

STEVEN P. DINKIN A Path Forward

STILL SEARCHING FOR THE PERFECT MOTHER'S DAY GIFT?

It's mothers who are getting all the attention today, thanks to Anna Jarvis, who founded Mother's Day in 1908.

Jarvis conceived of Mother's Day as an intimate occasion — an opportunity for children to honor their mother — and strenuously objected to its rapid commercialization. She later disowned the holiday, lobbying the government to remove it from the calendar.

For all the flowers and sweets and greeting cards sold, I know what moms really want this Mother's Day — especially working moms, with kids of a certain age: high-quality, affordable and convenient child care.

A story by Kristen Taketa in Tuesday's Union-Tribune paints a bleak picture: There are only enough licensed child care spots in San Diego County to cover half the number of children here. And for many, the spots that are available are unaffordable: typically, \$12,900 to \$19,500 a year per child, depending on their age. The data is part of a recent study by researchers at the University of

San Diego, sponsored by the San Diego Foundation.

Online child care resource Tootris casts the lack of affordability in a different light. In San Diego, the cost of care for infants (age 2 and under) is 21 percent of median monthly income. That's for just one kid. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has set 7 percent of income or less as the affordability threshold.

The pandemic exacerbated what was already a challenging situation. Frontline workers in need of care for their children couldn't find or afford it, as many providers closed their doors. They shifted their schedules to care for their children, or dropped out of the workforce altogether, stressing household incomes. Moms who had the option of working from home also left the labor force, finding it untenable to hold the equivalent of two full-time jobs.

Post-pandemic, problems persist. The child care industry has shrunk, with 16,000 programs and 131,000 jobs lost. Hiring is

difficult in the current labor market because of low wages. The USD study found that the median annual wage for child care workers in our region was \$29,289 in 2020 — about \$14 an hour. Target announced last week that it is raising its starting wage for workers in some positions to \$24 an hour.

The benefits of pre-kindergarten programs for child development are well established. As a society, we gain from investments made in kids before they go to school. In a divided system — where quality child care is accessible only to affluent families — achievement gaps are inevitable and difficult to reverse.

You may be surprised to learn that the United States contributes just \$500 per year for a toddler's care; in other wealthy nations, the average contribution is \$14,000 yearly. And you may wonder, as I do: Why are we content to be an outlier when it comes to investing in children — our future?

Even in 2022, we're not sure that mothers should work in the

first place. The adage "a woman's place is in the home" still resonates loudly. Our resistance to outsourcing child care isn't about economics, it's about preserving the traditional family.

The fact is, in two-thirds of American families, both parents work. Solving the child care dilemma must be a priority. In New Mexico, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham recently made child care free for most families. She also announced a \$10 million investment to improve accessibility and a stipend program for child care workers seeking to further their education.

But it's not just a government matter. Employers must be part of the solution and provide greater support for working families. In a competitive job market, it can make a real difference in attracting and retaining employees. It also affects productivity: With the knowledge that their child is well cared for, it's easier for a mom (or dad) to focus on their work.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation offers a range

of options for employers in their "Essential Care for Essential Workers" executive briefing. One "quick win" they suggest is creating work schedules that are stable and predictable but also flexible, so parents can drop off and pick up kids from school or day care. Internal investments might include the issuance of vouchers or subsidies to help working parents offset child care costs; access to backup care to accommodate last-minute needs; or establishment of an onsite child care center.

When we recognize there's a problem, we can begin to solve it. Let's embrace the idea that high-quality, affordable child care is beneficial for all and find solutions that align with the realities of everyday life. It's the gift that moms and families so richly deserve.

Dinkin is president of the National Conflict Resolution Center, a San Diego-based group working to create solutions to challenging issues, including intolerance and incivility. To learn about NCRC's programming, visit ncronline.com

PIE SHOP • 'Top Gun' house underwent nearly \$1 million in restoration work

FROM B1 F/10, Lazar worked as a trader on the options floor of the stock exchange in San Francisco. When her father became ill, she moved back to Palm Springs to help care for him in 2006 and began working from home as a day trader. She and her husband, commercial real estate businessman Marco Rossetti, always loved restaurants, and opening her own restaurant was always a dream.

"I loved breakfast and my friends would come and visit and we wouldn't have places to take them, so I got the idea I should open a breakfast place. I started losing more and more money sitting in front of my computer and decided if I'm going to lose money, I might as well go into the restaurant business."

In 2008, she opened Cheeky's, a brunch-centric Palm Springs restaurant where everything is made from scratch using locally sourced ingredients and the menu changes weekly. Since then, she has also opened a steakhouse, an Italian restaurant, a cocktail bar, a tiki bar and a catering company. She also owns Alcazar, a 34-room boutique hotel.

For several years, Lazar said she wanted to break into the restaurant business in San Diego, but she struggled to find the right space. Then she connected with S.D. Malkin Properties, the Connecticut-based global retail investment company



EDUARDO CONTRERAS U-T

Employees prepare Friday for the opening of the "Top Gun" house, which has opened its doors as HIGH-pie, a bakery and pie shop. The former home also has historical architectural significance.

that built the Mission Pacific Hotel and the adjacent Seabird Resort, which both opened in 2021. Founder Scott Malkin is a fan of the movie "Top Gun," so as part of the development deal for the 2.75-acre oceanfront property he offered to give the peripatetic Top Gun House a place to stay and a face-lift.

Originally known as the Graves House because of its original owner, Dr. Henry

Graves, the 500-square-foot house was one of several cottages built along Pacific Street in downtown Ocean side in the 1880s. Over the years, as the downtown area's commercial district grew, all of the other cottages were torn down. According to local historians, the Graves House had important historic merit because of its age and Folk Victorian architectural style, which is more commonly

seen in San Francisco and the Pacific Northwest. As a result, the city purchased the Graves House in the 1980s to protect it from demolition.

Meanwhile, in 1986, "Top Gun" was released to global acclaim. Tom Cruise starred in the movie as a cocky San Diego-based Navy pilot. The Graves House was featured in one scene of the film as the home of Cruise's onscreen girlfriend, played by actress

Kelly McGillis.

In 2019, the home was hoisted up and moved a few blocks away to make way for the hotel's construction. With the consultation of the Oceanside Historical Society and Save Our Heritage Organisation, S.D. Malkin Properties spent nearly \$1 million restoring the home to its original design with a new chimney, refreshed roof and re-creation of its ornate gingerbread filigree along

the roofline and porches.

Malkin first hired Lazar to develop the menu for the High/Low café at Mission Pacific Hotel, which she described as a healthier take on the breakfasts surfers eat around the world, like Hawaiian fried rice, Australian corn fritters and Southern California breakfast burritos, but with house-made Spam and American-style cheese.

Lazar said her concept for HIGH-pie is tied closely to the movie "Top Gun," American patriotism, the military and the ocean. Because of the shop's small size, a dessert concept worked best for the space and Lazar said she knew Malkin was a fan of apple pie. So is she.

"I loved the McDonald's apple pies growing up. I wanted to re-create that in a really nutritious, recognizable-ingredient kind of way, using old-fashioned butter, cup-for-cup flour that's gluten-free and fillings that are very clean ingredients, like cherry, almond extract and sugar."

The shop will host a grand-opening event on May 20, which is just five days before a long-awaited film sequel, "Top Gun: Maverick," opens in cinemas.

Managed locally by Elijah Alexander, HIGH-pie is open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily. The menu can be found at famouslyhighpie.com.

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50TH • Congressional candidates weigh in on COVID, housing, immigration policy

FROM B1 member and Assembly district delegate to the California Democratic Party.

Each candidate was emailed three questions and asked to provide written responses. Some responses have been edited for length.

COVID-19 measures

Q. Health and economic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic are still being felt in the 50th and across the nation. As the virus moves closer to becoming endemic, what should Congress and the federal government do to help Americans adapt to this "new normal"?

Chiddick: The "new normal" cannot be "how do we live with this virus" but must be how do we as leaders help the people of our great country not live in fear their whole lives. I desire to lead the way in two areas: One, helping small businesses recover so we can get back to work and stray away from offering incentives disguised as financial aid for people who choose not to work. Second, implementing easy, tangible and affordable ways within our health care system for people to be prescribed alternative options like diet and lifestyle changes, rather than a pharmaceutical drug, which almost always is just putting a band-aid on a deeper issue.

Gustafson: When the next pandemic comes, we have to make sure we prioritize our children's well-being and mental health. America can improve its handling of crises like the COVID pandemic by acknowledging that its federal system of government was neither designed nor intended to dominate state and local government in times of emergency. We must embrace a decentralized approach that balances

the resources of the federal government with the expertise of the private sector and the on-the-ground knowledge of local government.

Peters: The American Rescue Plan delivered crucial funding for health care, businesses, families and schools so that we could safely navigate through the tail end of this pandemic. Now, we must combat the lingering economic and health impacts of COVID-19. I created and currently lead the New Democrats' Inflation Working Group. Our highest priority is passing the America Competes Act to invest in good-paying jobs, domestic manufacturing, research and innovation, and lowering prices. We must also better prepare for new COVID-19 variants and future pandemics by ensuring greater supply chain reliability for personal protective equipment, basic pharmaceuticals, and accelerated development of tests, vaccines and treatments.

Taitano: If living with COVID-19 is truly going to be our "new normal," then it needs to fall on Congress and the federal government to make ongoing fully funded COVID-19 relief and monitoring efforts part of its "new normal" as well. In addition to comprehensive, ongoing testing and vaccination programs, our government should be using every available tool to monitor the rise of new variants and track case rates so that we can stay ahead of this virus. Moving forward, we also need to do more to provide assistance to those suffering from "long COVID" related disability, and help people get back on their feet after more than two years of economic and social disruption.



David Chiddick Corey Gustafson Scott Peters Adam Schindler Kylie Taitano

Housing

Q. With home prices soaring, housing is out of reach for many young people and young families. Homelessness is on the rise in San Diego and other cities. What would you do in Congress to assist local governments grappling with these issues? Is there a role for the federal government here?

Chiddick: Inflation and homelessness is all due to the failure in leadership from both a federal level and local here in San Diego. To be honest, eradicating homelessness is going to be a process. Our homelessness problem isn't necessarily due to increasing home costs. It first starts with getting people to believe they don't need to remain a product of their circumstances. Federal funding for people who aren't working has to stop. With inflation on the horizon, it just doesn't make sense. When I win, my goal is to implement ways to bolster up our mental health and addiction rehabilitation facilities and make sure we have the right leadership in these areas.

Gustafson: To reduce the cost of housing we must cut red tape and reduce the high cost of housing imposed by burdensome layers of government. For the homeless we must better work with local nonprofits who know how to best deliver the help and services needed by our community's most vulnerable. And we must always support veterans by improving the Department of Veterans Af-

fairs and making sure that those who served our country in uniform receive the best care and support services possible.

Peters: In Congress, I introduced the Build More Housing Near Transit Act, which would leverage federal transportation funding to encourage local governments to build more homes near transit. I have also been an advocate for changing state law, specifically calling for infill housing to be shielded from lawsuits brought under the California Environmental Quality Act. I believe we must also update zoning laws to make it easier for local governments and developers to build more housing, and I have supported the efforts of UCSD to build more on-campus housing.

Schindler: Solving the housing crisis so that there is adequate housing to support our population is a large-scale project that requires an investment from the federal government. Congress has not taken steps to help cities increase housing supply, and the result is soaring prices and increased homelessness. As someone in the middle class who understands the pressure that high housing prices place on families, I will advocate for Congress to allocate money to San Diego and other cities to develop enough housing to allow families to live in San Diego and provide shelter for the homeless.

Taitano: Across the nation, the single biggest

driver of soaring housing prices is the lack of affordable housing units, and the response at all levels of government should reflect that we are presently in a supply-side housing crisis. While local governments will ultimately have to take the lead in approving new construction, this is a time for bold action and the federal government should be doing much more to support those efforts, beginning with increased tax incentives and subsidies, and I will be a strong advocate for those policies in Congress.

Immigration

Q. Title 42 authority is set to expire May 23, removing pandemic-related asylum restrictions. Many expect a large number of refugees at the border, certainly at the Tijuana crossing. How should the U.S. government handle this expected increase and do you support terminating the Title 42 restrictions?

Chiddick: Title 42 was a temporary solution to a bigger problem. The bigger problem is leaders who neglect the safety of Americans in order to protect others. For the southern border specifically, the Biden administration has opened our borders and people came in by the masses, so yes, we will now have a bottleneck at the border come May 23. That's a fact. For the safety of our people and our country, we need to seal up the southern border and make the process of coming into America easy for those who qualify.

Gustafson: The Biden administration has completely failed to secure our borders. Title 42 is a tool our brave border agents need to do their job. We must provide the border patrol with

the resources and tools necessary to secure our border. We cannot fix America's broken immigration system unless we know who enters and who leaves our country. Securing our border is a national security issue.

Peters: The Department of Homeland Security is actively developing a more efficient process for the intake of asylum seekers at the southern border, which includes additional personnel and enhanced processing starting in the country of origin. Title 42 will not be in place indefinitely — it's a public health order meant to guard against COVID-19 transmission, not an immigration policy. However, we must be prepared for the consequences of lifting Title 42. A comprehensive plan to meet the needs of the migrants arriving at our border is critical.

Schindler: I support terminating Title 42, which removed the right to seek asylum in the U.S. on the grounds of COVID-19. As we lift pandemic restrictions, Title 42 should also be lifted, and replaced with an asylum policy that aligns with our values as a country. A surge is expected to happen at the border, and to handle it I support additional financing of CBP to increase staff, along with improved technology and pre-clearance to expedite commercial traffic at the border.

Taitano: I do support terminating Title 42 restrictions. America has historically been a haven for those seeking refuge around the world, and our nation has been stronger for it. We must act swiftly and with compassion to take in as many people as we can and ensure that they have the help they need to integrate into our society.

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