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Amid cutout figures and a few team officials in the seats, Padres and Arizona Diamondbacks players line the infield Friday for the national anthem on opening day at Petco Park. More coverage, D1.

BYRCE MILLER Columnist

PADRES OPEN SEASON MISSING SOMETHING

July start in fan-less Petco Park adds another chapter to strange times

Baseball returned to Petco Park on Friday, with wrinkles and weirdness and the reassurance of lives inching closer to some sporting normalcy. When the Padres lined up to play the Diamondbacks for a season opener stalled 120 days by a global health pandemic, the moment offered a time machine ride back to sandlot snapshots from everyone's youth — when the sound off the bat was crisper and conversations rang clear. If you closed your eyes to momentarily erase the \$450-million-or-so stadium, it mimicked baseball in its purest form than any time in our adult lives — before the big contracts, the Jumbotrons and the tsunami of sabermetrics. “What’s disappointing is not to be around all the pageantry,” said Trevor Hoffman, the Hall of Fame

closer who watched the opener at home. “There were new uniforms and personnel. It would have been over-the-top great. Selfishly, I know the Pads would have put on a tremendous show. “That’s a big miss, unfortunately with the whole COVID stuff.” Hoffman had to mine his memory bank to identify the last time he missed a season opener. “Shoot, pre-1993 Marlins I guess,” he said. “I think I’ve been to every one since I retired. If you go to the minor leagues, it probably goes all the way back to the ‘80s.” Painted on top of the Padres’ dugout, “Thank You Friar Faithful,” thanking no one. On the visitors’ side, “Welcome to Petco Park,” welcoming no one. It was like being at a Marlins game — a

SEE MILLER • A8



NELVIN C. CEPEDA U-T

A man standing on the balcony of his unit waves a Padres flag Friday during the San Diego Padres home opener at Petco Park against the Arizona Diamondbacks.

SDSU TO RECONSIDER EMERITUS POLICY

Proposal would give school right to revoke status of professors

BY GARY ROBBINS

Reacting to sharp criticism, San Diego State University has decided to reconsider a proposal that would give it the right to revoke the emeritus status of professors who harm the school's reputation. SDSU's University Senate said

in an email Thursday that the draft policy had been sent back to a committee “for further discussion and revision.” Such a move isn't unusual. But this time it came as some SDSU faculty publicly described the policy as a threat to free speech. They also said the policy, as drafted, stoked the “cancel culture” that is occurring nationally. Faculty expressed particular concern that the proposal did not specify what it means to harm the university's reputation and that it could be used to penalize faculty

before or after emeritus status is granted. Emeritis status can confer many benefits, such as allowing a professor to keep a campus office, use the university's email system and library and participate in research. “It seems to me that the proposal is an attempt on the part of SDSU to discredit criticism and oppositional voices, and drown out dissent,” said Peter Atterton, an SDSU philosophy professor and member of the Senate. “The focus at a university

should be on what is true, not on what makes the university look better than it is. Again, SDSU is there for the public good, not to further its own interest.” The proposal also drew criticism on Thursday from the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), a nonpartisan faculty and student rights group based in Philadelphia. “If this language faithfully reflects the proposed policy, the authority it would extend risks chilling the research and extramural

SEE SDSU • A8

DA THROWS OUT WOMAN'S MURDER CONVICTION

New DNA evidence casts doubt on guilty verdict for Jane Dorotik in 2001

BY GREG MORAN

A San Diego Superior Court judge wiped out the two-decade-old murder conviction of former Valley Center executive Jane Dorotik on Friday, after San Diego prosecutors conceded new DNA evidence cast enough doubt on a conviction, one they had zealously

guarded, to warrant a new trial. The decision by Superior Court Judge Harry Elias is not a clear exoneration of Dorotik, who has insisted she was innocent of killing her husband, Robert, in February 2000. She could still face another trial, a possibility that will be discussed at a hearing now set for Oct. 23. Steve Walker, the director of communications for San Diego



Jane Dorotik

County District Attorney Summer Stephan, said in a statement that prosecutors want to conduct DNA testing, and retesting, on evidence in the case. The outcome of those tests will likely weigh into a final decision on a new trial. A team of lawyers from the Loyola Law School Project for the Innocent, who have worked on Dorotik's case for years, argued in a detailed court filing that DNA testing using new techniques shows that her DNA was not on crucial evidence in the case: her

SEE DOROTIK • A8

S.D. YOUTH THEATER LEADERS ACCUSED OF IGNORING ABUSE

BY ALEX RIGGINS

The president of El Cajon-based Christian Youth Theater announced Friday that the San Diego branch of the nonprofit organization has shut down indefinitely amid allegations of sexual abuse by former employees. At a news conference Friday, Janie Russell Cox, whose parents founded the youth theater in 1981 and grew it into one of the nation's largest youth theater organiza-

tions, said she and her staff “are heartbroken and devastated about the experiences of former students of our program that were recently shared via social media.” Allegations of sex abuse, racism and homophobia within Christian Youth Theater have come to light over the past 10 days, particularly on Facebook, where alumni and former employees have opened up about their experiences, often using the hashtag

SEE THEATER • A8



HOME + GARDEN

MAKING A SPLASH

Stay-home culture has some diving in for a luxury backyard poolscape. E1

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DIANE BELL

Columnist

Local legend Leon Williams is still making news — at 98

Leon Williams turned 98 this week, bringing him close to being a centenarian. Even at this age, accolades keep fattening the résumé of the retired San Diego politician and civic leader.

In 2016, he was named “Mr. San Diego” by the San Diego Rotary Club.

In 2017, a section of E Street in Golden Hill was given the honorary designation of Leon Williams Drive by the San Diego City Council for his many accomplishments. Thus he joined such luminaries as



Leon Williams

actor Mark Hamill and oceanographer Walter Munk in having a special San Diego street designation.

Last May, when the county resurrected its Human Relations Commission, the group was named after Leon Williams because its predecessor — defunded in the 1990s and officially dissolved in 2018 — had been created by Williams during his 12 years as a county supervisor, ending in 1994. Williams also created a local Hate Crimes Registry in the wake of racial and religious tensions at that time.

He told me that Supervisor Nathan Fletcher, who re-established the commission, came to his home and discussed the idea with him beforehand. When supervisors approved it in May, Williams was at home in keeping with COVID-19 health precautions but relayed his thoughts by phone during the meeting. “It has the potential to improve human relations,” Williams said Wednesday as we discussed the latest protests and the Black Lives Matter movement, which was déjà vu for him. “San Diego can be a leader in the country and in the state.”

“Creating such a group helps us talk about what we can do to help build respect for each other,” Williams added. “It’s a bigger task than most of us know.”

He personally has experienced that difficult journey. When he stepped off a bus in San Diego in 1941 before serving with the Army

SEE DIANE BELL • B3

DNA LEADS TO ARREST IN '87 MURDER

Woman found sexually assaulted, strangled in La Costa; suspect is man, 54

BY TERI FIGUEROA

CARLSBAD

More than three decades after a woman was found sexually assaulted and strangled, her body left in ivy on an embankment in Carlsbad’s La Costa neighborhood, police say DNA helped lead them to her suspected killer.

On Friday, Carlsbad police announced that they’d arrested a Poway man in the 1987 homicide of 26-year-old Julia Hernandez Santiago.

Police said 54-year-old James Charles Kingery emerged as a slaying suspect after sheriff’s deputies in Poway arrested him in March on suspicion of drug and weapons violations. The felony arrest meant Kingery had to supply a DNA sample.

Two months later, in May, the sheriff’s crime lab notified Carlsbad

police that Kingery’s DNA matched samples collected during the homicide investigation 33 years earlier.

“With this information, detectives diligently followed new leads, cross-checked the information and worked with the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office to identify Kingery as a suspect in the 1987 murder of Ms. Santiago,” Carlsbad police said in a news release.

Kingery was booked into custody Wednesday on one count of murder,

and as of Friday remained held in San Diego Central jail without bail. Online jail records indicate he is slated to be arraigned Friday.

In October 1987, a local newspaper reported that a passerby had discovered the victim’s partially clothed body on a hillside in the vicinity of Estrella Del Mar Road, near Alga Road and not far east of El Camino Real.

Carlsbad police said Friday investigators had recovered “several key pieces of evidence at the time” but were unable to identify any suspects.

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Julia Hernandez Santiago

SPOTTED PLAYING AROUND



KEN BOHN SAN DIEGO ZOO GLOBAL

A pair of endangered Amur leopard cubs born April 26 at the San Diego Zoo explore their outdoor habitat this week. The cubs’ birth is particularly significant for their species, as fewer than 100 are believed to exist in their historic range in Russia and China.

OCEAN COOLER, BUT WEATHER TO BE NICE

Forecasters say seasonal monsoonal moisture will hold off until next week

BY GARY ROBBINS

The ocean was unusually warm during the early part of last weekend, with temperatures rising to 75 degrees or more at many spots along the San Diego County coast-

line.

It didn’t last.

Persistent winds caused upwelling. Colder, deeper water rose to the surface and temperatures dropped to the low-to-mid 60s.

The chill will last through this weekend even though there will be plenty of sunshine after the morning marine layer burns off, says the National Weather Service. Sea surface temperatures will generally be in the mid-to-upper 60s.

“The upwelling usually occurs in late spring, but it is happening now,” said Adam Roser, a weather service forecaster.

The air will be warmer. San Diego will hit 75 degrees today and 76 on Sunday. The seasonal high is 75. Ramona will be 87 today, 88 on Sunday. Oceanside will be 68 today and 69 on Sunday.

It appears that seasonal monsoonal moisture won’t drift into the county’s mountains until Wednes-

day or Thursday.

The surf will mostly be below three feet tall along the entire coastline through Saturday, the weather service says.

This week’s sea surface temperatures: Oceanside: 70.3 degrees; Carlsbad: 68.5; Encinitas: 66.6; Del Mar: 64.4; Scripps Pier: 65.7; Mission Bay: 69.8; Chula Vista: 68.7; and Imperial Beach: 68.4.

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MUSIC APPLIES HEALING BALM

Hospitalized COVID-19 patients soothed by 1-on-1 virtual concerts

BY PAM KRAGEN

Pharmaceutical companies worldwide are scrambling to develop drugs and a vaccine for COVID-19. But for dozens of San Diego patients now hospitalized with the disease, music is proving to be a soothing treatment for worn-down spirits, agitation and fatigue.

Scripps Mercy Hospital San Diego in Hillcrest and UC San Diego Health facilities are among a growing number of hospitals nationwide offering COVID-19 patients free, one-on-one private concerts played virtually via iPad by string musicians all over the country.

The concerts are presented through Project: Music Heals Us, a 6-year-old nonprofit in New York that produces classical concerts in nontraditional locations such as nursing homes, homeless centers and correctional facilities. Since they launched the COVID-19 concert program on April 7, 88 musicians have presented 140 hours of music for 545



COURTESY OF ANDREW JANS

Cellist Andrew Janss, Project: Music Heals Us co-artistic director, performs a virtual concert for a patient.

listeners at a dozen hospitals in eight cities from San Diego to Boston, according to Andrew Janss, co-artistic director of PMHU and a professional cellist.

Truong-Giang Huynh, the Intensive Care Unit manager at Scripps Mercy, has seen the therapeutic results of these 15- to 20-minute concerts firsthand. He is also a musician, having played violin for several concert organizations in San Diego over the past 20 years. He said he’s watched with admiration how the brief musical

interactions affect the COVID-19 patients.

“I watch the professional musicians playing for them and literally before my eyes I see the (patients) doze off,” Huynh said. “It’s really beneficial for the patient because these patients need to rest. A lot of them are agitated because of many medications, and we’re in their room constantly, so they lose sense of what’s day and what’s night.”

Huynh said he has seen re-

SEE MUSIC • B6

Comic-Con without the crowds is a walk on the lonely side



KARLA PETERSON

Columnist

wonderland with no lines and unlimited front-row seating. A place where I could show up at the last minute and still get a seat for the “Avengers” panel in Hall H. A place where I could revel in news scoops, celebrity sightings and swag while still having room to breathe and the luxury of subsisting on something other than smashed peanut-butter sandwiches and lukewarm Diet Coke.

I would have been very excited about the hypothetical joys of my own private Comic-Con, and I would have been very wrong.

When Comic-Con International announced in May that Comic-Con 2020 — which was canceled in April due to the coronavirus — would be re-imagined as the totally virtual Comic-Con@Home, I did a little

fist-bump with my computer screen. First, because any Comic-Con is better than no Comic-Con, and a Con pulled out of the coronavirus chaos is a miracle. Second, because the online version would be free and accessible to anyone with a computer and an Internet connection. And third, because after 15 years of stress, sweat and Doritos breath, my dream Comic-Con was here.

So on Thursday, I showed up one hour late for Marvel Entertainment’s panel for “The New Mutants,” the long-delayed horror-thriller starring Maisie Williams of “Game of Thrones,” Charlie Heaton of “Stranger Things” and Blu Hunt of the CW’s “The Originals.” The stars were all waiting for me on Comic-Con International’s YouTube channel, beamed in from their respective lock-down bubbles and looking pretty happy to be out and about, if only virtually. The panel also included a sneak peek of the film’s nail-biting opening scene, an on-screen collection of fan art and a contest for Con-exclusive giveaways.

And as I sat back with a healthy salad while the cast and writer/director Josh Boone traded in-

SEE PETERSON • B3

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