since the registrar of voters original report in the immediate aftermath of the November 4 balloting.

At that time, planning commission member Richard Prieto appeared to be the victor, with 364,

or 50.77 percent of the 717 votes that had been counted. Luis Gonzalez had eleven votes fewer, at 353 or 49.33 percent.

Two days after the election as provisional ballots from throughout the county were verified by the registrar's office and tallied, 153 more ballots from the three precincts in Colton's Fourth

District were added, bringing to that point, a total of 870 votes in that contest. Of those 153 ballots received, Gonzalez prevailed, 92 to 61 over Prieto. Thus, as it currently stands, Gonzalez has pulled ahead of Prieto 445, or 51.15 percent, to 425, or 48.85 percent.

With the total and the

trend in Gonzalez' favor, he now appears to be the winner. The result is not official, however. There are still more than 15,000 ballots still left to count countywide, an unknown number of which are from Colton and Colton's Fourth District in particular.



DA Promotes Mistress To Assistant DA from front page

experience than Ashley.

One venerable prosecutor with 37 years in the office, John Kochis, who was widely viewed by his colleagues to be the most logical candidate for promotion to an open assistant district attorney's position were such a position to emerge, put in for retirement when word of Ashley's pending ascendancy shot through the office two weeks ago. His last day with the department is

today.

Members of the prosecutor's office said Ashley, who was hired as a deputy prosecutor under former district attorney Dennis Stout in 1998, did reasonably competent work in prosecuting sexual crimes against children as well as crimes involving violence against women and children after she was assigned to head the Victorville office of the district attorney's newly-formed Family Violence Unit in 2004. She remained in that capacity until 2007.

At that time, Ashley bounded, at Ramos's apparent direction, over more than two dozen of her colleagues with greater and more varied prosecutorial experience when she was promoted to supervising deputy district attorney overseeing selected prosecutions in the San Bernardino, Victorville and Joshua Tree offices.

Members of the office report that at that stage Ashley was believed to have been involved in a casual but non-exclusive physical relationship with Ramos, who since

he had become district attorney in 2003, had extramarital affairs with no fewer than eight of his department's employees. Adverse publicity about Ramos's dalliances had proven problematic for Ramos as well as the county, which in 2009 paid the Santa Monica-based legal firm Curiale Hirschfield Kraemer \$140,000 to conduct an investigation into the circumstances pertaining to just one of those, a tryst with former district attorney's office evidence technician Cheryl Ristow.

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Accordingly, Ramos attempted to be discrete about his relationship with Ashley as it was intensifying in the late 2011/early 2012 time frame. As it turned out however, the affair was exposed when Ashley sent a cellular phone text message to another member of the office, deputy district attorney Suzanne Patton, telling her that Ramos was at her residence. Word of Ramos's liaison with Ashley leaked out from there, spreading to nu-

merous other members of the district attorney's office, as well as among several judges.

By Summer 2012, office members report, the relationship between Ramos and Ashley had progressed to the point that Ramos was cohabiting with Ashley and he filed for divorce from his wife of nearly three decades. Simultaneously, Ramos was seeking to groom Ashley for further advancement, giving her the prestigious assignment of carrying out the office's evaluations of officer involved shootings.

Simultaneously, Dennis Christy, who had long served as assistant district attorney, was moving toward retirement. Ramos stood by an earlier commitment that had been made to promote Gary Roth, who had held a wealth of assignments throughout the office and was at that time serving in Victorville as the chief deputy district attorney in the county's desert division, to assistant district attorney. In turn, it was widely expected throughout the office that supervising deputy district attorney Richard Young, who was then overseeing the Fontana prosecutor's division, would be tapped to succeed Roth. Young for the previous half decade had been entrusted with several top-tier and high profile prosecutorial assignments, including murder and manslaughter cases, the review of officer involved shootings and delicate matters such as those involving

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Glimpse Of SBC's Past George Patton In Twentynine Palms

By Mark Gutglueck

Little more than five months after the United States entered World War II, General George Patton sojourned to the



forbidding outback of San Bernardino County to establish a training and maneuver ground for Army soldiers to acclimate them to fighting in the desert.

An interesting sidelight to this is that Patton, who would go on to glory in North Africa, Sicily, France and Germany in 1943, 1944 and 1945, at one point was on the verge of utilizing the men under him in a defense of the North American continent in which he was to deploy to Mexico to rebuff a Japanese invasion there.

In January 1942, German Field Marshall

Erwin Rommel was pushing his troops in a relentless drive toward Egypt, threatening the Suez Canal and Great Britain's critical line of communication between West and East, its land holdings in the British Colonies in Asia and a key channel for the delivery in either direction of supplies and raw materials needed in the war effort.

America had just entered the war and Patton was acutely aware, as was his commanding officer, Lt. General Lesley J. McNair, Chief of Staff, General Headquarters, that the United States would soon be called upon to join their British allies in the North African campaign. Americans would be going up against a well-trained, well equipped and experienced enemy, well versed and accomplished in the use of tanks as a tactical weapon in the desert.

With American fighting men and their leaders having no experience or background in a desert campaign, McNair resolved to develop a

strategy and capability to engage the Germans and halt their advance in Northern Africa. He assigned Major General George Smith Patton, Jr. to establish the Desert Training Center for the purpose of training men and machines for action under the brutal and unforgiving conditions of the African deserts.

With staff officers in tow, Patton flew over a vast expanse of the Mojave Desert and the Anza Borrego Desert in Southern California and deserts across the Arizona and Nevada borders. At spots where his plane set down, Patton mounted horses to reconnoiter the territory. He elected to utilize a vast portion of the East Mojave Desert stretching across into Arizona, approximately 18,000 square miles of some of the most rugged land in the country. This was to become the Desert Training Center, the largest military installation and maneuver area in the world. In his communication back to General Headquarters, Patton beamed that the spot he had chosen was "the best training area... I have ever seen... it is desolate and remote... large enough for any kind of training exercises."

Patton was briefly detailed to another assignment, but he was back in early April to a place where already arriving



George Patton In North Africa

troops describes as "a place God forgot."

Unfamiliar with the desert, Patton consulted with Roy Chapman Andrews, an explorer who had made several expeditions to the Gobi Desert. He instructed his officers that it was his intention to make his men

so at home at living in the desert that when they were sent overseas to any desert environment, it will be no difficulty at all to kill the assorted sons of bitches you meet in any other country."

Patton subjected himself to the same conditions his men had to endure, shunning accommodations at an Indian hotel and at a ranch house where his wife,

no sheets for their cots, and none of the amenities common to other stateside military installations. Water was a problem. Patton wanted the Metropolitan Water District in Los Angeles to provide water to his men. District managers instead suggested that the men build storage tanks for water. Patton told the utility managers that his men "have no

move north and capture San Diego, Patton had his troops on high alert for three days in which they were poised to move within minutes to meet the invading Japanese at the tip of the Gulf of California. Ultimately, however, the Japanese invasion fleet eventually landed on Kiska Island in the Aleutians on June 6.

Four months after



George Patton takes a compass reading during training in the East Mojave Desert, Spring 1942

Beatrice lived. Determined to move rapidly, Patton had the Desert Training Center operational by mid-April. Within four days of his arrival, Patton had the troops under his command engaged in a desert march. By the 15th day of his command all units at the center had been on a desert march.....Within 23 days, he had conducted 13 tactical exercises, including some with two nights in the desert. Within a month after arrival, every man sent to the Desert Training Center had to be able to run a mile in 10 minutes, wearing a full back pack and carrying a rifle.

Conditions were primitive. Only some of the bivouac tents had wooden floors. None had electricity. There were

time to do anything except learn to fight."

The harsh conditions and Patton's unrelenting drive to build a fighting unit created tremendous hardship for the troops, but they recognized such toughness was necessary and the training would stand them in good stead to fight and survive in the environment they would soon encounter.

On June 3, 1942, Patton was given information about a Japanese expeditionary force on the High Seas heading toward the West Coast. Accompanying that information were indications the force was coming to invade Mexico, which had joined the Allies on May 22, 1942. Believing the Japanese would land on the beaches of Baja California to

he founded the Desert Training Center, Patton was summoned to Washington and then dispatched overseas to start planning Operation Torch, the North African campaign which was to be decisive in Allied victory. Only a small portion of the million men that trained at the Desert Training Center during World War II served while he was commander there. But his legacy lives on and at this point, more than 72 years later, it has served as the training ground for more than a million troops in seven armored divisions and thirteen infantry divisions.

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POST Scandal Prosecution Closes Out from front page

ecuting the case, Dan Silverman, were present. After the aggressive kick-off, which was followed by intensive scrutiny by the media and further suggestions that the cheating implicated far more than those who had been charged, up to and including former sheriff Gary Penrod, the case stood essentially dormant for sixteen months.

Then, on July 13, 2012, sixteen months after the charges were originally entered, the first definitive public demonstration of a problem with the case manifested when Silverman, announcing he was doing so in the interest of justice, dismissed charges against Maddox. Maddox had been charged with failing to complete a class relating to police dispatch work. His lawyer, Michael Scaffidi, demonstrated to Silverman's satisfaction that in claiming the course completion credit, Maddox had properly utilized a work assignment, the opening of a sheriff's department dispatch center in the desert which he had supervised, as a learning experience that met the training criteria. Specifically, according to Scaffidi, Maddox had done research relating to dispatch equipment and procedures by speaking with other agencies throughout the state and consulting technical and procedural manuals.

In dismissing the charges against Maddox, Silverman asserted that the case against all six of the remaining defendants was proceeding toward trial. But on February 1, 2013, Silverman acceded to dismissing all charges against Wilke on the grounds that there was insufficient evidence to obtain a conviction.

Almost three weeks later, on February 21, 2013, the court finalized a plea arrangement Silverman obtained with Pichotta, in which the original charges against him were dismissed in

return for his acceptance of guilt on a grand theft charge that was reduced to misdemeanor status.

Silverman was able to declare a second victory in the case on August 28, 2013 when Angela Gray pleaded guilty to the charge of aiding in a misdemeanor.

Nearly a year elapsed with no further developments in the case, until on August 19, 2014, very quietly, all felony charges against Stodelle were dismissed on Silverman's motion "in the interest of justice."

On October 31, 2014, the same day that Bart Gray entered his plea, all charges against Christian were dismissed upon a motion by Silverman "in the interest of justice."

Multiple perspectives on the case relating to whether it should have been filed in the first place, whether it should have included more defendants than the handful who were charged, whether Angela Gray and Christian fraudulently added the names of far more department personnel to the roster of those who had completed training, whether it should have been more aggressively pursued, whether it entailed the maligning of innocent people or whether it represented a political can of worms exist. Those charged but exonerated can now maintain they were innocent all along. Those who entered pleas – the Grays and Pichotta – are seen by some as having thrown in the towel too early. Some believe that the case, as far as it went, was valid but that it did not go far enough. Those having that perspective hold that because dozens, scores or even hundreds of other deputies, corporals, detectives, sergeants, lieutenants, captains, deputy chiefs, assistant sheriffs, undersheriffs and even a sheriff or two were equally guilty, some of those in the docket were able to leverage themselves out of the case by threatening to expose virtually the entire department in the cheating scandal.

Cook Disappoints Environmentalists from front page

ty, which lies 217 miles from the project area and which has contracted with Cadiz, Inc. to purchase one-fifth of the desert water, assumed lead agency status with regard to approval of the project and its environmental certification, including acceptance of the environmental impact report for the undertaking. Santa Margarita gave approval to the plan in July 2012. The county of San Bernardino, which contemplated challenging Santa Ana Margarita's role overseeing the project, ultimately laid aside its authority as lead agency and in October 2012 accepted a water use monitoring plan for the project which gave Cadiz, Inc. procedural clearance to move forward with the project.

A series of nine environmental suits against the project ensued, including six that were remanded to Orange County Superior Court to be heard jointly. Environmentalists and residents of the East Mojave enlisted Cook's support in opposing the project. As the member of Congress representing the East Mojave, Cook in

June 2013 called for a federal review of the undertaking.

In a letter dated June 12, 2013 to Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, Cook stated, "I am writing to request a reevaluation of the impact the Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery, and Storage Project will have on my constituents in the 8th District of California. The Cadiz Project, as it currently stands, is likely to impact San Bernardino County's water resources, harming ranchers, rural communities, East Mojave landowners, and the National Chloride Company of America's brine mining operation on Bristol Dry Lake. Moreover, the aggressive project pumping could harm the springs of the Mojave National Preserve and regional air quality, while exporting precious water resources out of San Bernardino County to ratepayers in Los Angeles and Orange counties."

Cook's 2013 letter continued, "In order to ensure this project won't adversely affect my district, I respectfully request the Cadiz Project be subject to a National Environmental Policy Act review. I request that the United States Geologic Survey conduct

an updated analysis of the hydrologic features of the project area and that any new or revised Cadiz Project proposals adhere to the principle of sustainable yield, meaning no more water would be pumped out of the aquifer than would be replaced through natural recharge as determined by the United States Geologic Survey. This is intended to protect sustainable water supplies for East Mojave communities and businesses."

Cook further wrote, "Currently, no federal environmental reviews or approvals have been conducted, despite numerous requests from the Bureau of Land Management that Cadiz Inc. supply them with specific project information relating to the construction of a 43-mile water conveyance pipeline along the Arizona and California Railroad right-of-way." Cook noted, "Professional independent reviews have called into question the 32,500 acre-feet per year recharge rate Cadiz Inc. claims will naturally occur. These independent scientists concluded that the actual recharge rate is between 2,000 and 10,000 acre feet per year. There are serious doubts about the validity of the

previous environmental studies, specifically the draft environmental impact statement" for the project. Cook concluded, "This project must be examined thoroughly before it moves forward."

Two months ago, 15 months after writing that letter, Cook abruptly shifted course.

"Shortly after taking office last year, I wrote to you about the proposed Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery and Storage Project ("project"), which would be located in California's Eastern Mojave Desert," Cook wrote Jewell in a letter dated September 16, 2014. "The project will provide an additional 50,000 acre feet of water per year to the state's dwindling water supply. It is important to me that my constituents and the land itself are protected from significant environmental harm. For that reason, I asked in my previous letter that a federal environmental review be undertaken for the project. Further developments have changed the dynamics surrounding the project, calling into question the need for federal environmental review and signaling a need to allow the project to move forward.

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Needles Votes To Use Eminent Domain Against 14 Property Owners

More than sixty people showed up at the irregularly scheduled Wednesday night city council meeting a day after Veterans day to attend the public hearing held by the city of Needles with the intent to adopt a "resolution of necessity" to acquire multiple properties by eminent domain on a main route through the shrinking town that includes a portion of Route 66.

Though 14 properties were being considered for the eminent domain proceedings, only two property owners objected to the city's findings of necessity.

Chuck Dewald, the city engineer, maintained that the city needs the property to improve traffic flow through town. The project consists of installing traffic light indicators at three corners, J Street and Broadway, Broadway and Needles Highway, and Needles Highway and K Street, Dewald said. This flow pattern and alignment was conceived of in 2005 and at that time was considered to be the most reasonable and least disruptive

to the people in the city, while not bypassing the community as an alternative configuration, which would have which involved a very costly construction of an overpass from J Street to the bridge over the Colorado River. The project is scheduled to begin when construction plans and specifications plans are 100 percent, Dewald said, and must get approval from the California Department of Transportation, known by its acronym Caltrans.

The city is looking at an October 2015 start date for the project, which is to be funded by money put up by the city along with federal matching funds. There is also an agreement with the county of San Bernardino for shared funding for the cost of engineering services. Concern was expressed by some members of the council that if the project did not proceed, the city would have to reimburse the county and repay grant money to the state that was previously obtained and has been husbanded for the project.

Craig Bono, who lives at 1400 Needles High-

way and has property involved in the project, questioned the city engineer about the integrity of power lines in the face of high winds and whether the lines would be undergrounded. Dewald said there was no intent to put any of the power lines underground except possibly at K Street and Needles Highway where they might interfere with the traffic signal.

Also at the hearing, two of the parties owning property to be seized lodged protests, questioning the city's true need for the property in question. Among the properties to be seized is property owned by Mayer Edward Paget who recused himself from conducting the hearing. Councilman Terry Campbell wielded the gavel in his absence.

Paget's wife, Jan Paget, speaking for the owners, testified that the frontage of their corner property at K and Broadway was being taken and was not needed for the project.

Ruth and Robert J. Lopez were the only party to submit written protests and both also gave

testimony at the hearing that their corner frontage at Broadway and River Road was also being taken and not needed by the city for the identified purpose, which is to install a traffic signal indicator, saying that the city already controls that land. They objected that the entire frontage of their corner lot was being taken for an alleged purpose of one traffic control device and that was too much and that the language in the grant of easement left for wiggle room and allowed for more land to be taken as the city desired, for any purpose with no definite end date. They testified that the clouded title and encumbrance would diminish the value of their property and leave them with uncertainty, subject to the whim of fleeting city councils, and maintained that the city's designs on their property go beyond the immediate project needs.

The Lopez's asserted that the seizure was a violation of their Fourteenth Amendment rights "to the extent that an arbitrary, unfair, or unjust taking of someone's property is not al-

lowed, even if the taking is for the public use and the property owner is compensated," according to their written protest.

Ultimately, however, the city council voted unanimously 5-0 to approve the resolution of necessity and voted in summary to proceed with eminent domain on all of the listed properties. Mayor Paget who ran unopposed and was re-elected on Nov. 2, abstained due to a potential conflict of interest. Three of the council members who voted, Shawn Gudmonson, Campbell and Linda Kidd have been voted out of office as of November 4 election but will not leave until the end of November.

After the meeting, Bob Lopez stated, "Despite our objection and evidence that the taking was unnecessary and that they already control plenty of room for installation of traffic signals, they just voted to take the mayor's property, my property and about a dozen other properties tonight. The taking is open-ended and allows them to come back for more land if they so

desire, for a variety of purposes, including facilities, even though they may not be immediately necessary for this project."

Lopez noted, "This will cause the impacted land owners trouble by clouding title on our private holdings, potentially diminishing the value of the property. It will be interesting to see what the city intends to do with the property, since the frontage is not needed for a traffic signal."

While many in the audience were there to see hear the outcome the public hearing on the necessity of the public taking of private land, many were more interested in staying for the hearing that followed, which was to consider evidence and testimony for or against enacting new city legislation that (a) prohibits medical cannabis cooperatives or collectives but (b) grants limited immunity from said prohibition to those cooperatives/collectives that are in existence and operating within the city at the time the article is adopted and which comply with the requirements set forth by the city.

Ramos Scandalizes DA's Office By Promoting His Mistress from front page

trafficking in child pornography and accusations that a teacher had employed sexual battery perpetrated by some of his students against other students as a classroom disciplinary tool. Moreover, Young had cultivated what appeared to be a strong professional relationship with Ramos by supporting him politically in years past and endorsing other politicians with whom Ramos was aligned.

On July 18, 2012 however, whatever expectations Young had of immediate promotion were dashed when Ramos, in an interoffice memo to all district attorney's staff, announced that Ashley was being pro-

moted to the position of chief deputy district attorney, effective September 6, 2012.

"Mary will be replacing Gary Roth as the chief deputy district attorney in the desert division," the memo stated.

Members of the district attorney's office drew an immediate connection between Ashley's promotion and her relationship with Ramos. Resentment over her advancement in the office has simmered since, due to the perception that Ramos has created a standard under which competence, dedication, expertise and merit are secondary criteria to maintaining a personal relationship with him. Indications that resentment is boiling over emerged late last week as members of the office began to lash out at their boss in private conversa-

tions, precipitated by the announcement of Kochis's abrupt decision to retire.

While many prosecutors in the course of their conversations with the *Sentinel* opined that the currently employed prosecutor most deserving of being elevated to assistant district attorney was John Kochis, more than twenty other prosecutors, lead prosecutors, supervising prosecutors and chief deputy prosecutors with the office were identified as having prosecutorial, leadership, managerial and organizational talent that exceeded that of Ashley, which rendered them better suited than her to assume the newly created assistant district attorney post. Those mentioned in this regard were: Michael Abney, Bruce Brown, Rob Brown, Terry Brown,

Bob Bulloch, Lewis Cope, Michelle Daly, Gary Fagan, Charles Feibush, Joseph Gaetano, Clark Hansen III, Grover Merritt, Kathy Norman, Maureen O'Connell, Doug Poston, James Secord, Reza Sadeghi, Kevin Smith, Denise Trager-Dvorak, Charles Umeda, Ron Webster, Simon Umschied and Richard Young.

Resentment over Ramos's choice of Ashley is particularly keen among those members of the office assigned to the courthouses in Victorville and Joshua Tree. This is primarily because, her colleagues say, while working in those divisions, Ashley, who was then married to another prosecutor in the office, former deputy district attorney Alex Martinez, initiated an affair with J. David Mazurek, who was formerly a deputy

district attorney before he was elevated to a Superior Court judgeship in 2006. Ultimately, the affair ended badly, with Mazurek divorcing his wife and Ashley's marriage to Martinez breaking up. Martinez was elevated to the bench in 2010. The relationship between Mazurek and Ashley proved somewhat nettlesome for the court when Ashley was overseeing a district attorney's prosecution unit in Joshua Tree, where Mazurek sat as a judge, requiring the expurgating intervention of then-assistant presiding judge Michael Welch. Among some of her colleagues, particularly woman, Ashley was perceived as a climber who was not above utilizing her sexuality to ingratiate herself with the men in the office or the legal community to advance profes-

sionally.

Judge Martinez told the *Sentinel*, "I will have no comment on issues related to the district attorney's office."

Bailiffs at the San Bernardino Justice Center, where Judge Mazurek is now assigned, prevented the *Sentinel* from accessing him for an interview.

That Ashley is now consolidating her position through an intimate relationship with her boss has damaged the morale and esprit de corps of the district attorney's office. Many office members were dumbfounded by the memo Ramos issued in which he announced his planned reorganization of the office, including creating the third assistant district attorney's position to augment current assistant district

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from page 5

attorneys Mike Fermin and Gary Roth, and his intention of inserting Ashley into the new post. Those that contacted the *Sentinel* to alert it to Ramos's move, as well as members of the office contacted by the *Sentinel* subsequently, while expressing consternation and dismay privately, refused to speak for the record over concern that voicing such pointed criticism of Ramos and the woman he is appointing to a senior position in the office would harm them professionally.

A recently retired deputy district attorney, Sharon Caldwell, was not so reticent. She spoke openly about the damage Ramos had wreaked upon the office by his reported sexual liaisons, his earlier promotion of Ashley and his latest move to elevate her to assistant district attorney.

"There is no denying his reported rampant womanizing has impacted the office," Caldwell said. "There are many qualified women who have been working there for years and have impeccable credentials who will not put their names in for promotion because

they don't want to be perceived as having advanced because they were sleeping with Mike Ramos. This is horrific cronyism. As district attorney, he is notorious for promoting people who are not qualified. The people of San Bernardino County deserve much better."

Ashley was promoted well beyond her level of competence when she was made chief deputy district attorney, Caldwell said.

"She is an embarrassment," Caldwell said. "She has been an absentee chief deputy. Her idea of leading is to bring cookies and cupcakes for the people in the office. She skips meetings, which is unheard of in an organization like the prosecutor's office. She is not dealing with the job."

The most recent decision to promote Ashley was "colossally stupid," Caldwell said, given her demonstrated lack of judgment and disregard for the reputation and wellbeing of the office. "An example of what I base my judgment of her lack of judgment on was when she was reported to have a dating relationship with Judge Mazurek while supervising prosecutors appearing in his courtroom while they were both in Morongo [i.e., working

at the Joshua Tree Courthouse]. They had this relationship while she was supervising the prosecutors who were coming before him every day. We are talking about hundreds of cases during that period. She and he had the obligation to inform the parties who were being prosecuted that she and the judge were in a dating relationship. To my knowledge, that disclosure was never made. I don't know what would happen if counsel for those defendants who were convicted took that up. It potentially could compromise hundreds of cases. It is hard to believe that Mike Ramos did not know about this. He's promoting her anyway."

The vast majority of the office's employees disapprove of many aspects of Ramos's comportment and are disturbed by his unabashed promotion of his girlfriend, Caldwell said. "Most everyone knows about them [i.e., Ramos and Ashley]," Caldwell said. "I don't know anyone in the office who likes it. But no one is going to say anything publicly. People will not stand up to him just to be shipped to Timbuktu and given terrible assignments. He's a vindictive tyrant."

She continued, "Ramos has done one outra-

geous thing after another and nothing has blown up in his face. No one sued him successfully. He just gets bolder and bolder. He thinks he's bullet-proof. I truly believe that he doesn't know how bad his decisions are. The entire DA's office has devolved under his leadership and he doesn't care."

A primary check on Ramos is the board of supervisors, which could closely examine his request to determine if adding a third assistant district attorney position to his staff is truly justified and then inquiring about the qualifications of the individual Ramos intends to tap to fill it, and asking about the relative qualifications of any alternative candidates for the position before agreeing to provide him with the funding to carry it through.

"The Board of Supervisors does not buck Ramos that I have ever seen" Caldwell said. "They're unwilling to question him. I believe that they're afraid that if they do, he might do something to them. He can file charges against people and let other people do the same conduct and not file. No one wants Ramos to do to them what he did to [Neil] Derry."

Former supervisor Neil Derry was crimi-

nally charged after district attorney's office investigators, who were interrogating former supervisor/former county assessor Bill Postmus, obtained a statement from him that he had laundered a campaign contribution from Highland developer Arnold Stubblefield to Derry through Postmus's political action committee. Though he was initially charged with two felonies in that case, Derry stuck a plea bargain with prosecutors in which he was convicted of a misdemeanor campaign reporting violation. That conviction, which was widely trumpeted by his opponent, was a key factor in Derry's defeat in his run for reelection.

Despite her low estimation of Ramos's ethics and managerial ability, Caldwell said he was highly skilled in misleading the public.

"Ramos filed for divorce some time ago and was thereafter seen publicly with Mary Ashley," Caldwell said. "I believe when Ramos felt that he would draw at least one opponent in his bid for re-election, he abandoned the divorce proceeding so that he could sell to the voters that he is a devoted family man married for decades. I told people then that should he win re-

election, he would dump his wife and resume his relationship with Mary Ashley. He got reelected and now he's refiled for divorce and he's reported to have rekindled his relationship with Mary. He fooled the voters again."

David Wert, the spokesman for the board of supervisors, told the *Sentinel*, "The district attorney has notified the board of supervisors that he plans to reorganize his department in response to court closures and his proposal would come to the board perhaps as soon as November 18."

The reorganization is scheduled to be done very quietly as part of an item on the agenda that does not reference the district attorney's office but rather several of the county's park and recreation districts, county service areas, the county flood control district, the county industrial development authority, its joint emergency medical agency, its economic and community development corporations, its in-home supportive services agency and the county fire protection district. In one of the attachments to this item, the first quarter budget report, buried on page 59 under the heading "County Positions Action" is notation that a chief deputy district attorney position – the one currently held by John Kochis – is to be deleted and that an assistant district attorney position is to be added. The position is to pay \$192,150 in salary. Also shown is that the position will represent a total annual cost to the county of \$315,039, which means that Ashley will receive \$122,889 in benefits annually in addition to her salary.

The *Sentinel* made inquiries with the board members to ascertain what information they had been provided with regard to Ramos's proposed reorganization, including his intention to appoint Ashley to the newly created assistant district attorney's position.

Don Holland, one of

Continued on Page 9

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McStay Family Murder Suspect Arrested And Charged from front page

disappeared on February 4, 2010. Investigators said the family appeared to have left their home in northern San Diego County abruptly, leaving food to spoil on the kitchen counter and abandoning the family dogs.

The family's SUV was found less than a week later near the Mexican border in San Ysidro. A grainy surveillance video from around the time the family went missing showed a family believed to be the McStays, consisting of two parents and two small children, walking into Mexico. It was assumed on that basis that Joseph McStay had willingly taken refuge in Mexico for some unknown but widely speculated upon reason, taking his family with him.

Theories abounded as to what the rationale for the family's exodus from their country was.

Joseph McStay owned a business that designed decorative fountains, artificial waterfalls and birdbaths, which utilized some materials imported from Mexico. One rumor held that Joseph McStay's business was a front for a drug cartel and that the McStays were seeking refuge in Mexico, either from authorities or a rival drug importation organization. San Diego detectives also focused on McStay's ostensibly legitimate business operation and anything that might be amiss in this regard. Contacted and interrogated relatively early on in that process was Charles "Chase" Ray Merritt, who had manufactured, fabricated, assembled and installed Joseph McStay's designed products. That trail appeared to be a dead end and investigators went on to other leads, including hundreds of phoned-in tips.

In April 2013, the San Diego County Sheriff's Department announced they were transferring the McStay family case to the FBI.

The case took a startling twist when on November 11, 2013, an off-road motorcyclist spotted what appeared to be human remains. When deputies from the Victorville sheriff's station were dispatched to the remote desert area near Quarry Road and Interstate 15 and north of Stoddard Wells Road they encountered what ultimately proved to be the bodies of all four members of the McStay family, which had apparently been interred in hastily dug shallow graves.

Just a little less than a year after that grisly discovery, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department and the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office jointly announced that on November 5, 2014, Merritt, 57, had been arrested on suspicion of killing Joseph McStay, 40, his wife Summer, 43, and their two young boys Gianni, 4, and Joseph Jr., 3 in February 2010. Merritt, who was at that time a resident of Homeland in Riverside County, was arrested "without inci-

dent," officials said, in Chatsworth in Los Angeles County.

An investigative team from the sheriff's office, led by captain Leland Bolt and sergeant Chris Fisher and working in conjunction with the FBI and in communication with San Diego County authorities, conducted over 200 interviews and interrogations and obtained and served 60 search warrants in conjunction with the case.

There was a slight variance in the statements of the sheriff's investigators and the district attorney's office with regard to the nature of the evidence against Merritt. The sheriff's department indicated it was the totality of evidence implicating Merritt rather than a single "smoking gun" that led to his arrest. The district attorney's office, however, which charged Merritt with four counts of murder with a special circumstance of multiple murder on November 7, intimated that there was direct forensic evidence linking Merritt to the scene where the McStays

were buried that would be presented at trial.

Sheriff John McMahon said, "There is no information to suggest there were any other suspects involved in this crime. Chase Merritt was a business associate of Joseph McStay. The cause of death was determined to be blunt force trauma and based on the entire investigation and the evidence obtained, investigators believe the murders occurred at their residence in Fallbrook. Investigators are not disclosing the motive for the murders at this point."

Investigators now believe the family videoed crossing the border into Mexico at San Ysidro in February 2010 was not the McStays. Neither investigators nor the district attorney's office offered an explanation on how it was that the McStay family vehicle came to be parked near the border.

Merritt had a connection with the Victor Valley, where the bodies of the family members were found. In his youth his family lived in Hesperia

and he attended Apple Valley High School in 1972, 1973 and 1974. In 2012 he was in a partnership with Abayomi Adepoju in a steel sculpture fabricating business run out of the Clock Tower Professional Center in Hesperia.

On Wednesday November 12, he was arraigned in Victorville Court before Judge Raymond Haight III. The prosecutor present was deputy district attorney Sean Dougherty. Merritt was represented by attorney Robert Ponce. Merritt pleaded not guilty to four counts of murder and denied the special circumstances alleged by the district attorney. Haight continued his no bail status. After the arraignment, Merritt was returned to custody at the West Valley Detention Center in Rancho Cucamonga.

Read all about the intrigue in the San Bernardino County political scene at iepolitics.com on the worldwide web.

Cook Reverses Position On Cadiz Water Project from page 4

"Recently," the letter continues, "the Orange County Superior Court denied all six petitions challenging the project's environmental assessment and upheld the actions of the Santa Margarita Water District and the county of San Bernardino in approving the

project."

"Furthermore," Cook's September letter continues, "San Bernardino County suffers from unemployment that far exceeds the national average. The project is expected to employ 1,500 people during every year of construction. Indeed, I have received assurances that 80 percent of the project's capital cost will be spent in San Bernardino County, and 50 percent of jobs have been

dedicated to residents of San Bernardino County, including 10 percent for military veterans."

Cook's letter continues, "Project plans specify that San Bernardino County will regulate the extraction of groundwater, and 20 percent of the project water is reserved for county water providers for the next 50 years. Perhaps most importantly, I have reviewed a study of the hydrology in the area; I believe the

project to be sustainable in terms of water recharge rates and in avoiding adverse effects on top soil."

The letter continues, "The project construction is expected to generate close to \$1 billion in economic activity and, over the long-term, local governments will receive \$6 million per year in new property tax revenues, including \$600,000 annually added to the budget of the Needles Unified School District."

Cook's letter concludes, "With the court approvals in mind and with so many jobs at stake, I believe further investigation into environmental impacts to be unnecessary. However, as the project moves forward, I will continue to monitor it to ensure that no harm is done to the local environment or water supplies."

Cook's letter was written on September 16 while he was engaged

in an election campaign against Democratic challenger Bob Conaway. It was not released publicly until November 6, when Cadiz, Inc. did so in conjunction with its strategy to promote the project and stave off further legal challenges, including appeals of the cases in which it prevailed on in Orange County Superior Court.

Ruth Musser-Lopez, one of the environmentalists who brought suit against Cadiz, Inc, the Santa Margarita Water District and the county of San Bernardino over the approval of the project in 2012 who was also an unsuccessful candidate for California State Senate in Senate District 16, which encompasses the East Mojave, was highly critical of Cook's most recent letter.

She said Cook, a Republican, had betrayed the voters he represents by seeking to shut down further environmental review of the project.

Musser Lopez, a syndicated columnist whose work has appeared in the *Sentinel*, said environmental review of the project has been inadequate. She suggested Cook had engaged in underhanded action by withholding the September letter to Jewell while the election was still pending.



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Adelanto To Consider Los Angeles County Detention Facility Project

from front page

hit particularly hard by the mandates in Assembly Bill 109, legislation aimed at closing California's so-called "revolving door" of low-level inmates cycling in and out of state prisons. Assembly Bill 109 was drafted in an effort to comply with a U.S. Supreme Court order to reduce the number of inmates in the state's 33 prisons to 137.5 percent of original design capacity. The law sent inmates deemed low risk – those who were convicted of non-violent offenses – back to the county where they were convicted for incarceration.

Adelanto, which is San Bernardino County's sixth smallest city population-wise at 31,765 residents, is also one of its most cash-strapped municipalities, with little in the way of sales tax revenue-generating

commercial development. Last year the city council declared it was in a state of fiscal emergency, but its residents have refused to consent to impose on themselves a tax that city officials say is needed to stave off bankruptcy.

Johns and Crants are proposing that the \$332 million cost of constructing the jail, which is to be located on 160 acres on Adelanto's eastern boundary next to the existing federal correctional facility in Victorville, be defrayed with bonds issued by a public finance authority or other agency. The city of Adelanto would own it. Once operating, Johns and Crants say, it would generate enough revenue to debt service the bonds and would provide the city with water and sewer connection fees of \$11,317,482, development impact fees of \$3,713,750, public schools impact fees \$215,220, and engineering department fees of \$91,046. In addition, Johns and Crants, main-

tain, the project would involve off-site infrastructure installation expenditures of \$5,734,000 that would be of tremendous future benefit to the city and would create an estimated 3,769 construction jobs and an estimated 1,250 permanent jobs once the facility is in place.

Thus, Johns and Crants have touted the project as one that will not require the city to put up any funding toward the project, nor require that it put its credit on the line for the project to be completed.

There was something of a Catch-22 that held up progress toward the closing of a deal to get the project under way during the summer. The city of Adelanto wanted Los Angeles County to make a two decade-long commitment to housing its inmates at the facility before proceeding. Los Angeles County wanted Adelanto to commit to building, owning and running the jail before it gave its commitment.

Johns and Crants

turned a corner on resolving that stalemate when the Adelanto Planning Commission on November 4 endorsed the project and gave its recommendation to the city council that it approve the development agreement. The council is now set to consider it on November 19.

While the council's approval appears likely, a new challenge to the project has emerged in the form of opposition by activist Victoria Mena, a former Adelanto resident and current public administration graduate student at the University of Washington. Mena, in conjunction with a group calling itself Defund Detention, maintains that California residents in general are opposed to the construction of more jails and are against the proliferation of privately-run detention facilities and that Adelanto residents want no more jails, prisons or detention facilities built in their community, which already is host to the county sheriff's department's

High Desert Detention Center. She asserts that California residents, in passing Proposition 47, which is aimed at reducing property and drug crimes from a felony to a misdemeanor in order to reduce jail crowding, have initiated a trend against detention facility construction.

Moreover, Mena has seized upon the consideration that on the very night the planning commission made its recommendation to the city council, three of those council members – Mayor Kari Thomas, councilmen Steve Baisden and Charles Valvo – lost their bids for reelection in this year's November 4 municipal election and will be leaving office as a consequence in December. She wants the decision on the jail postponed until the three new city council members are seated. She contends the newly composed council will not approve the development proposal.

Mena is working with the Defund Detention group to hold rallies

and otherwise lobby the council to hold off on the November 19 vote, which has already been placed on the council agenda by city staff. She maintains the new council will reflect resident sentiment against the jail facility, based in large measure on assertions that warehousing large numbers of criminals in the community will compromise public safety.

Johns this week told the *Sentinel* that the project as planned will have safeguards built into it to ensure the safety and security of the community. Documentation Johns provided showed that by agreement with Los Angeles County only inmates serving time for "non-violent, non-serious, non-sexual crimes" will be housed in Adelanto and furthermore "no inmate with a prior conviction for a serious or violent crime" will be imprisoned there.

Johns told the *Sentinel* the planning commission had already looked at the safety is-

Continued on Page 9

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Ramos's Promotion Of His Mistress Has His Deputy Prosecutors Seeing Red *from page 6*

First District supervisor Robert Lovingood's field representatives, told the *Sentinel* Lovingood's office would have no comment on Ramos's proposal at this time.

Scott Vanhorne, the communications director for Second District Supervisor and Board Chairwoman Janice Rutherford said on November 12 that it was his understanding that

Ramos had provided a justification for the re-organization "based upon caseload increases because of the court realignment."

As to whom Ramos would designate to fill the role of the newly created assistant district attorney, Vanhorne said, "We haven't got that information. District Attorney is an independently elected office. What he does within his office with his staff is in his realm. The board cannot tell him what staff to put in what positions."

The board would be able to exercise some discretion with regard to determining whether the new position should be funded, irrespective of who fills it, Vanhorne said. "When it comes to budget requests for additional funding for staff, whether it be the sheriff, the DA, the assessor or treasurer, the board takes a look at it to see whether it wants to approve additional monies for staffing."

Vanhorne said that Rutherford and the other supervisors have "probably spoken to the dis-

trict attorney about this. I do know that (assistant district attorney) Mike Fermin has spoken with district staff about the new staffing needs the DA has."

Precisely how the re-organization Ramos is proposing shapes up is not known to the board at this point, Vanhorne said.

"No one has seen what is going before the board," he said.

There are two legal considerations why Ramos's promotion of Ashley might be ill-advised and legally problematic.

One of those is the le-

gal precedent set in the case Edna Miller et al v. Department of Corrections, which resulted in a precedent setting ruling by the California Supreme Court relating to favoritism to a governmental employee based on a relationship with her boss.

In Miller v. Department of Corrections, two former employees of the Valley State Prison for Women, Edna Miller and Frances Mackey, claimed that the warden of the prison at which they were employed accorded unwarranted favorable treatment to numerous female employees with whom the warden was having sexual affairs and that such conduct constituted sexual harassment in violation of the California Fair Employment and Housing Act. The California Supreme Court ruled that employees passed over as Miller and Mackey were had grounds to sue the state and the Department of Corrections for both income lost and punitive damages.

The other legal consideration is Government Code Section 1090,

which reads: "Members of the Legislature, state, county, district, judicial district, and city officers or employees shall not be financially interested in any contract made by them in their official capacity, or by any body or board of which they are members. Nor shall state, county, district, judicial district, and city officers or employees be purchasers at any sale or vendors at any purchase made by them in their official capacity."

To the extent that Ramos and Ashley have created a household together and have commingled their finances, any increase made to Ashley's pay upon a recommendation or action by Ramos in his elected and official capacity would appear to run afoul of Government Code Section 1090.

District attorney's office spokesman Christopher Lee did not respond to telephonic and written requests from the *Sentinel* for input for this article and requested interviews with Ramos and Ashley were not granted.

Adelanto To Consider Building Los Angeles County Detention Facility *from page 8*

sues. "They did not want the Los Angeles County inmates who will be held there released into San Bernardino County. The agreement covers that. Once their sentence is served and their time is done, they will be put on a bus and taken back to Los Angeles and will be released from the

L.A. Men's Central Jail. We have satisfied the responsible authorities on that question. We got a unanimous vote of approval from the planning commission."

Johns said he and Crants have made substantial progress toward getting the project approved but that they are not there yet. "Los Angeles County is not going to take any substantive action until we get the approval to build," Johns said.

Johns said he is rela-

tively confident the city council will see the benefit of approving the project. "By the terms and conditions of approval, this will spin off approximately \$1.2 million per year to the city of Adelanto and it will create 5,000 construction and permanent jobs," he said.

Johns said he is aware of Mena and Defund Detention.

"I know a little about them and what they are saying but I don't know who they are," he said. He had not met Mena,

Johns said. "I know some of the local people have talked to her. They know who she is. She is said to be an activist and a community organizer. She needs to make her case with the city council. I am going to make our case. I think we will win because this project will bring the city of Adelanto two of the things it desperately needs, revenue and employment," Johns said.



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San Bernardino County Coroner Reports

Coroner case #701408482 On 11/14/2014 at 6:06 AM, the California Highway Patrol received a wireless 911 call reporting an overturned vehicle off the right side of the westbound lane of Interstate 40, 1 mile west of River Road, in Needles CA. The 51 year-old Hispanic male passenger of the vehicle was pronounced dead at the scene. The name of the decedent will be released following confirmation of identity and notification to the next-of-kin. The California Highway Patrol is investigating the incident. [111414 1232 SY]

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE (Coroner case #701407258) Back on 9/29/14, 60-62 year-old Manuel Ramirez-Ramirez was struck by a vehicle while walking on Interstate 215, south of Rialto Avenue, in San Bernardino. Mr. Ramirez later died at Loma Linda University Medical Center. The San Bernardino Sheriff Coroner Division is requesting public assistance in locating Mr. Ramirez' family. He is also known as: Jesus Torres, Pablo Martinez, Jesus Torres-Mancias and Jose Perez. Mr. Ramirez' city of residency in unknown. Anyone with information about how to contact his family is asked to call the Coroner Division at (909) 387-2978. [111314 1518 SY]

Coroner case #701408433 On 11/12/14 at 3:50 AM, 911 calls were made indicating that a possible traffic collision occurred. Officers from the San Bernardino Police Department (SBPD) responded to the location identified as the 500 block of N. Pepper in San Bernardino. When the officers' arrived, they found a male subject, Robert Edward Wilborne, a 24 year-old resident of Rialto [11122014 1056 SY], down in the street with upper body trauma. Investigations revealed this was not a traffic collision. Paramedics from the San Bernardino Fire Department responded to the location also. At 4:11 AM, paramedics pronounced Wilborne dead. Detectives from SBPD homicide detail are investigating the incident. The name of the decedent will be released when the next-of-kin have been notified. An autopsy will be conducted later this week to determine the exact cause of death. [111214 1218 SY]

Coroner case #701408364 On 11/09/2014 at 11:45 PM, the California Highway Patrol received a 911 call reporting a man struck by car. A Hispanic male was reported to have been walking westbound across Interstate 215, south of Orange Show Rd., when he was struck by a 2014 Kia Rio. Forty-four year-old San Bernardino resident David Martinez was pronounced dead at the scene. The California Highway Patrol is investigating this incident. [111214 0923 SY]

Coroner case #701408426 On Tuesday, 11/11/2014 at 5:46 PM, San Bernardino Police Department officer responded to a call for shots fired in the 2900 block of N. Mountain Ave, in San Bernardino. Officers arrived on scene and found 15 year-old San Bernardino resident Rahsaan Greene with trauma to the upper body. Greene was pronounced dead at the scene by paramedics. The San Bernardino Police Department Homicide Detail is investigating the incident. [111214 0918 SY]

Coroner case #701408422 On 11/11/14 at 7:15 PM, the Ontario Police Department received 911 calls reporting a shooting. George Estrada, a 51 year old resident of Rancho Cucamonga, was driving northbound on Vine St., approaching 'I' St., in Ontario, when unknown suspect(s) began shooting into Estrada's vehicle. Paramedics arrived and transported him to San Antonio Community Hospital where he was pronounced dead at 8:12 PM. The Ontario Police Department is investigating the incident. [111214 0914 SY] Name and age corrected [111214 1004 SY]

Coroner case #701408390 On 11/10/2014 at 5:53 PM, the California Highway Patrol received a 911 call reporting a traffic incident involving a pedestrian on Hwy 62 near Desert Willow Trail. Upon arrival, California Highway Patrol personnel learned that a 2007 Ford Focus had been traveling westbound Hwy 62 when it struck a pedestrian. Eighty year-old Morongo Valley resident Arthur Dachroeden was pronounced dead at the scene by San Bernardino County Fire Department personnel. The California Highway Patrol is investigating the incident. [111214 0908 SY]

Coroner case #701408654 On 11/10/2014 at 3:29 PM, the San Bernardino Sheriff Department - Yucaipa received 911 calls reporting a bicyclist had been struck by a car on 7th St., near 'E' St. in Yucaipa. Officers and paramedics responded to find 75 year-old Yucaipa resident Julian Rodriguez had been traveling southbound on his bicycle when he was hit by a 2004 Hyundai. Rodriguez was transported to Loma Linda University Medical Center where he died of his injuries at 5:34 PM. The Yucaipa Sheriff Department is investigating the accident. [111214 0905 SY]

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Coroner case #701408340 On Sunday, 11/09/2014, at 5:23 AM, a 911 call was received reporting a vehicle burning in the center divider of Interstate 15 approximately 2 miles south of Bailey Avenue in Mountain Pass. San Bernardino County Fire Department personnel responded and extinguished the flames to find charred human remains inside the vehicle. The name of the deceased is being withheld pending positive identification of the remains and the notification of the next of kin. The California Highway Patrol is investigating the incident. [1092014 1253 GB]

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Water Conservation Issue In Upland Prosecution

from from page

legally, to pour buckets and buckets of water on grass is wrong.”

In 2013, the city notified Bogman that he was out of compliance with the city code and would need to “abate” the situation. Initially he was told that he needed to resume watering his yard. But Bogman learned on his own that he did not necessarily have to have grass as a component of his yard’s landscaping and he began looking into replacing it with drought-resistant plants and vegetation that are native to California. He approached Jeff Zwack, Upland’s director of community development, to ascertain which plants the city would deem acceptable for domestic landscaping.

“I asked him to give me a definition of drought tolerant landscaping that would be acceptable to them,” Bogman said. “He said I should come up with something and they would let me know if it was acceptable. The city doesn’t know how to define drought tolerant landscaping. If the city doesn’t know what is acceptable to them, how do they expect us to know?”

The city’s failure in this regard and its insistence on a formula of more watering exacerbated the problem, Bogman said. “It is up to the city to come up with the proper code to implement their policy, which they are not doing,” he said. “All of the city’s officials do not accept my present landscaping. Some say they will accept the drought tolerant landscaping but the others will not let me put it in. Drought tolerant landscaping using native California plants requires that they develop a root system. You must give them some water and the root system will grow, but if you give them too much water the root system will not grow properly. The idea is to conserve water and the city people are telling me to use more water.”

Bogman said the city’s failure to understand this principle is on display on several city-owned properties, including at the Civic Center containing City Hall and the Upland Library. “Go to City Hall,” Bogman said. “Look at other city properties. There is bare ground there. There is no landscaping. So the city is in violation of its own rules.”

The city initiated proceedings against Bog-

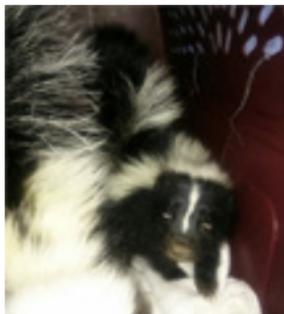
By Diane Dragotto Williams

Skunks, also known as “polecats (with “pole” from either the French poule “chicken” or puant “stinking”),” are one of the most maligned animals in the western world. And yet, they are valuable to



Infant skunks

our ecosystem. Yes, of course, beware of their noxious spray that contains sulfur-containing chemicals! Skunks can spray with accuracy at targets that are up to ten



Striped skunk baby

feet away. Even bears give this small mammal a wide berth. Its spray can cause you to vomit, and get your dog to suffer the consequences of many tomato juice baths! However, this small creature does get a

man under its administrative citation authority in August 2013. The matter has now proceeded to court. Technically, the city of Upland and its prosecutor, Dan Peelman, have charged Bogman with a violation of Upland Municipal Code Section M8.12.020(D), maintaining nuisance landscaping. Peelman has also charged Bogman with a violation of Upland Municipal Code Section M12.24.130, maintaining a nuisance parkway. In Upland, parkways are owned by the city but the municipal code requires that the most proximate landowner maintain them.

With regard to the second charge, Bogman maintains that he actual-

ly watered and attempted to save the tree in question, which is located on city property in front of his house, but that some unknown condition beyond his control such as blight had infested it. He contends it was the city which neglected its own tree that caused it to expire. He said he believes it is the city’s responsibility to remove it and replace it, if replacement is deemed appropriate.

Bogman said, “The governor has declared a state emergency because of the drought, which is in its third year. We are not allowed to waste water, but the city requires us to spray enough water on the ground to maintain a green lawn. There



bad rap for being exactly what it is, a predator of varmints that need to be eradicated from your back yard. If you don’t take care of your garbage, he can be a nightly nuisance also.

Skunks are omnivorous, and change their diets as the seasons change. They eat insects and larvae, earthworms, grubs, small rodents, lizards, salamanders, frogs, snakes, birds, moles, and

eggs. They also commonly eat berries, roots, leaves, grasses, fungi, and nuts.

Interestingly enough, skunks are one of the primary predators of the honeybee, relying on their thick fur to protect them from stings. The skunk scratches at the front of the beehive and eats the guard bees that come out to investigate. Mother skunks are known to teach this behavior to their young.

Skunks are active at dusk and dawn and are

solitary animals and they den up in burrows but are not true hibernators in winter. However, they remain generally inactive and feed rarely, going through a dormant stage. Over winter, multiple females (as many as 12) huddle together, while males often den alone.

Although they have excellent senses of smell and hearing, they have poor vision, being un-

able to see objects more than about 10 ft away, making them vulnerable to typical death by road traffic. They are short-



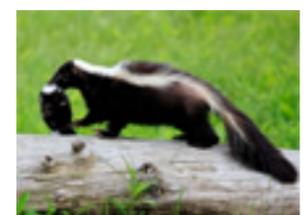
lived; their lifespan in the wild is no more than three years, with most living only up to a year.

When a wildlife rehabilitator works with

skunks, there is a special way of handling the skunk so as not to be sprayed. Also, they warn you with little taps



on the ground with their front feet if you are about to be sprayed! They are adorable as youngsters, and have that “Flower” look about themselves, as Bambi’s friend had in the Walt Disney movie of the same name. Skunks are respected at Wildhaven Ranch. If you have any nuisance



problems, you can contact Wildhaven at (909) 337-7389.

Wildhaven Ranch is a wildlife sanctuary in the San Bernardino Mountains. For more information about its tours and mission, visit its website at www.wildhavenranch.org.



desert area. The Inland Empire is a desert that has been reclaimed. We can have grass here and people obviously do, but

Continued on Page 12

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California Style Mom on the Run

By Grace Bernal



After the Boston marathon bombing tragedy, marathon runners donned colors as a show

of solidarity and defiance in the face of terrorism.



Inadvertently, that begat an unanticipated fashion trend, with athletes getting more and more colorful with their garments. To see runners in a marathon full of color is a wonderful explosion. Their style is pretty neat,



making the runners look fashionably creative and in shape. The focal point of marathoners' dress-



beginning with Turkey trot runs, along with other long races. Get your col-

have some marathon fun. "The marathon can humble you."

-Bill Rodgers



ing is the colorful clothing which just keeps moving. All the tutus are a lot fun, too. The colored ones look great in conjunction with the printed running pants. Some people juggle balls in the air while they jog and some kick soccer balls. In addition to the exhilaration of running, it's nice to be fashionably noticeable. We're so lucky to have marathoners pave the way into competitive color and style. Many marathon events are coming up,

colorful tutu, and printed garment, and go out and



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

Upland Prosecuting Man For Conserving Water

from page 11

only by using massive amounts of water. In a drought, continuing to do that is immoral, in

my opinion. I consider myself a good citizen. I consider myself a responsible citizen. The city of Upland is saying I am a bad citizen. I will go to court on Monday and let 12 other citizens of the state of California

decide." Councilman Glenn Bozar said he questioned "why the city is handling this in this way. Look at what the governor [Jerry Brown] did with his mansion up in Sacramento. He let his lawn go

brown. There were pictures of it in newspapers all over the state. Taking this guy [Bogman] to court seems to me a peculiar way of doing this."

Mayor Ray Musser told the *Sentinel*, "The problem is that this has gone on for months and months and there has been no cooperation. Had he [Bogman] just cooperated and been reasonable, there would not have been a problem."

Musser acknowledged that some of the landscaping at the Upland Civic Center had been neglected.

"The city doesn't have anything in the budget to improve our landscaping there at this time," Musser said, in acknowledging the city is not in compliance with its own code. "What we hope to do is get together with a church group who will adopt that and when they come up with something

that is acceptable, we will have that relandscaped at no cost to the city."

With regard to drought resistant landscaping, Musser said, "When I first saw it, I didn't like it. But now that I've seen more of it, it's okay. It doesn't look as nice as grass, which I prefer, but drought friendly plants are starting to grow on me, especially with how

precious water is."

Musser said he had personally gone to Bogman's home with a city staff member to survey it. "The way he is keeping his plants and shrubs green as best as he can looks nice, but his lawn is completely dead," Musser said. "If he is putting in some water saving method, let's finish it out is all we are saying."



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