

Local

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DIANE BELL

Columnist

San Diego needs dialogue and emerging leaders

Former San Diego Police Chief **Shelley Zimmerman** doesn't mince words when she speaks of the despicable action of several Minneapolis police officers, whom she only refers to as "ex-officers."

"What they did, in my view, was a murder," she says. Her reaction was shock at the graphic video of a law officer kneeling on **George Floyd's** neck as he plaintively begged, "I can't breathe," and "Don't kill me."

"I'm angry. I'm devastated." Shelley says. "What they did was betray our honorable and noble profession."

It was heart-breaking on so many levels. Floyd's tragic death quadrupled the work that law enforcement must do to regain the community's trust, Zimmerman contends. At the same time she called it a unifying moment like none she has witnessed in her 35 years of police work. Floyd's death brought condemnation from thousands in law enforcement across the country, all speaking in unison. "We were all in shock."

Zimmerman, now a professor at National University, is adamant that people seize this moment to make positive change and not let the selfish agenda of a few bad actors who are looting and ransacking hijack the public's attention.

As I spoke with people around San Diego, there was universal disgust at the Minneapolis tragedy, but there was less certainty about how best to pick up the pieces and move forward.

In the earlier days of civil rights unrest in San Diego and elsewhere, there were civic leaders who promoted dialogue, who led round-table discussions with diverse voices to defuse volatile situations and spearhead reform.

Many of these leaders are gone. The legendary Catfish Club, a weekly lunchtime gathering of civic leaders, politicians, law enforcement and community members to discuss front-burner issues, was founded by the Rev. **George Walker Smith**, who died in February at age 91.

George Mitrovich, who hosted diverse speakers in his City Club of San Diego forum for many years, passed away last summer.

The once active San Diego County Human Relations Commission that was defunded in the 1990s is now being revived by the county Board of Supervisors.

Forums for ongoing discussions of simmering issues are greatly needed.

When the protest erupted, I turned to the National Conflict Resolution Center and asked President **Steve Dinkin** if he could suggest some solutions.

He was quick to respond that addressing complex issues is a process. It's impossible to move directly to solutions because those in the dispute must be part of the process, or it will be

SEE **DIANE BELL** • B2



KAREN PEARLMAN U-T

Artist **Joe Castillo** works on a mural at the La Mesa Springs Shopping Center. Local artists organized to paint hopeful images and positive messages on plywood used to board up windows and front doors of shops following weekend riots.

BRINGING BRUSHSTROKES OF HOPE

Artists add color, positive messages to boarded-up shops after rioters vandalize La Mesa shopping center

BY **KAREN PEARLMAN**

LA MESA

Bright swaths of color and words of hope are filling up a riot-ravaged shopping center in La Mesa.

Dozens of artists from around San Diego County have been painting murals on top of the plywood covering boarded-up windows and front doors of businesses that were vandalized over the weekend at the

La Mesa Springs Shopping Center in La Mesa. Other painters are bringing color, shine and hope to the downtown, as well.

Messages like "La Mesa Strong," "Be Kind," "Love Wins," "Spread the Peace" and "Better Days Ahead" are painted on some of the boards. The murals are filled with hearts, flowers, the sun, rainbows and even a slice of pizza and soft drink at the local Pizza Hut.

Mural artist and designer **Jonny Alexander**, a third-generation San Diegan, has painted several murals at the strip mall where La Mesa Boulevard and University Avenue meet, a center anchored by Vons, which is currently closed because of the damage done.

The mural on which he teamed with **Aaron Glasson**, a visiting artist from New Zealand, shows several blooming flowers with the faces

of people of color at the center of each flower looking upward. It's on the side of **Albert's Mexican Food**, one of Alexander's favorite taco shops.

Nearly every businesses at the center, including **Albert's**, was trashed by rioters late Saturday and into the early morning hours of Sunday after an afternoon protest at the La Mesa Police Department escape

SEE **HOPE** • B2

PARKING BAN DISRUPTS BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD IN CARLSBAD

BY **PHIL DIEHL**

CARLSBAD

The continuing beach parking ban, an effort to encourage social distancing during the COVID-19 crisis, is causing problems for some coastal residents, especially now that beaches are open again.

In Carlsbad, the stress is highest in the Terramar community just south of Cannon Road and the Encina power plant. Dozens of

residents there have written letters to their City Council, and the letters are read aloud as public comments at the council's virtual meetings.

Parking problems have increased since the Memorial Day weekend, said **Dan Walsh**, president of the Terramar Association, in a letter to the council.

"Speeding, parking on corners, surfboards in the streets, car doors wide open, trash everywhere, beer

cans, discarded clothing, dirty diapers, bags of dog excrement, and visitors with very poor attitudes yelling at you if you dare to drive by them ... to get to or from our houses," Walsh wrote.

"We've had a big increase in people urinating on homeowners' property, one family set up a picnic in a resident's front yard, while another set up a barbecue at the curb of another resident to cook their

SEE **PARKING** • B10

NONPROFIT GROUPS LOBBY FOR REVISIONS TO CITY BUDGET

Organizations ask that San Diego provides more for low-income residents

BY **DAVID GARRICK**

SAN DIEGO

A coalition of nonprofit groups and labor unions is lobbying San Diego to make major revisions to the city's proposed budget that would help renters, low-income workers, undocumented residents and small businesses.

The Community Budget Alliance, a partnership that includes 22 local organizations, wants the city to give rent relief to people struggling during the pandemic and provide free high-speed Internet to low-income households.

The alliance also wants more money devoted to enforcing worker rights and wage rules, boosting small businesses in low-income areas and translating city communications into the many languages spoken across San Diego.

Other requests include reversing proposed cuts to parks and libraries by spending less on police, and conducting a comprehensive study of local rents, eviction rates, vacancies and related issues.

For undocumented families, the alliance wants a cash assistance fund, because federal and state relief efforts and stimulus programs don't apply to them.

The alliance hopes to persuade the City Council to make major adjustments to Mayor **Kevin Faulconer's** proposed spending plan when the council adopts a final budget for the new fiscal year on Monday.

SEE **BUDGET** • B2

Art keeps students' hearts open amid shutdown



KARLA PETERSON
Columnist

artists fended off nosy siblings and interfering pets so they could make their new deadline. The big dedication ceremony was down-sized in a major way.

When the San Diego Unified School District shut down all of its schools on March 16 to prevent the spread of coronavirus, nothing about the mural planned for a wall on the campus of the Pacific View Leadership Elementary School in Paradise Hills happened the way it was supposed to.

It happened the way it needed to.

"It was like, 'OK, so things didn't go the way we planned. But



NELVIN C. CEPEDA U-T

Pacific View Leadership Elementary School fifth-grader Gizele Campos, 10, unveils her mural at a ceremony on campus.

we grew something beautiful out of it," said teacher **Cindy Trunzo**, whose fifth-grade students were supposed to start painting the mural on March 16.

"It showed me and it showed the kids that we don't have to dwell on how negative things are.

If we are willing to be flexible and throw ourselves into a new experience, we can trust that we will end up with something special."

Like the school's original mural plans, the coronavirus-related revision was a product of

SEE **PETERSON** • B10



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Police still sifting through evidence in fatal crash

ESCONDIDO

Escondido police said they have spent “hundreds of work hours” investigating a crash that left four pedestrians dead on May 5, but have not announced any arrests.

An Escondido grandmother, her boyfriend and her two grandsons were killed when a car struck the group as they walked on San Pasqual Valley Road near Oak Hill Drive in Escondido.

Authorities identified those who died as Carmela Camacho, 50; Abel Juan Valdez, 33; Emmanuel Rivas, 11; and Yovanny Felix, 10.

The crash happened shortly after 8:30 p.m. on May 5, when a 28-year-old Escondido woman struck the group with a 2014 Mazda3, according to Escondido police Lt. Scott Walters.

Police said they have conducted a “witness canvass” of the area and also sought surveillance video that may have captured the crash. They have searched the vehicle and the driver’s phone to determine if anything contributed to the crash and thoroughly inspected the car to determine if speed or mechanical issues were factors.

Police also analyzed evidence found at the scene to try to determine the vehicle’s path of travel and location of the collision.

Valdez and Emmanuel died at the scene, according to police and the Medical Examiner’s Office. Camacho and her younger grandson, Yovanny, died that night at Palomar Medical Center.

Police have not said where the family was in the roadway — inside or

outside of a crosswalk, for example — when they were struck. The driver remained at the scene and did not appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, police said. She was treated for minor to moderate injuries.

Police said the investigation is ongoing and asked anyone with information to call Officer Mike Nelson at (760) 839-4407.

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Pot dispensary security guard fatally shot in Spring Valley

SPRING VALLEY

Sheriff’s detectives are investigating the fatal shooting of a security guard who was killed in front of an illegal Spring Valley marijuana dispensary Tuesday night.

Deputies responding to a report of a shooting found a man suffering from at least one gunshot wound at the unlicensed dispensary on Troy Street near Sweetwater Road, just east of state Route 125, sheriff’s Lt. Thomas Seiver said.

The victim, a security guard at the dispensary, died before he could be taken to a hospital. The victim’s name and age were not released.

Seiver said several men were seen running from the area after the shooting. No suspect descriptions were immediately available.

The lieutenant said the dispensary was open at the time of the shooting. He said investigators were seeking a search warrant. “Evidence of marijuana sales will be seized,”

Seiver said.

Authorities shut down Troy Street between Central Avenue and Sweetwater Road for the investigation.

Anyone with information about the shooting is asked to call the sheriff’s homicide unit at (858) 285-6330 or Crime Stoppers at (888) 580-8477.

City News Service contributed to this report

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Camp Pendleton fire torches more than 10 acres, spreads

CAMP PENDLETON

A brush fire that ignited Wednesday afternoon on Camp Pendleton threw up a plume of smoke that could be seen around North County.

Officials said the blaze on De Luz Road near Weisgarber Gate Road was reported shortly before 2 p.m. It had charred more than 10 acres and was moving with a moderate rate of spread, CalFire officials said on Twitter.

Firefighters on the ground were aided by air resources on fighting blaze, dubbed the Hotel fire. By 2:30, Cal Fire reported that firefighters were “making good progress” although the fire was still burning.

The Sheriff’s Department said flames could be seen in Vista and Fallbrook.

No other information was immediately available.

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HOPE

FROM B1

lated into all-night destruction. Many stores along La Mesa Boulevard on the other side of Spring Street also had their windows and doors broken and items stolen.

Along with many of his artist friends, Alexander said he had been waiting for an opportunity to stand united with protesters around the United States seeking change and reform. He said he walked with demonstrators on Saturday afternoon along the streets of La Mesa, but had left before the protest devolved into violence and looting. He watched the goings-on via social media into the early morning hours of Sunday.

He said he got a call Sunday morning from fellow artist Spenser Little, who also attended the protest. Along with his sister, Megan Little, and their friend Chris Heaney, Spenser Little sprung into action on Sunday, reaching out to his network and organizing artists to see what they could do to beautify the shopping center.

“Spenser called and I knew I wanted to be part of this, a proactive step in pushing what everybody is fighting for, which is continued equality in this country,” Alexander said.

Little is a wire artist and sculptor who was born and raised in El Cajon and attended Valhalla High



Artist Chloe Becky paints a portrait of George Floyd in front of the beauty college at the shopping center.

KAREN PEARLMAN U-T

School. He said he is closely connected and in support of the movement for justice and social reform. Because of that, he said he was moved to stand up in solidarity in the most powerful way he and his contemporaries know — through art.

“A lot of artists were with me at the protest and later, when I saw the businesses getting smashed, I instantly knew we had to do something,” Little said. “I said, ‘We are organizing.’ Small businesses are already hit by (the COVID-19 pandemic) and we’re going to paint on the facades so the business owners and customers don’t have to stare at plywood and see the constant reminders of this tragic event. We must keep in perspective that we are all human, and that art and music keep us together.”

Little said more than a

dozen artists have left their distinctive marks throughout La Mesa Springs, including Chloe Becky, who goes by @elsiethecowwww on Instagram. Becky spent the early part of the week painting a mural with the likeness of George Floyd and sunflowers on wood in front of the beauty college next to Sally’s Beauty Supply, which was one of the hardest hit businesses in the center.

As he painted on Tuesday with Glasson, Alexander said: “This is another day that I feel empowered and contributing to the narrative.”

Megan Little has been helping connect artists with businesses and vice versa, and said the response has been so great that she’s had to turn some down. Some artists are now showing up along La Mesa Boulevard to

paint boarded up windows there, with landlords and shop owners’ permission. Children have added art on canvas that is being hung around fences that surround buildings that were burned downtown.

For store owners and employees of businesses that were affected, the art has brought much hope in a time of sadness. They say business has picked up and people are coming by to show support, lauding the artwork around them.

“The art, the creativity, that’s what saving us,” said Dalene Early, who manages the Menchie’s frozen desserts store in the shopping center. “Even just looking out and watching people paint has been comforting.”

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BUDGET

FROM B1

Faulconer is proposing cuts to library hours and arts funding, but the mayor announced last month plans to restore funding for parks, pools and other services using \$270 million in federal and state COVID-19 relief money.

In addition to the specific requests, the alliance is urging the council to focus more broadly on equity across the city. They contend San Diego has neglected neighborhoods below Interstate 8 for decades.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the existing inequities in the economy and the ripple effects on housing, health care and government,” the alliance says on its website.

“Although our current

economic crisis is sparked by the coronavirus, it will be fueled and deepened if policymakers continue to enact policies that favor the wealthy and well-connected — leaving the vast majority of workers and families behind.”

Leaders of the alliance say the city needs to radically shift its priorities.

“This list is what our communities deserve,” said Andrea Gaspar, who is spearheading alliance efforts for the Center on Policy Initiatives. “Institutional racism has existed on the City Council since it was created, so we need to focus on making sure these neighborhoods get their fair share.”

The alliance was established six years ago, but it became more vocal and conspicuous this spring, as San Diego faces potentially deep

budget cuts for the first time since the recession of 2008.

Many members of the alliance lobbied the council on Tuesday to reduce proposed spending on police in the wake of local and national protests about police misconduct.

Before the nationwide protests, members of the alliance lobbied the council during nearly a dozen public hearings on the proposed budget.

“Before this crisis many of us were already struggling to keep up with skyrocketing rent prices and stagnant/poverty wages,” Jose Lopez, of the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment, told the council May 21. “Now it’s worse, and it’s getting worse every day as the debt continues to buildup.”

Lopez’s group is part of the Community Budget Alli-

ance.

Other groups include Youth Will, the Emerald Hills Neighborhood Council, the City Heights Community Development Corporation and the Mid-City Community Advocacy Network.

The alliance also includes local chapters of Planned Parenthood and the American Civil Liberties Union, plus labor groups like the United Domestic Workers, the San Diego Building & Construction Trades Council and Interfaith Worker Justice.

San Diego has an eviction moratorium that the council recently extended through June 30. The council also approved Tuesday a rent relief fund but didn’t specify how much money would be devoted to the fund.

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DIANE BELL

FROM B1

doomed to failure.

“We need to acknowledge our past and vent frustrations but in a constructive way,” Dinkin says. There needs to be dialogue between law enforcement officers and citizens.

With the passing of the Catfish Club and the City Club, he says, “We need the next generation to step up and create these types of forums giving people the ability to come together.”

The San Diego Regional Hate Crimes Coalition that brings together several nonprofit organizations, the sheriff, the district attorney

and others, is one avenue.

In response to the deadly shooting at the Poway synagogue on April 27, 2019, the National Conflict Resolution Center created A Path Forward, an initiative that continues to conduct dialogues across the community.

One of its programs, the Art of Inclusive Communication, trains people to overlook outward appearances and work together. It was selected by the state Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training to be taught across California. The goal is to arm officers with communication tools needed to defuse tensions and de-escalate emotional situations.

Communication training is a start, but San Diego also needs a new generation of dedicated young leaders to follow in the steps of their predecessors.

“We have to have people come together and make changes,” says Michael Brunker, the local YMCA’s VP of Mission Advancement. “If you sit on the sideline and do nothing you’re wasting your life.”

He praised the work of Assemblymember Shirley Weber, D-San Diego, and her daughter, Dr. Akila Weber, a physician and La Mesa City Council member.

Another emerging leader is the Rev. Shane Harris, 28, an ordained Baptist minister who lives in Spring

Valley. He rushed to Minneapolis to comfort George Floyd’s brother and works to bring protesters together with law enforcement and city leaders.

Another emerging voice is that of Wayman Yeldell, 28. He is the grandson of the late Rev. George Walker Smith and grew up helping out at the Catfish Club meetings. He and his sister marched in the La Mesa protest last Saturday.

“I want to try to reach out to as many as I can to keep my grandfather’s legacy alive,” Yeldell says. “His whole life he fought for equal rights for African Americans.”

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THINKING EXERCISES Language arts

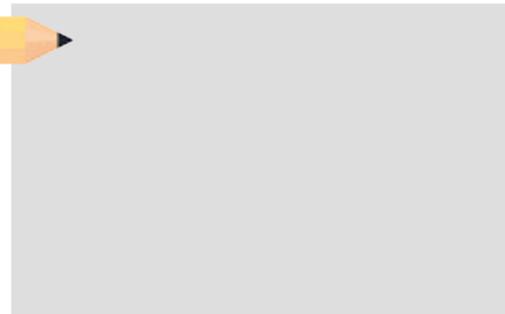
TODAY’S LESSON: FOUND IN TRANSLATION

Learn new things, test your understanding and practice writing skills. These lessons are provided free by Achieve3000, an educational technology company that works with schools to enhance comprehension, vocabulary and writing proficiency for students in grades 2 through 12.

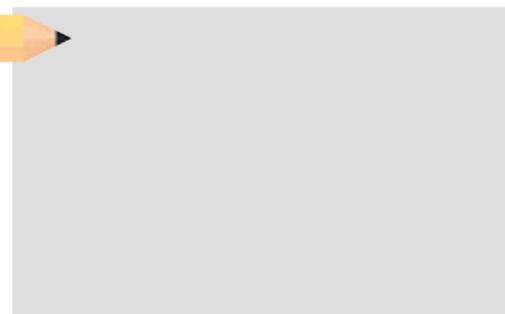
Step 1: Write your answer to the questions below before reading the article.

Sometimes, teams from around the world get together to play sports. The players may speak different languages. Is this a problem?

What do you think?



It’s important for players from different teams to be able to speak with one another.
Do you agree or disagree?



Step 2: Read the article below.

FINDING THE WORDS

SOUTH WILLIAMSPORT, Penn.

Rolando Rodriguez of Panama and Tai Peete of the U.S. have something in common: baseball. They’re among the best young baseball players in the world. But Rolando speaks Spanish, and Tai speaks English. So it’s not easy for them to talk to each other about their sport. Still, when the two boys met at the 2018 Little League Baseball World Series, they found a way to communicate. They used a smartphone app called Google Translate.

There was plenty to talk about at the event. Sixteen teams from around the world were there. The players were all boys. They ranged from ages 10 to 12. The players did everything together. They hung out together and bunked together. They even faced reporters together. Technology helped them communicate in different languages.

While meeting with reporters, for example, Rolando was asked a question in English. He didn’t understand. So Tai typed the words into Google Translate. Rolando got the Spanish translation.

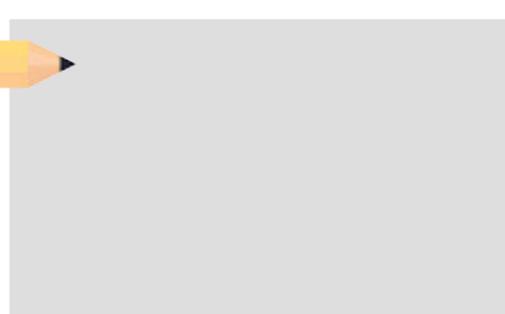
“It was easier than expected,” Rolando said about communicating at the event.

Technology also made it easier for the boys to get to know one another in the dorms. The boys played arcade games like bowling. They also got to play Fortnite. It’s a video game for teens. Through it all, they used Translate to communicate. They typed what they wanted to say in the app. Then, others could see or hear it in another language.

One place they didn’t need help communicating was on the field. All the boys understood how to play baseball. And they couldn’t wait to play!

The Associated Press contributed to this story. ■

Step 3: Retell this story as if you were reporting on the Little League Baseball World Series. What did the boys do when they weren’t playing baseball? How did Google Translate help them communicate? Use information from the article, as well as vocabulary terms and describing words, in your answer.



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