

Rise In Fentanyl Availability, Use And Related Deaths In The Morongo Basin

There are unmistakable signs of a serious uptick in the prevalence of fentanyl among the illicit street drugs available in the Morongo Basin since late spring, including multiple overdoses among its users, two of which resulted in deaths in the last month.

A synthetic opioid first derived in Belgium in 1960 and put to use to treat cancer pain, it became available legally

by prescription in the United States beginning in 1968. Fentanyl has become widely popular among a certain segment of the population as both a painkiller and recreational drug.

Much more powerful than morphine, heroin or oxycodone, fentanyl is also far more deadly. In minute quantities it packs four, five and six times as much pain attenuating punch as do

other opioids measured by weight, such that users can and often do perish upon imbibing a dose in a comparable amount to that typically used by an individual inhaling heroin, or injecting it intravenously or taking it orally.

Fentanyl played a primary role in the overdose death of the singer Prince and was a major contributory factor in the combined-substance

overdose death of singer Michael Jackson.

More than a decade ago, Chinese companies began counterfeit manufacturing of the substance, which was distributed illicitly internationally. Within the last six years, according to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, pirate laboratories in Mexico began manufacturing it, whereafter it was marketed as "Mexican oxy,"

i.e. what was represented as oxycontin. Between 2015 and 2018, there was a dramatic 400 percent spike in fentanyl-related deaths in Arizona, where the drug was being imported.

That corresponded with a rash of fentanyl deaths in Canada beginning in the 2014-2015 timeframe, followed by fentanyl deaths in the United States in 2018

surpassing See P 5

Cities Scramble To Place Tax Measures On Ballot For This November

As the COVID-19 crisis is contracting the economy at the national, state and local levels, seven municipalities in San Bernardino County are seeking permission from their cities' or town's residents consent to layer further taxes upon them.

The need for income to subsidize flagging government operations is so great, those local officials maintain, that those jurisdictions' citizens, who are equally financially challenged themselves by the sputtering economy, should be willing to chip in even more than they are already paying to keep government at all levels viable to ensure that local governmental control is not compromised.

Chino Hills and Redlands have already qualified their tax proposal votes for the November election.

Adelanto, San Bernardino and Victorville have requests for the San Bernardino County Registrar of Voters to expand the ballot to include their taxing proposals. And on Monday, July 27 and Tuesday July 28, the Upland City Council and Apple Valley Town Council, respectively, in last-ditch efforts will attempt to come to a consensus about whether they should begin the application process to get a tax measure for Upland and the Town of Apple Valley on the ballot by the deadline to do so.

The ballot proposition that is to be submitted directly to Chino Hills' voters calls for the municipal code to expand the definition of "hotel" for purposes of See P 9

Report Of Valdivia Intrigue To Lure Lopez From Hemet To SB As City Manager

By Mark Gutglueck

Reports that San Bernardino is on the brink of hiring Chris Lopez as its city manager are at best premature and based upon speculation that overestimates the pull of Mayor John Valdivia and underestimates the strength of several other candidates for the position, sources within what

now suffices as San Bernardino City Hall have told the *Sentinel*.

Late this week, word came in over the transom that Lopez, who is currently the city manager of Hemet and formerly had extensive experience in San Bernardino, had more than one meeting with Mayor John Valdivia, a sign that some said

indicated Lopez was about to jump ship and sign on as the city manager in the county seat.

Currently, Teri Ledoux is serving as San Bernardino city manager. She took on the city manager's position on a fill-in basis in April 2019, slightly less than four months after Valdivia had acceded to

the mayor's post. What looked at that time to be Ledoux's temporary promotion was occasioned after Valdivia was able to summon up the bare minimum three votes he needed to create a 3-to-3 deadlock on the city council in a vote to suspend then-City Manager Andrea Travis-Miller. The mayor in

San Bernardino is not in most circumstances accorded voting power, but can vote to break a tie. From virtually the day Valdivia was sworn in as mayor on December 19, 2018, he was gunning to cashier Travis-Miller, whom he considered to be closely aligned to his predecessor as mayor, Carey Davis. See P 2

Barstow Goes First With Mutual Sacrifices To Save The Jobs Of All

In the first of what inevitably will prove to be a series of similar economies necessitated by the financial devastation following in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Barstow's top ranking municipal employees have voluntarily imposed on themselves fiscal austerity measures intended to tide the city's ship of state through a treacherous undertow-and-whirlpool-laden sea

of red ink that is directly ahead.

Barstow City Manager Nikki Salas, Barstow Assistant City Manager Cindy Prothro and Barstow Police Chief Albert Ramirez Jr., together with the members of the Barstow Management Employees' Association, consented to forego any raises for two years along with the withholding of vacation, holiday and manage- See P 10

Two Years After Political Mugging That Blew Him Out Of Office, Negrete A Candidate Again



Eric Negrete

Two years ago, Eric Negrete was perceived by some as the California Republican Party's

"Great Brown Hope." Shortly thereafter, however, Negrete's once-promising political career hit a snag.

Negrete's one-time position of potential had grown out of his party's dire circumstance. Over the last two decades, the Democratic Party in California has been in ever greater ascendancy, until at present the state GOP is considered to be pretty much of a

political irrelevancy. A Democrat, Gavin Newsom, just as did his predecessor, Jerry Brown, occupies the Governor's Mansion at 1526 H Street in Sacramento. The Democrats hold dual supermajorities in the Assembly and State Senate. The lieutenant governor, the California Attorney General, The California Superintendent of Schools, the state's controller, superin- See P 5

Hesperia, Smugly, & Redlands, Obsequiously, Make Official Denunciations Of Racism

The city councils of two San Bernardino cities this week made similar denunciations of racism, one doing so in a smug fashion that made no concession of participation in any of the current or past acts or attitudes it was decrying, and the other doing so somewhat obsequiously and perhaps even imprudently from a legal perspective, acknowledging

past insensitivity and transgressions that carry with them potential liability issues.

In the first instance, involving the City of Hesperia, the city council's use of language in reckoning with the matter was in no small measure shaped by the consideration that the city as an institution and its city council as a political body, including one of its

current members, stand accused by the Donald Trump Administration no less of racially biased policing of its citizenry and in its housing policy, extending to efforts to force members of what are classified officially as minority populations to move out of the city. In the second instance, the resolution offered by the City of Redlands was so concessionary that some

legal professionals were concerned that it may have created the basis for not-yet-filed claims of discrimination against the city.

Both cities' councils met on Tuesday evening, July 21. During the course of those meetings, each panel took up the issue of racial injustice, a subject that has been in vogue throughout the country in the

aftermath of the May 25 death of George Floyd, which was brought about when a Minneapolis police officer effectuating his arrest gratuitously knelt upon his neck for some nine minutes while he was prone on the pavement with his hands handcuffed behind his back. Floyd's death has since become emblematic of the full range of injustice borne See P 3

Lopez Had Experience In SB's Public Works, City Manager's and Mayor's Offices When Previously Employed With The City *from front page*

Valdivia defeated Davis in the November 2018 election.

Valdivia had hopes of being able to fire Travis-Miller with the support of his four then-allies on the city council – newly-elected First Ward Councilman Ted Sanchez and newly-elected Second Ward Councilwoman Sandra Ibarra, Fifth District Councilman Henry Nickel and Sixth Ward Councilwoman Bessine Richard. City restrictions, however, prevented San Bernardino's city manager from being fired in the immediate aftermath of a municipal election. Furthermore, the reluctance of both Nickel and Richard to act in haste in the early going after an administration turnover kept Travis-Miller in position for what was then the time being. In early April 2019, however, when Richard at last joined with Sanchez and Ibarra in supporting the temporary suspension of Travis-Miller, Valdivia moved at once to break the tie that had resulted when Nickel and Fourth Ward Councilman Fred Shorett and Seventh Ward Councilman Jim Mulvihill opposed protracting Travis-Miller. The moment was pregnant with suspense, as many anticipated that Travis-Miller's once-loyal second-in-command, Ledoux, whom Travis-Miller had installed into the assistant city manager's position, would move to support her boss by threatening to walk out with the city's department heads as a show of confidence in Travis-Miller's leadership. Valdivia and his then-chief of staff, Bill Essayli, adroitly foreclosed any such manifestation of resistance by elevating Ledoux into the interim city manager's position to oversee city operations in

Travis-Miller's absence. Ledoux had no previous experience in a top management position and was nearing retirement. In May 2019 a special election was held to fill the vacant Third Ward council post that had come about when Valdivia was obliged to tender his resignation from that position, which he had held since 2012, to accept the mayor's gavel. Juan Figueroa, Valdivia's handpicked choice as a replacement, prevailed in that election. With what then appeared to be a solid four or five member ruling coalition on the council in his camp, Valdivia from his position of perceived strength, moved to fire Travis-Miller. The council in a 6-to-2 vote in which Valdivia was permitted to participate, confirmed Travis-Miller's sacking.

Valdivia recognized that Ledoux's promotion into the full-fledged city manager's position would, under the California Public Employees Retirement System's formula, increase the pension Ledoux was to receive upon her February 2021 retirement from \$122,472 to \$181,642.50 annually. Shrewdly, Valdivia two months later arranged to have the city council promote Ledoux to city manager, pursuant to an 18-month contract that would keep her in place until December 31, 2020. This, Valdivia calculated, would buy Ledoux's loyalty, making it far easier for him to dominate the city with the city's top administrator in his pocket.

Control of the city's administrative function was an important consideration for Valdivia. In 2016, the city's voters had adopted a new municipal charter, replacing the 111-year-old one that had been in place since 1905. That 1905 charter created what in municipal parlance is referred to as a strong mayor form of governance. While the mayor had no voting power as the presiding member of the city council under normal circumstances,

he or she as the presiding officer wielded the gavel and officiated over the meeting, controlling the ebb and flow of debate, with unfettered freedom to place items for action or discussion before the council. He or she had the power to break a tie-vote, and veto power on any votes that ended either 4-to-3 or 3-to-2, which in practical terms meant that on any issue where the vote was going against the position the mayor held, he or she in fact had two votes. More significantly still under the 1905 charter, the mayor had administrative power equal to his or her political power. The 1905 charter endowed the mayor with the power to hire and fire city employees. This made the mayor, in a sense, a co-regent of the city with the city manager. And if the mayor had differences with the city manager, the mayor could fire him or her.

It was that kind of power that Valdivia yearned for but which, to his chagrin, had been taken away by the 2015 charter revision, which transformed the city from a strong mayor form of government to a council/city manager model in which the council as a panel set city policy which the city manager carried out, such that the administrative and managerial authority once infused in the mayor was attenuated and his or her power of hiring and firing was discontinued. By promoting Ledoux, Valdivia was angling to co-opt her, to essentially turn her into his puppet, and have her surrender back to him the administrative power that the new charter no longer gave him.

Ledoux's tenure as city manager was understood to be limited from the outset in that her contract ran only to December 2020, which was less than two months shy of her expected retirement date. Accordingly, one of the primary assignments Ledoux had been tasked with was to compile a list of those whom the city council could consider and then hire as her

successor.

The *Sentinel* is informed that one of those on the list was Chris Lopez.

Lopez began with the City of San Bernardino as an environmental projects specialist in the public works department. While in that capacity, Lopez was involved in cooperative efforts between the city and the Wildwood Association Group and the Del Rosa Neighborhood Action Group relating to educating the public with regard to recycling, as well as increasing revenues and reducing expenditures for the city's integrated waste management division. City management deemed Lopez to have achieved satisfactory results in all of those areas. Concurrent with that, the city achieved success in meeting commercial recycling goals set by the State of California in accordance with a program Lopez put in place using a geographic information system that efficientized routes of the city's sanitation vehicles, thereby reducing wear and tear on the garbage trucks. Lopez was subsequently entrusted with overseeing and monitoring the public works department's \$47 million annual budget, advising division managers on technical issues related to the department's divisions' budgets to streamline department processes.

With the city's 2012 bankruptcy filing, Lopez was detailed to husbanding the limited financial resources yet available to the public works division, including imposing the fiscal discipline required to continue to completion a park relighting program at Littlefield Shultis Park, seeing to the completion of contract work within landscape maintenance assessment districts, carrying out a cost analysis for disposal of city waste at alternative locations and undertaking a programmatic review of activity of the department to focus on the most essential elements of the department's function

The San Bernardino County

Sentinel

Published in San Bernardino County.

The Sentinel's main office is located at 10788 Civic Center Drive in Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730

A Fortunado Publication in conjunction with

Countywide News Service

Mark Gutglueck, Publisher

Call (951) 567-1936

to learn of locations where the Sentinel is available or to provide news tips

10808 Foothill Blvd., Suite 160-446

Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730

SBCSentinel@yahoo.com

Legal Notice Department 909 957 9998

Message Line 909-276 5796

during the initial phase of the city's bankruptcy.

In 2013, he was brought into the city manager's office to assist in analysis, where he offered guidance on the streamlining and consolidation of functions within the public works division and facilitating the city's graffiti removal program.

Within the city manager's office, he was assigned to the legislative review committee and the Measure Z Citizens Oversight Committee. In 2014, he did a comparison of the city's function with neighboring cities to determine if the city's standards limited economic development opportunities and whether there was redundancy or duplication in the city's regulatory action and processes handled by the State of California.

He also created the infrastructure maintenance plan for the city's bankruptcy team.

He managed both the bidding process and the accumulation of cost data relating to the outsourcing of the fire department and the provision of animal sheltering services.

After the position of chief of staff to Mayor Carey Davis had been vacated in January 2015 and remained so for some time, the city council approved a redefinition of the chief of staff's job duties and reduced the salary for the position to the salary range of that of assistant to the city manager. Thereafter recruitment for the position was undertaken and applications ac-

cepted. Lopez was one of four applicants ultimately considered for the post. He was deemed most qualified with the conclusion of the competition, and thereafter served as Carey Davis's chief of staff.

Allen Parker served as San Bernardino's city manager from February 2013 until December 2015. While neither Lopez nor Parker have used the term, Lopez came to be something of Parker's protégé. In August 2017, the City of Hemet hired Parker as city manager. Seven months later, Parker brought Lopez to Hemet to serve as assistant city manager. Eleven months after that, when Hemet terminated Parker, Lopez was selected as interim city manager. In October 2019, the Hemet City Council offered, and Lopez accepted, the position as its confirmed city manager.

Having achieved that milestone, Lopez, who possesses a bachelor's degree in political science with a minor in geographic information systems and a master's degree in public administration from Cal Poly Pomona, is now purposed to move up the municipal evolutionary chain from 86,000-population Hemet to 218,000-population San Bernardino.

In recent weeks, Lopez has met with Valdivia, during which the discussions have centered around the terms by which Lopez will make the leap from Hemet to become city manager in San Bernardino. Valdivia is reportedly prepared

Continued on Page 10

His RC Candidacy, Rush Says, Is An Alternative To Special Interests And The 16-Year Incumbent

Mark Rush this week told the *Sentinel* he is running for city council in Rancho Cucamonga's District 1 "to give the voters a choice for change between the existing city council member and myself."

So far, the two candidates in the First District are Sam Spagnolo, who has been on the city council since 2004, and another challenger, Jon Hamilton. "I will represent the residence in District 1 in Rancho Cucamonga with a plan going forward of reducing overdevelopment, which will reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality in our city," Rush said.

Rush said he believes his professional experience and abiding and active interest in issues impacting the city qualifies him to hold the council position he is seeking.

"As a retired telecommunications engineer and planner, I have ex-



Mark Rush

perience in managing, planning and working on large projects in coordination with municipalities." Rush said. "As a long time resident of Rancho Cucamonga, I am familiar with local issues and have attended numerous city council meetings."

He is favorably distinguished from Spagnolo, Rush asserted, by the consideration that he is not tied into the city establishment nor the firefighters union. Spagnolo was a fireman with the city's fire department and its predecessor, the Foothill Fire District for 35 years.

"The current city

councilman for District 1 has been there a long time, and as far as I'm concerned, the city is progressing in the wrong direction, and he is part of that decision-making team," Rush said. "I am a longtime resident with a diverse background, and with no ties to special interest groups, offering a different prospective on how this city should progress and plan for the future."

A major issue facing the city, Rush said, is too-aggressive development.

"This city is developing at such a rapid rate, that it seems every available acre is being developed into high density dwellings and warehouses, which are contributing to the increased traffic, reduced air quality, and the increased use and price of water as the demand goes up," Rush said. "You can only develop as far as the available resources and

infrastructure can accommodate."

Moreover, Rush said, the city's growth has not been balanced.

"The lack of job opportunities for our residents and graduating students is also a problem," he said. "They need to commute out of the city to find jobs that pay a wage allowing them to live here. These factors diminish the quality of life here."

Rush offered a relatively simple formula for redressing the city's problems. He said city decision-makers could make a major stride toward rational land use policy "by not approving every proposed development that requests a permit, and requiring those that do get approved provide a more environmentally conscious design to help curb the problems I mentioned. By eliminating high density developments and warehouses, you reduce auto

and truck traffic. This also improves air quality and water consumption. By providing incentives to high tech, medical and professional businesses to build here, we can attract higher paying jobs for the residents and graduates from Chaffey College. They can then find jobs here and afford to live here."

There would be no costs affiliated with the solutions he is advocating, Rush said.

"The city will not have to pay anymore for these changes than the current way we do business," he said. "The benefits would be an improved quality of life for the residents of Rancho Cucamonga."

Rush said he possesses experience that would provide him with the foundation upon which to function as an effective council member.

"I'm a former vice president of the Associated Artists of the Inland

Empire, and the Rancho Cucamonga Democratic Club," he said. "I'm also an active member of the Sierra Club."

Born and raised in Riverside where he attended Ramona High School, Rush served in the Army and first moved to Rancho Cucamonga in 1980, but moved to Highland in 1989 before returning in 2000, making him a 29-year Rancho Cucamonga resident.

He attended and graduated from Chaffey College, receiving an Associate of Arts degree in general studies and an Associate of Science degree in physical sciences. He subsequently attended and graduated from the University of Redlands with a Bachelor of Science degree in business and management.

He is currently retired, with two daughters and four grandchildren.

-Mark Gutglueck

Hesperia, Accused By U.S. Justice Department Of Discriminatory Housing and Law Enforcement Policies, Bypasses Any Mea Culpa In Denouncing Racism *from front page*

by African-Americans and what are commonly referred to as minority groups in the United States.

Prompted by written and verbal calls from members of the Black Lives Matter movement for the City of Hesperia to confront and address issues of racism in its community, which included accusations that the sheriff's department in Hesperia, serving under contract as the City of Hesperia Police Department, has engaged in racial profiling, staff prevailed upon the members of the Hesperia City Council to take up the issue.

Prior to the hearing, two entities, the Inland Empire Citizens Action Committee and the Victor Valley Freedom Campaign cautioned the council to resist what was characterized as partisan political pressure to adhere to an agenda of

politically correct platitudes being foisted upon decision-makers at all levels of government by left-wing extremists.

In the resolution the Hesperia City Council passed, it noted that "Hesperia is a highly diverse community and it is this diversity that makes us such a desirable place to live, work, shop, play, worship and get an education," and asserted that as "the City Council of the City of Hesperia" its members were "deeply saddened by the tragic events that have recently occurred across the country and that racism and intolerance have no place in our community, and we are committed to working actively against all forms of racism." Moreover, the resolution avowed the council is "committed to safeguarding our community against the damages that racism causes and to ensuring that the

Constitutional rights of every person who lives, works, plays and visits Hesperia are respected and protected," such that there was determination that "the City Council of the City of Hesperia stand steadfast with all citizens of Hesperia" to reaffirm a "commitment to fighting for human and civil rights for all. The City Council of the City of Hesperia stands steadfast with all citizens against racism and intolerance and we are committed to working actively against all forms of racism."

Unmentioned in the resolution was the lawsuit filed by the civil section of the United States Justice Department against the City of Hesperia in December accusing both the City of Hesperia and the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department of using the City of Hesperia's "Crime Free Rental Housing Ordinance" to systematically induce, persuade or force African-American and Latino renters to move out of Hesperia. The lawsuit was filed by Nicola T.

Hanna, the United States Attorney in Los Angeles and includes as those representing the United States the names of William P. Barr, the U.S. Attorney General; Eric S. Dreiband, the Assistant U.S. Attorney General; Sameena Shina Majeed, the chief of the office's Housing and Civil Enforcement Section; the section's deputy chief, R. Tamar Hagler; David M. Harris, the chief of the civil division in Los Angeles; Karen P. Ruckert, the chief of the Los Angeles Office's Civil Rights Section; Matthew Nickell, the head of the civil division within the Los Angeles office's Civil Rights Section; and Megan K. Whyte De Vasquez, who as a member of the bar in Washington, D.C. is to be the trial attorney. The lawsuit alleges that city officials enacted the ordinance to drive African-American and Latino renters out of Hesperia. The Justice Department's lawsuit is based on an investigation and charge of discrimination by the U.S. Department of Housing

and Urban Development, which found that African American and Latino renters were significantly more likely to be evicted under the ordinance, which was in effect between January 1, 2016 and its amendment on July 18, 2017, than white renters, and that evictions disproportionately occurred in areas of the city where both black and Hispanic populations predominated. According to the complaint, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determined that African American renters were almost four times as likely as non-Hispanic white renters to be evicted because of the ordinance, and Latino renters were 29 percent more likely than non-Hispanic white renters to be evicted. Sheriff's department data showed that 96 percent of the people the sheriff's department targeted for eviction under the ordinance in 2016 had lived in what the federal government refers to as "majority-minority census blocks," meaning districts in which white

residents are outnumbered by Latinos and Negroes.

The ordinance had been passed by a city council then consisting of members Eric Schmidt, the late Russ Blewett, Paul Russ, Mike Leonard and Bill Holland. Holland is the lone remaining member of the council as it was then composed.

In adopting the resolution, the council used language in the body of it and made statements during the meeting that demonstrated why it was willing to defy the Inland Empire Citizens Action Committee's and the Victor Valley Freedom Campaign's calls for the city to not engage in a politically correct diatribe relating to race relations. The resolution provided the city with an opportunity of self-promotion and a public relations opportunity to controvert the negative publicity of the Justice Department's civil suit against it. The language of the resolution stated "the City of Hesperia

Continued on Page 9

Do You Have Information Of Public Interest? Call the *Sentinel* at (951) 567 1936 The *Sentinel* is always looking for information to inform our readership and keep our readers abreast of newsworthy developments.

The *Sentinel* devotes itself to what is happening in and around San Bernardino County. Social events, political news, issues pertaining to education, medicine, industry, commerce, development, real estate, history, culture and entertainment are of interest to us.



San Bernardino County **Sentinel**

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

**Let us help you make our readers aware of what is happening in your corner of the world.
Do you have a news tip? Don't hesitate to pick up the phone or drop us a line at
sbsentinel@yahoo.com to alert us to that fascinating tidbit.**

After 2014 Election To Victorville Council, Negrete Established Himself As A Republican Stalwart *from front page*

tendent of schools and its insurance commissioner are all Democrats. Key to that dominance is that approaching 80 percent of the state's Latinos, who themselves comprise 14,013,719, or 35.47 percent, of the state's 39,512,223 residents, are Democrats.

Yet many believe that the Party of Lincoln, long in eclipse statewide, is a single charismatic Latino Republican politician away from reversing the current score in Sacramento. Such a personage could redefine both the parameters and conception of partisan identification in the Golden State, resulting in a mass exodus of Hispanic voters out of the Democratic Party, as they swing behind a Republican Party leader who might lead the Republicans out of the desert and to the Promised Land once more.

For some, at least, Negrete potentially represented that deliverer. San Bernardino County remains one of the last bastions of Republicanism in the state. While the number of registered Democrats eclipsed the number of registered Republicans in San Bernardino County in 2009, a full 11 years ago, the Republicans remain in ascendancy throughout the 20,105-square mile county, which is larger

than four New England states combined. Religiously in San Bernardino County, Republicans turn out in far greater percentages when it comes time to vote than do their Democratic counterparts. The San Bernardino County Republican Central Committee is an immaculately-tuned and well-oiled machine, with its members carefully coordinated and committed to efficiently spending the considerable political donations the party has taken in to promote Republican candidates at every level. Meanwhile, the Democratic Central Committee is not a machine as much as it is a horse-drawn wagon, one that is poorly maintained at that. The Democrats perennially do a poor job of raising money, the mother's milk of politics, and whenever election season approaches, the bickering among Democratic Party members often displays itself as even more bitter than the enmity members have toward Republicans. And try as they might, the Democrats have inveterately found themselves incapable of hooking all the horses up to the same side of their wagon, instead hitching the beasts up opposite or sideways from one another, to the point that the wagon rarely moves in one direction consistently. The outcome is that at present, there are more Republicans in the California Legislature representing San Bernardino County than Democrats, four of the five members

of the county board of supervisors are Republicans, the sheriff is a Republican, the district attorney is a Republican, the county assessor is a Republican and the county treasurer is a Republican. While local races are officially considered nonpartisan contests, in San Bernardino County, party affiliation looms large whenever there is an election. In 17 of the county's 22 cities and its two incorporated towns, a majority of the council members are Republicans.

Within this smithy of hardcore conservatism, Negrete has been fashioned with fire, tongs and between the hammer and anvil of the political process into hard steel. An Air Force veteran who now works as a civilian contract project manager for the United States Army at Fort Irwin, Negrete falls right into line with the predominant pro-military and pro-law enforcement wing of the Republican Party. In 2014, he ran for city council and won.

Negrete blended well with his council colleagues, who included Jim Cox, who had been on the council since 2012 and had spent 30 years as Victorville's city manager from 1969 to 1999 and another two year stint as city manager when he had been induced to come out of retirement in 2009; Jim Kennedy, a Republican and a certified public accountant who had been on the council since 2010; Ryan McEachron, a Republican who had been on the

council since 2008; and Gloria Garcia, a Republican who had been running a bookkeeping service in Victorville since 1975 and who had been on the city council since 2012.

Victorville at that time had a history of tremendous stability on its city council going back, essentially, to the city's incorporation in 1962. Under Victorville's governmental arrangement, the mayor is not elected directly by the voters but selected from among the members of the city council by a vote of the council. In 2014, the council elevated Gloria Garcia to the position of mayor. Council operations throughout the next two years were harmonious. In 2016, however, two fateful events came to impinge upon Negrete's political fortunes.

The first of these was Blanca Gomez's electoral victory, which resulted in her displacement of McEachron from the city council. The second development consisted of Negrete declining the offer to be elevated to the position of mayor for the two-year term running from 2016 to 2018. Because of both family and professional commitments, Negrete was concerned he would not be able to devote himself or enough time to the ceremonial aspects of the mayor's function, and he opted to remain in the role of a simple citizen-legislator, which resulted in Garcia remaining in the role of mayor.

Gomez, a Democrat,

broke up the Republican homogeneity of the council, and in short order, through her oftentimes vocal resistance to the direction the council was taking, provoked her colleagues. Gomez courted controversy by espousing causes traditionally well afield from the responsibility of local government. Gomez generated both positive and negative publicity through advocacy on behalf of undocumented or illegal immigrants, embracing a philosophy at odds with the social and political conservatism shared by her council colleagues, her occasional inflammatory rhetoric and her propensity for dispensing with traditional meeting protocol when it interfered with her advocacy. This at first bemused, then dismayed, upset and ultimately antagonized Garcia, Cox, Negrete and Kennedy, most pointedly, it seemed, Garcia and Negrete more than the others. Certain elements of Gomez's comportment especially riled her colleagues, as when she at one point draped herself in a Mexican flag during a council meeting.

Garcia found herself struggling to maintain her own composure when dealing with Gomez's vocal remonstrations that the mayor felt were an assault upon the decorum, dignity and solemnity of the public meetings she was attempting to conduct. Negrete grew irate, in particular when Gomez would take issue with

policies or attitudes she considered reactionary and contrary to advancing the progressive ideology most Republicans considered radical and anathema to the order that prevailed de facto throughout government at the local level in San Bernardino County. Over time, Victorville residents, including ones who normally or previously were not interested in the goings-on at City Hall, would attend or watch the broadcasts of the city council meetings for the sheer amusement of seeing the regular clashes between Garcia and Gomez or Negrete and Gomez or the less frequent heated exchanges between Gomez and either Cox or Kennedy.

Gomez's election to the council in 2016 was an indication of more than her personal political advancement alone, and it reflected the ongoing demographic change in Victorville, including growing numbers of Democrats in the city, which has traditionally been dominated by Republican officeholders. Of note was that Gomez had standing within the Democratic Party. In this way, she was able to bring the situation relating to Victorville to the attention of Democratic Party higher-ups. This included focus on the consideration that despite the fact that some 24,000 or roughly 44 percent of the city's nearly 55,000 voters were registered Democrats compared to the 13,000

Continued on Page 5

Marsh Commits To Apply Logic & Civility If Entrusted With Victorville City Council Berth

Victorville Planning Commission Member Paul Marsh is seeking a position on the Victorville City Council in November. This week he told the *Sentinel*, “I believe all politics are local and the Victorville City Council needs people who can evaluate issues logically and offer common sense solutions.” Marsh said he is “able to recognize issues, research the facts, engage in civil discussion, then make a decision. I am hoping to bring a different approach to the council. I am running because I understand this election is a pivotal point, a crossroads for our city and I can bring rationality and consistency to the council.”

In addition to his current position on the planning commission, Marsh is a self-employed loan officer affiliated with Home Funding Corp. who originates home,



Paul Marsh

commercial and hard money loans. He has previously served as vice president of the Southern California Black Chamber of Commerce. Marsh said he was at one with that organization’s dedication “to improving the economic environment for the minority business community by fostering business development and prosperity. I am a member of the High Desert Community Coalition which focuses on preventing and reducing substance abuse within communities of the High Desert. I am also a member of the Southern California High Desert

Intervention Action Coalition, which addresses ongoing homeless issues.”

Marsh said his “diverse community engagement, active participation in and dedication to city improvement, in addition to my business background, distinguishes me from other candidates.”

Enumerating the major issues facing Victorville, Marsh highlighted “the lack of essential services, such as police, code enforcement, animal control, fire service; rapidly increasing crime; the deterioration of parts of our city; and homelessness. In order to rectify these issues, the city would basically need to have additional personnel, and seek neighborhood and commercial involvement and participation.”

Marsh noted that, “A measure has been approved by the city council

for placement on the November ballot which, if approved by the voters in Victorville, would increase city revenues which would be directed to these issues.”

Marsh further advocated “holding absentee and commercial property owners accountable for the condition of their parking lots and properties.” He said those problem could be partially offset by further development. “The additional housing being built will also enhance the amount of property tax allocated to Victorville,” he said.

Marsh said that in evaluating his candidacy, he hopes the city’s voters will consider, “my current position on the planning commission, my advocacy for special needs children, my service as a board member on numerous civic organizations. I also have attended city council meeting regularly for

four years and participate by addressing the council on agenda items and community commitments.”

Marsh noted that he knows the lay of the land in Victorville as well as it can be known. “I have lived in Victorville for 58 years,” he said. “I arrived in 1962 when my father was stationed at George Air Force Base. My mother was a teacher at Park View Elementary School. The only time I was away was when I served in the US Army, but I maintained my Victorville address.”

Marsh is a 1975 graduate of Victor Valley Sr High School. “I am a proud Jackrabbit,” he said. Furthermore, he noted, “I attended Bossier City Community College and Victor Valley College, studying business. In addition, I am required to take supplemental courses, which includes conferences,

seminars and workshops in finance, mortgage banking and financial regulations to maintain my certification.”

Marsh has been married to Lenita Q. Marsh for 40 years. “We are the proud parents of three children, two daughters and one son who was born with cerebral palsy. We have four grandchildren, two of whom live with us and call us Mom & Dad.”

Marsh was hopeful his addition to the city council will elevate and enlighten that body’s deliberations and decision making.

“Since I have been attending Victorville City Council meetings, they have become pandemonium, which impedes the business of the city,” he said. “I will bring civility and decorum to the dais, as well as a commitment to return to Victorville’s tradition of vision and planning.”

Democrats Made Devastating Hit On Negrete In 2018 from page 4

or approximately 24 percent registered as Republicans, the Republican Party was still dominating the city politically. Moreover, Victorville appeared to be a breeding ground for the likes of Garcia and Negrete, Hispanic Republicans who fit the description of the GOP Moses who might one day lead a frightful number of their fellow and sister Latinos out of Democratic Egypt to the Republican land of milk and honey. Because Garcia was pushing 70, had expressed no ambition for escalating her political reach beyond the Victorville City Council and was not up for election in 2018, the Democrats ignored her. Negrete, however, was up for election that year. Roughly two decades Garcia’s junior with a viable future that would potentially extend into the statehouse, he represented a recognizable and immediate threat to the Democrats, it was

perceived, that they should do something about.

First, they scoured Negrete, his function as a politician, his résumé and curriculum vitae, his records and his life for details and vulnerabilities, his credits and debits, his acclamations and derogatories.

They found something, a domestic disturbance at his residence in February 2009. The party assigned its investigators to dredge up everything they could about the matter, including police reports and witness statements, court records and Negrete’s own admission regarding what had happened when the matter came before a judge for disposition. That information was then provided to various media outlets, including National Public Radio and the radio station KPCC as well as the local press. The release was timed to do maximum damage to Negrete’s reelection campaign. The story exploded during the third week of October 2018, just as the candidates

in that year’s race were rounding the clubhouse turn and heading into the final sprint to the finish line.

The upshot was that in a field of 11, Negrete finished third in a race in which two positions were up for election. Perhaps if he would have had the advantage of claiming the prestige of the mayor’s title while he was running, the outcome of the race would have been different. Councilman Kennedy had chosen not to seek reelection. The final results had newcomer Debra Jones, a Republican, finishing first with 6,691 votes or 18.19 percent. Finishing second was Rita Ramirez, a Democrat who had previously held a college board post further out in the desert in Joshua Tree and who has also sought state and federal legislative posts unsuccessfully. Ramirez polled 5,196 votes or 14.13 percent. Negrete was behind the winning pace, having pulled in 4,909 votes or 13.35 percent. As a net result, the Democrats picked up one position

and the Republicans lost one position on the Victorville City Council.

Having been thrown from his political horse, Negrete this year, at his first opportunity, is remounting, determined to seek reelection.

“With the support of my wife and family, I’m running for reelection to serve my community,” Negrete this week told the *Sentinel*. “My focus is on public safety, encouraging a prosperous business environment and ensuring city services are cost effective and responsive.”

Negrete said, “I believe in Victorville. I grew up in Victorville and returned to the city to raise my family after serving in the Air Force. I’m a strong public safety advocate and committed to implementing quality of life projects. I want a safe and healthy community where families can live, work and play.”

He has the qualifications needed to return to the council, Negrete said.

“It was an honor to serve as a councilman from 2014 until 2018,” he

said. “While every city has its share of problems, I helped make the critical decisions that improve public safety, increase local job growth and ensure smart development. Most importantly, I represent all Victorville residents and businesses.”

Negrete said he is distinguished from his opponents in the race, who include Gomez, by his practical real-world approach to the challenges the city is facing, unhampered by ideological prejudices.

“I have the enterprise-

level experience necessary to be a dependable, professional member of the council who knows the value of strong working relationships,” Negrete said. “Many of my opponents are not familiar with the challenges that face the city and how to get things done. I’ve always been a strong proponent of law enforcement and will continue to advocate for the resources the police need to do their jobs. This election is no time

Continued on Page 11

with fentanyl manufactured in Mexico.

Available evidence is that the drug is available from dealers frequenting Brehm Youth Park, Essig Park and North Park in Yucca Valley, in the downtown area of Joshua Tree and at several off-base bars and recreational spots in Twentynine Palms.

Both of the known fentanyl overdose deaths in the Morongo Valley this month involved teenaged girls.

-Mark Gutglueck

Glut Of Fentanyl On The Street In Morongo Valley from front page

those related to much-more-widely-used heroin. Fentanyl-related mortality generally entails asphyxiation or respiratory failure brought on by the drug’s suppression of the brain’s breathing control signalization mechanisms.

In recent months, the Morongo Basin has been flooded with counterfeit prescription pills laced

Public Notices

to the date set for hearing of the petition.
Dated: June 17, 2020
Lynn M. Poncin
Judge of the Superior Court.

Published in the San Bernardino County Sentinel on 7/24/20, 7/31/20, 8/7/20, 8/14/20

FBN 20200006141 The following person is doing business as:

Public Notices

C.W.I INDEPENDENT INSPECTIONS. 22387 BLACK BEAUTY TRAILWILDOMAR, CA 92595The business is conducted by: AN INDIVIDUAL. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: N/ABY signing, I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. A registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false is guilty of a crime (B&P Code 179130. I am also aware that

Public Notices

all information on this statement becomes Public Record upon filing.s/ JUAN L GARCIA, OWNER, 22387 BLACK BEAUTY TRAIL WILDOMAR, CA 92595Statement filed with the County Clerk of San Bernardino on: 07/13/2020I hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office San Bernardino County Clerk By:/DeputyNotice-This fictitious name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new

Public Notices

fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14400 et seq., Business and Professions Code).Published in the San Bernardino County Sentinel 07/24/2020, 07/31/2020, 08/07/2020, 08/14/2020 CNB-B302020021R

Public Notices

FBN 20200006023 The following person is doing business as: SILENCE NO MO. 17963 PASSIONFLOWER LNSAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407The business is conducted by: AN INDIVIDUAL. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: N/ABY signing, I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. A registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false is guilty of a crime (B&P Code 179130. I

Public Notices

am also aware that all information on this statement becomes Public Record upon filing.s/ BARBARA A HARRIS, OWNER, 17963 PASSIONFLOWER LN SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407Statement filed with the County Clerk of San Bernardino on: 07/07/2020I hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office San Bernardino County Clerk By:/Deputy Notice-This fictitious name statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the county clerk. A new

Public Notices

fictitious business name statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14400 et seq., Business and Professions Code).Published in the San Bernardino County Sentinel 07/24/2020, 07/31/2020, 08/07/2020, 08/14/2020 CNB-B30202001L

In Denouncing Racism, Redlands Treads On Thin Legal Ice By Conceding Its Own Discriminatory Past *from page 3*

truly appreciates the overwhelming support we receive daily from this great community, and it is our promise to each of you that we will work diligently every day to exceed your expectations in all aspects of city-wide operations and community engagement.” During the council’s interaction Tuesday evening with regard to the resolution, Mayor Larry Bird, in a pointed dig at the U.S. Justice Department, said “It’s great to live in Hesperia, where we already practice what we preach.”

In Redlands that same night, the city council, which was down to four-fifths strength because of the absence of Councilman Paul Barich, voted to adopt a series of admissions in a five-page document prepared by

Councilwoman Denise Davis and Councilman Eddie Tejada. The document and action by the council declared racism to be a public health crisis

While expressing the approximately same sentiment as contained in the Hesperia resolution, the Redlands’ action was much more expansive, serving as an indictment of not only what were represented as racist attitudes in a wider context but of policies at the local level as well, with references that, while not overly specific, offered sufficient definitude, legal experts said, to become problematic for the city if any individuals who can demonstrate having been victimized by the policies referenced seek legal recourse.

“This city council acknowledges that systemic racism was manifested throughout the history and development of our community and region, resulting in the forced dislocation of local Native American

settlements in its earliest forms and in a latter form by the implied geographic segregation of communities of color, known to them as the north and south sides of town, causing disparities of access and service to be felt by these residents due to their race, color, level of education or income, educational and recreational disparities, and other such deficiencies consistent with systemic racism,” the resolution states.

Moreover, the resolution states that “this city council acknowledges the historic grievances held by black Americans and the various forms of injustice that people of color have experienced for generations and further recognizes the opportunity for our city to participate in the healing process with members for our black and Latino communities and other communities of color by acknowledging past transgressions.” According to the resolution, “this city council declares that the

lives and experiences of black people matter, and furthermore that the lives and experiences of people of color living in Redlands matter.”

The resolution specifies nine ways in which the council is committed toward “actively participating in dismantling the remnants of racism in Redlands by implementing annual training on implicit bias, diversity, equity, and inclusion for all elected officials, city staff and members of boards, commissions and committees; assessing and revising city department policies, procedures, and ordinances to ensure racial equity and transparency are core elements; ensuring that hiring practices provide greater opportunities for people of color to be employed to further diversify our workforce; ensuring diversity of race, age, and gender within the city commissions; creating a system of reporting progress towards achieving the goals outlined in this resolution and communicating such to

the greater community; supporting community efforts to amplify issues of racism and engaging actively and authentically with communities of color wherever they live; adding health, equity, and justice to the objectives and purview of the appropriate city commission to address public health and welfare of all the residents through an equitable lens as prescribed in the Healthy Redlands resolution and to identify specific activities to further enhance diversity and principles of equity; continuing to work with and support “Unity in the Community” in conjunction with The Human Relations Commission and/or appropriate city commissions and community groups to help measure and achieve the goals outlined in this resolution; building and strengthening alliances with other organizations that are confronting racism, and encouraging other agencies to recognize racism as a crisis,

including considering city membership in the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), which is a national network of local government agencies working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.”

The document prepared by Davis and Tejada recommended that efforts be made to “involve community representation and input in matters of historic and continued racial injustice.”

The Hesperia and Redlands resolutions were the latest in similar resolutions passed by the Apple Valley Town Council, the Fontana City Council and the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors.

It is noteworthy that in none of those resolutions is the application of excessive force or the use of brutality by law enforcement, an issue central to the Floyd Matter and the issues being raised nationally and locally as a consequence of it, specifically addressed.

-Mark Gutglueck

Seven Municipal Tax Measures County-wide On Upcoming November Ballot *from page 3*

the city’s transient occupancy tax, known as the hotel or bed tax, and to increase the current transient occupancy tax rate from 10 percent to 12 percent, effective January 1, 2021, subject to the approval of a majority of the electors voting on the tax measure at the general municipal election to be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2020.

Chino Hills’ proposed transient occupancy tax applies to hotels and motels and the use of any residential dwelling, or

portion thereof, for transient lodging purposes. The proposition calls for a definition of “hotel” that means “any structure or facility, or any portion of any structure or facility, which is occupied or intended or designed for occupancy by transients for dwelling, lodging or sleeping purposes, and includes any hotel, motel, inn, tourist home or house, studio hotel, bachelor hotel, lodging house, rooming house, apartment house, dormitory, public or private club, mobile home or house trailer at a fixed location, campground or other similar structure or facility, or portion thereof, wherein overnight accommodations are offered for hire.”

The City of Redlands’ submitted ballot proposition calls for adding Chapter 3.18 to the Redlands Municipal Code to enact a one percent transactions and use tax – in common parlance referred to as a sales tax – to the cost paid for goods and services in the city, which is to be administered by the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration.

The Redlands taxing proposal appears to be somewhat problematic in that the document approved by the city council and sent to the registrar of voters office provides an “exemption from this tax with respect to certain sales,

storage, use or other consumption of tangible personal property,” while laying out no such exemption for prescription drugs or food, which are both exempt under California’s tax code. Furthermore, the language “exemption from this tax with respect to certain sales, storage, use or other consumption of tangible personal property” defied interpretation by virtually every tax lawyer the *Sentinel* consulted in seeking to discern its meaning.

This week the Adelanto City Council voted to have the Registrar of Voters place on the November ballot at the general consolidated election on November 3,

2020 a proposal to adopt an initiative ordinance establishing a special tax on vacant properties to fund solutions for parks and recreation, illegal dumping remediation, public safety, capital improvement projects, and specified programs.

If passed, the Adelanto tax would levy on vacant parcels a fee based upon the zoning of each particular parcel ranging from \$50 to \$600 per acre. Property owned by nonprofit corporations is exempted.

The measure calls for setting a tax of \$200 per acre within the city’s airport development district and its airport park; \$600 per acre in the city’s business park

area; \$600 per acre on commercial property; \$50 per acre on property zoned for desert living, i.e., residential use; \$600 per acre for land zoned for light manufacturing; \$600 per acre for land zoned for manufacturing/industrial use; \$500 per acre for land zoned for mixed use; \$50 per acre for land zoned as open space; no charge for land designated for public utility use; \$300 per acre for land designated for development as single family residential homes; \$400 per acre for land zoned for medium density residential development; \$300 per acre for land designated for high density residential

Continued on Page 12

Lopez Up Against Highly Experienced Competition

from page 2

to look past the consideration that Lopez had served as his rival Davis's chief of staff, with an understanding that Lopez will enter into an authority-sharing arrangement which will extend Valdivia's administrative and managerial reach beyond that granted him as mayor under the current charter. An element of the dialogue between Valdivia and Lopez, the *Sentinel* was informed, consisted of Valdivia's assertion, and Lopez's acceptance of that assertion, that Valdivia's support will be key in bringing a majority of the city council into alignment in supporting Lopez's hiring.

While there is at least a scintilla of potential that a sufficient balance of votes could be achieved to support Lopez's hiring, the suggestion that the mayor holds sway over a controlling majority of the city council is at this point, by the most benign of interpretations, a wishful projection on Valdivia's part rather than one steeped in reality.

Valdivia was overtaken by scandal earlier this year when he was accused of sexual harassment, ethical and legal improprieties, and misappropriation of funds and personnel by no fewer than five employees within the mayor's office and one of his appointees to two city commissions. Three of the council members who had once formed his ruling coalition – Sanchez, Ibarra and Nickel – have abandoned him. Attestation to that consists in the consideration that the council has essentially eliminated five of the seven staff positions previously assigned to the mayor's office. The only sure votes among the council that Valdivia can count upon are those of Figueroa and Richards. Richards at this point is a lame duck, having lost her bid for reelection in March.

The *Sentinel* is in-

formed that competing with Lopez on the list of potential city manager candidates are over a dozen others with more substantial, deeper and impressive municipal management credentials than Lopez. The *Sentinel* was told that previous statements made both privately and publicly suggesting that San Bernardino was unable to attract qualified and experienced public management talent to serve as city manager was a gross misconception or deliberate representation. "There is no shortage of talent on the list Teri has put together," one well-placed city source who has seen the roster of candidates so far told the *Sentinel*. "Some of them are highly impressive, with fabulous résumés."

According to that individual, the most challenging aspect of the city council's task of finding the individual who is to succeed Ledoux consists in the council being able to achieve a consensus.

It is that difficulty in reaching an agreement that perhaps will provide Lopez with an opportunity to land the city manager's job in San Bernardino, a figure intimately familiar with the city council said.

All seven of the council members and the mayor will have a vote in the selection process, such that the hiring will come down to a "numbers game," that individual said, with five votes in one candidate's favor being the key.

Given Lopez's favorable status with Davis, it is likely that Shorett and Mulvihill, who were closely aligned with Davis, will support him. If those two votes are matched with those of Valdivia, Figueroa and Richard, Lopez would get the nod.

At this point, it is critical that Valdivia's militating on behalf of Lopez not become obvious with Shorett and Mulvihill, both of whom are at extreme odds with the current mayor. For that reason, Valdivia wants to keep under wraps that his meetings with Lopez have taken place and prevent revelation of there

having been any order of an authority-sharing arrangement on the table between them.

That, however, may prove challenging, given the number of people who now know of the one-on-one discussions – said to be two – that have taken place between Valdivia and Lopez so far.

A giveaway is the

Barstow Goes First

from page 7

ment leave payouts retroactive to July 1 and running until June 30, 2022. During that same two-year span the city's executive level staff have further agreed not to accept any performance bonuses conferred upon them, nor see their paychecks fattened by a cost of living increase. The city's contributions into the management employees' deferred compensation accounts are to be discontinued until June 26, 2022.

Under the terms of the voluntary program ratified by the city council on July 20, the money withheld from the management employees over that 24-month benefit suspension period will be paid to them on July 1, 2022 or shortly thereafter, well after, it is anticipated, the pandemic will have passed and economic recovery has been initiated.

Salas and Barstow Human Resources Manager Darcy Wigington have advanced with negotiations pertaining to similar temporary concessions on pay and benefit levels with the collective bargaining units for the city's other employee groups, but those talks have not yet reached a conclusion, the *Sentinel* was informed.

The suspension of normal business activity which occurred between March 18 and the beginning of June, including the shuttering of restaurants and a whole host of shops wherein there is close interaction or contact between customers and employees or customers and customers, curtailed drastically the sales tax income Bar-

stow, which stands at the crossroads of Interstate 15, Interstate 40 and California State Route 58, had been receiving. Earlier this month, those suspended precautions intended to slow the spread of COVID-19 were reinstated, entailing the prospect that the ongoing economic collapse will perpetuate, most likely until the advent of a vaccine to stem the advance of the disease.

The business shutdowns have clouded the city's financial picture substantially. Last month, Barstow moved to a two-year budgetary cycle, a major break from tradition and protocol not just in Barstow but in virtually every other municipality in the state, where cities, towns, counties, agencies, districts and governmental entities of all stripe normally function on a one-year fiscal cycle that runs from July 1 of one year to June 30 of the next.

The move to a two-year budgeting cycle will allow for the incremental reduction of ongoing expenses which now stand at a level more in keeping with those in past budgets when a correspondingly greater amount of revenue was pouring into city coffers. These gradual expenditure reductions are intended to allow the city's shortfalls to be sustained and the bills in excess of revenue to be defrayed beyond 12-months, at which time it is hoped the city's previous revenue levels will again be achieved.

Barstow's action immediately garnered the attention of other cities and incorporated towns in San Bernardino and beyond, as it represents

constant drone of social media. One such missive posted by an individual using the moniker Ms-LetyC states "@hemetgov are you aware that your CM Chris Lopez is being stolen from you by the shady @sbcitygov? Has he told you he is considering taking CM position in SB? You guys should keep him!"

Barstow's action immediately garnered the attention of other cities and incorporated towns in San Bernardino and beyond, as it represents

San Bernardino County COVID-19 Scorecard *

26,796 Confirmed Cases
&
372 Deaths

The disease continues to surge. In the last week there have been 3,558 newly confirmed cases and 57 deaths attributed to the disease. The malady is imposing a severe strain on the county's available medical resources. As of today, there are 618 individuals hospitalized as a consequence of COVID-19 and its symptoms, 196 of whom are in intensive care units.

* As of 4:44 p.m. Friday, July 24

a model that might conceivably avoid massive layoffs of city personnel. That the city's management class was not only willing to sustain the pay reductions but take the lead in accepting them, in so doing perhaps inspiring the city's line employees to do the same, was seen as significant.

Barstow, which is ranked variously as the county's 19th largest or sixth smallest municipality, was not the first San Bernardino County city to be forced into an accommodation with financial reality in the aftermath of the COVID-19 financial disaster.

In Redlands and Grand Terrace in May, those cities' operations made dramatic adjustment.

At the Wednesday May 6 Grand Terrace City Council meeting, City Manager Howard Duffy and Assistant City Manager Cynthia Fortune previewed the Fiscal Year 2020-21 budget for the diminutive city, the county's third smallest in terms of population at just under 13,000. Together with the imposition of an immediate adjustment for what was then the last quarter of Fiscal Year 2019-20, Duffy and Fortune slashed by half the city's already bare bones staff for Fiscal Year 2020-21 from 12 current employees to six.

The same week, Redlands, which qualifies as the county's 11th largest city with its roughly

72,000 population, announced the elimination of 38 full-time positions and 42 part-time positions. City Manager Charles Duggan noted that at that time, of the 38 full-time assignments to be eliminated, 21 were filled. Duggan indicated that of the 42 part-time posts the city was shedding, 31 were currently occupied. Thus, he stated "21 full-time and 31 part-time" city employees were to be given pink slips as of the fiscal year beginning this month.

Of the county's 24 cities and towns, only Ontario, which stands as the wealthiest of municipalities in the county with well over half of a billion dollars channeling through its various funds and departments annually, is likely to withstand the coronavirus pandemic's financial fallout unscathed.

Whether the remainder of San Bernardino County's cities will follow the Barstow model, where mutual sacrifice among top tier to lowest tier employees is taking place to avoid staff firings, or whether they will go the way in which Grand Terrace and Redlands met the challenge, which involved those cities' highest ranking and most powerful employees keeping their comfortable rate of pay at the expense of the sackings of those cities' lesser established and more vulnerable employees, remains to be seen.

-Mark Gutglueck

County Wildlife Corner

The Genista Broom Moth

The genista broom moth, which during its life cycle exists as the sophora worm, is extant in San Bernardino County. Known by its scientific name, *uresiphita reversalis*, the genista broom is a moth in the family *crambidae* found in North America, where it has been recorded from Nova Scotia to Florida, west to California, north to Colorado, Nebraska and Iowa. It is also found



in Mexico and Cuba, Bermuda, Puerto Rico and Jamaica.

The *uresiphita reversalis* has a wingspan from one inch to 1.27 inches. The forewings



are light to medium brown with dark antemedial and postmedial lines and two dark discal spots. The hindwings are yellow or orange with brownish-gray shading at the apex. Adults are on wing year round in multiple generations per year in the southern part of the range.

The larvae feed on acacia, lonicera, baptisia (including *baptista leucantha*), genista (including *genista monspessulana*) and lupinus species (including *lupinus arboreus* and *lupinus diffusus*), *sophora secundiflora*, *lagerstroemia indica*, *cytius scoparius* and *cytius striatus*. The larvae have a brownish-green

body and a black head with white dots. The species usually overwinters in the pupal stage, but may also overwinter as an adult.

The first known description of this moth was by Achille Guenée in 1854.

To some people with gardens, in particular those growing baptisia,



which is also referred to as false indigo, and *sophora secundiflora*, called the Texas mountain laurel, the genista broom moth is considered a pest. More accu-

rately, it is actually the caterpillars that cause the damage. Like most moths, all the adults can do is feed on nectar since they do not have any chewing mouth parts as an adult.

This insect pest is native to the southwest United States but usually doesn't make it up into colder climates. In recent years, there were reports of this insect causing feeding damage to baptisias along the East Coast. These moths may also feed on other members of the pea (*fabaceae*) family, including flowers like lupine, shrubs like caragana, genista and honeysuckle, and potentially trees like the Kentucky coffee tree and honey locust.

The adult moth lays eggs on the plants. Then the young larvae together in a web feed on the leaves inside the web until they grow a bit larger.

They eventually move out and start feeding on other parts of the plant or move on to other plants. The larvae can grow to about one inch long, are a dark tan-orange with white hairs and black spots. Normally, they will have two genera-



tions per year, but in areas with a short growing season, they may only have one generation per year.

As pests, they are not likely to kill a plant, just cause feeding damage to the leaves, which may cause them to turn black. However, if they are present prolifically, the caterpillars could damage young, newly established plants if they become defoliated a few years in a row.



Treatment of genista broom moth damage can be as easy as just trimming off the affected foliage, hopefully removing the caterpillars with the leaves. You can pick off others and squish them to provide pretty good control. If you catch the infestation early, you can use *Bacillus thuringiensis* against the invaders. This is a bacteria that you spray on the plants. Once it is ingested by the caterpillars, it will kill them. It is effective for any type of caterpillar pest but normally doesn't work well for more mature larvae.

From Wikipedia and <https://extension.sdstate.edu/>

Negrete Remains Less Than Charitable In His View Of Gomez from page 6

to take a chance with naïve and misguided candidates who want to defund the police. I am a voice for the family/quality of life, a voice for business and a voice for a safe city."

The major issues facing the city, Negrete said, are "crime, the rising cost of public safety, quality of life. Victorville has quickly grown from a small community to a city of over 120,000 people. There are many challenges associated with rapid growth, including enormous demand for services like public safety."

Those issues can be redressed, Negrete said, through "careful long term planning and strong fiscal management."

One of the means by which the city can get a financial handle on the circumstance it faces is at hand, Negrete said, in the form of a tax measure that will be decided

by the voters on November 3, the same day he is standing for reelection to the council.

"Rising public safety costs have made it necessary to augment the general fund," Negrete said. "The general transaction and use tax measure is going to be on the November ballot. If the citizens approve raising the sales tax to 8.75% the city stands to gain \$15.95 million in new revenue. The funding will be used for law enforcement, fire, improving and maintaining streets, repairing and maintaining public buildings like the city's library, graffiti abatement and homeless issues. This is an issue that is facing many municipalities as demand for public safety services continues to climb. I support this measure and if elected will work to identify additional solutions to our long term challenges."

In addition to his previous experience on the council, Negrete pointed out that his professional engagement relating to his work in program and project management for

the Army and Air Force for nearly 20 years has given him uncommon insight into the function of government and governmental financial issues. Having lived in Victorville, he said "off and on since 1985," Negrete relocated to the city permanently in 2009. As an adolescent and teenager, he attended Hook Jr. High as well as Victor Valley High School for one year.

Negrete holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Loyola Marymount University and a master's degree in management from Troy State University.

Since 2007, Negrete has been a civilian program manager at Fort Irwin.

"I facilitate cross functional, multi-agency teams at the federal, state and local levels to support the Fort Irwin commander's goals and initiatives," he said. Having celebrated his tenth wedding anniversary recently, Negrete has four children and one grandchild.

Negrete said, "Many

candidates talk about what they will do if elected. I was elected and my record includes right-sizing the city's employees benefits and retirements, removing red light cameras, settling many costly lawsuits, improving the roads and increasing public safety. I always encourage folks to get involved in their communities. Being elected to the council was truly an honor. My beautiful wife continues to support my service to our community and I hope the voters of Victorville will too.

In a thinly-veiled reference to Gomez, Negrete said, "It is clear to me that in every election at all levels a person can get elected for all the wrong reasons. As a candidate, maybe that person misrepresented herself to the public and perhaps she doesn't live in the city she won the election for. Who knows? Maybe she engaged in voter fraud and mysteriously beat obviously more qualified candidates. Of course, you would need to have all the institutions who are

charged to ensure election fraud doesn't happen look the other way. Look, this is California. I have no faith in local, county or state agencies to properly maintain voter registrations or conduct elections. Sadly, San Bernardino County and Orange County are going the way of the rest of the state."

Of his personality clashes with Gomez between 2016 and 2018, Negrete said, "There are always going to be sociopaths who think they are going to gain power from being elected. Being elected is not going to make you someone. You were supposed to already be someone. You've seen these vapid people, obsessed with making everything about themselves. Being elected to office to me is not about power. Rather it's the ultimate community service."

Negrete continued, "From 2014 to 2016, the council quietly went about doing the business of the city. I recall being happy to have other cities in the news as we efficiently resolved one is-

sue after another. In 2016 Victorville got someone new on the council who kept saying she wanted change but would never say what needed to change. This person wasted everyone's time claiming there was corruption around every turn, never actually finding it, attacking law enforcement at every chance, undermining their selfless service. It is clear that this person was seeing things that weren't there. For all the accusations, some too vile for this article, nothing ever materialized. The council is supposed to conduct the business of the city in a professional meeting. The council is not there to deal with a councilmember's apparent mental health issues."

In sizing up his experience on the council with Gomez as a colleague, Negrete said, "The only change that happened during the last two years of my time on the council was the circus came to town and our meetings were longer."

-Mark Gutglueck

Grace Bernal's

California Style Cargo



the beach? Complement them with a bikini top or swim suit of choice. For the office, top them off with a minimal T-shirt, ballet flats, and light

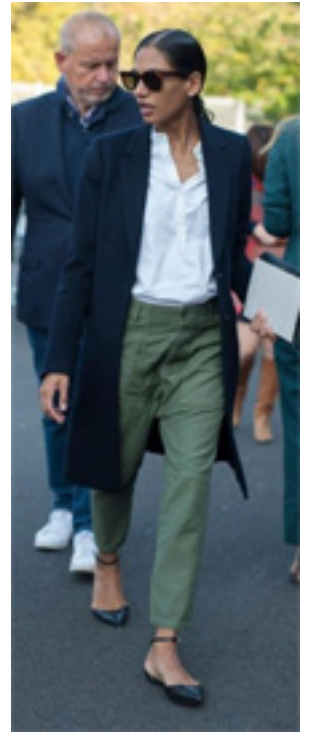
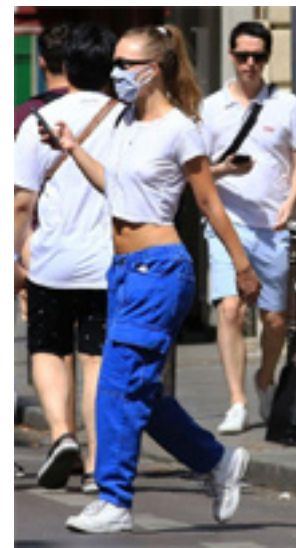


Cargo pants are that proven comfort item that can keep you cool and protected while at work or having fun under the hot California sun. The cargo seems to be trending as of late, available in thick-to-thin linen materials. They are perfect for on the go, a day trip, or even the office job. If you're headed on a hike or the lake, wear them with your favorite tank top. Headed to



sweater, if needed. The colors are open - from basic army green to white. It's super fun to wear the cargo and both gals and guys look great in them. Re-

ally this piece is utility-like, and perfect for the storm we're all weathering. Throw a pair on, and your ready to conquer the day. Stay safe and enjoy!



"The older I get and the harder it is to maintain a six pack, the more I wish I wore a tactical vest and cargo pants like Roman Reigns." -Randy

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

Six Cities And One Town Intent On Seeing If Their Residents Will Consent To Raising Taxes In November from page 19

use; and \$200 per acre for properties without any fixed zoning.

On July 21, the Victorville City Council voted 4-to 1, with Coun-

cilwoman Blanca Gomez dissenting, to place a measure on the November ballot that would raise the sales tax in the city another one percent, from the current 7.75% to 8.75%.

City officials maintain the measure, if passed, would net the city another \$15 million annually, which will be placed in the city's general fund to cover ongoing and future operating fund short-

ages.

In June, the Montclair City Council voted to put before the voters of that city a one percent sales tax increase proposal in November. If passed, the sales tax levied upon purchases in Montclair would rise from the 8 percent collected now to 9 percent.

As it now stands, goods purchased in Montclair are subject to the state's 7.25% rate, an existing 0.25 percent city tax, and another half cent countywide transportation tax.

If passed, the combination of Montclair's sales taxes would amount to 1.25%.

In San Bernardino, a 0.25 percent sales tax has been in place since the passage of Measure Z in 2007. The proceeds from the Measure Z tax are earmarked exclusively for public safety. The Measure Z tax is set to sunset in 2022. Over the years, Measure Z has provided San Bernardino with more than \$91 million in augmentation

funds for public safety.

Attempting to get ahead of the curve and at the same time redress a pattern of deficit spending that has depleted the reserves that San Bernardino was able to salt away between 2012 and 2017 when it was functioning under Chapter 9 bankruptcy protection, the city council has requested that the San Bernardino County Registrar of Voters put a Measure on the November 3 ballot that would extend the Measure Z tax, presumably for another 15 years, as well as impose another 0.75 percent tax on top of that, providing the city with a one percent sales tax that would go into effect as of April 2021. The total sales tax in San Bernardino would then become 8.75 percent per year. The addition 0.75 percent sales tax would translate into \$27 million in additional revenue to the city per year, according to projections.

At its meeting scheduled for next Monday,

July 27, the Upland City Council is to consider city staff's recommendation that it approve submitting to the San Bernardino County Registrar of Voters a request that the November 3 ballot feature what was labeled "a one percent Local Recovery and Essential Services Tax Measure."

In the staff report for the item, Stephen Parker, Upland's assistant city manager, and Steven Flower, Upland's city attorney, described the Local Recovery and Essential Services Tax as "a transaction and use (sales) tax." Parker and Flowers said the tax would "until ended by voters, provide a source of locally controlled funding to prevent further cuts and support local services residents value, using funding the state cannot legally take."

At its meeting scheduled for next Tuesday, July 28, the Apple Valley Town Council is to consider requesting a mea-

sure be placed before town voters on the November 3, 2020 general election ballot asking them to approve a one percent sales tax. Town officials say the money generated by such a tax will further fund community services, and shore up financing for infrastructure, and will fatten the town's reserves.

The town predicts the sales tax measure would generate approximately \$7 million annually off sales within the town limits.

An element absent from virtually all of the documents generated by the cities and the Town of Apple Valley relating to the proposed taxes was disclosure of when, or if, the taxes would "sunset," that is end. Nor was there any discussion given with regard to what process city residents or those in the Town of Apple Valley could use if they wished to rescind the taxes if they were to be approved.

-Mark Gutglueck



BIG ISLAND

Climber on the Mainland Inc

Treeworks

St. Forestry Lic. B 3064

CA State Contractors Lic. 954467

Fully Insured

(909) 337-6485