

LIFE

TO THE MOON!

OUT-OF-THIS WORLD PLACES TO CELEBRATE APOLLO 11'S 50TH. A6

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS



OUR 164TH YEAR

FRIDAY, JULY 19, 2019

75¢

WESTERN SNOWY PLOVER RELEASE

OUT ON THEIR OWN

Seven Western snowy plovers released back into the wild at Coal Oil Point Reserve



NICK MASUDA / NEWS-PRESS PHOTOS

Seven Western snowy plovers were released back into the wild at Coal Oil Point Reserve Thursday morning. The snowy plovers are monitored through federally permitted bands on their legs that can help experts track movement all over the California coast.

By NICK MASUDA | DIRECTOR OF NEWS

Walking along the beaches of Coal Oil Point Reserve, you witness a bevy of dolphins playfully lifting above the Pacific Ocean, with seagulls seemingly playing with their mammal friends. Only feet away, beachgoers don't realize they are among a threatened species — one that got a bit larger Thursday morning.

The Western snowy plover, a bird of special concern in California, utilizes Coal Oil Point as one of its chosen habitats, with nests of eggs commonly found. On this foggy morning, the Santa Barbara Zoo, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Reserve itself excitedly ushered seven chicks into the wild, mere weeks after being rescued due to dangerous circumstances.

"These are rewarding days," said Rachel Ritchason, the Zoo's director of collections. "Our goal is to always get them back out here in their natural habitat."

These particular seven plovers were rescued from Ormond Beach, South Oso Flaco (north of Guadalupe) and Oceano Dunes.

Coal Oil Point Reserve is one of three commonly used reintroduction spots near Vandenberg and San Buenaventura.

"It begins here, right where it ends — right here on the beaches," Ms. Ritchason explained.

A stable of local conservation experts and their docents monitor the snowy plovers at Coal Oil Point up to four times a week, according to Reserve Conservation Specialist Jessica Nielsen.

During the monitoring, they use high-end camera equipment to spot the otherwise inconspicuous birds, particularly looking for snowy plovers that are resting upon nests. If nests are found, they are GPS marked and workers will notate how many eggs are in the nest. Over time, if it seems as though the nest is not being monitored naturally, workers



Please see PLOVERS on A3

Santa Ynez River Valley communities' water contaminated, study says

By SOE HAN THA
NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENT

Groundwater in some areas of the Santa Ynez River Valley is polluted, and a recent study suggests that septic tanks may be contributing to the contamination.

The study, which was overseen by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, found that all the subbasins in the area — including Lompoc, Santa Rita, and Santa Ynez — had wells with pollutant levels higher than benchmarks established for safe drinking water.

That discharging effluent from a septic tank into the ground affects groundwater may be obvious for some. Determining the effect of septic tanks on groundwater quality, however, is complicated by the fact that other factors — agricultural activity and rain — also play a role in the quality. To get around this complication, the research analysts built a statistical model to see how significant septic tanks density was for nitrate concentration.

The reason nitrate was chosen as a pollution indicator was not random. Drinking water with

Please see WATER on A4

Recent study suggests septic tanks may be contributing to groundwater contamination in the area.

A NEWS-PRESS SERIES:
SMALL BUSINESS SANTA BARBARA



COURTESY PHOTO

Monica DeVreese and Jill Deering founded their running apparel company, Rabbit, in 2014, serving an international audience.

THIS RABBIT'S READY FOR A NEW RACE

Running apparel company making a name for itself

By ELIAS J. ATIENZA
NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENT

The running apparel company Rabbit might be new to the running scene, but they have been making massive strides with every hop ever since.

The business was founded by Monica DeVreese and Jill Deering in 2014, with the two meeting through the Santa Barbara running community. Both are skilled runners, as Ms. DeVreese qualifies for the Boston Marathon every year and Ms. Deering has been within three minutes of qualifying for the Olympics.

The idea for Rabbit came from Ms. Deering, stemming from her displeasure with running apparel she wore from non-running specific brands.

"It didn't feel like what a real runner would wear," she recounted.

Then she had a crazy idea. "And the only person I know who would hear this crazy idea was Monica."

The email contained a single question: What if the two started their own running apparel brand?

"She replied, 'YES! I want to do that, I'm so in!' She was so excited (writing) in all caps," Ms. Deering said.

The two launched a successful Kickstarter crowd-funding campaign, which raised \$45,328 from 322

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

We celebrated National Small Business Week ... for two weeks, and we don't want the momentum to stop. Today, we introduce a regular feature that you can expect to see every Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, where we highlight local businesses in our community. Have a suggestion? Email us at news@newspress.com!

Please see RABBIT on A3

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INSIDE

Business.....B1	Crossword.....B5	Sports.....B2-4
California.....A3-4	Life.....A6-7	Sudoku.....B5
Classified.....B7-8	Nation/World.....A8	Voices.....A2
Comics.....B6	Obituaries.....A8	Weather.....A8

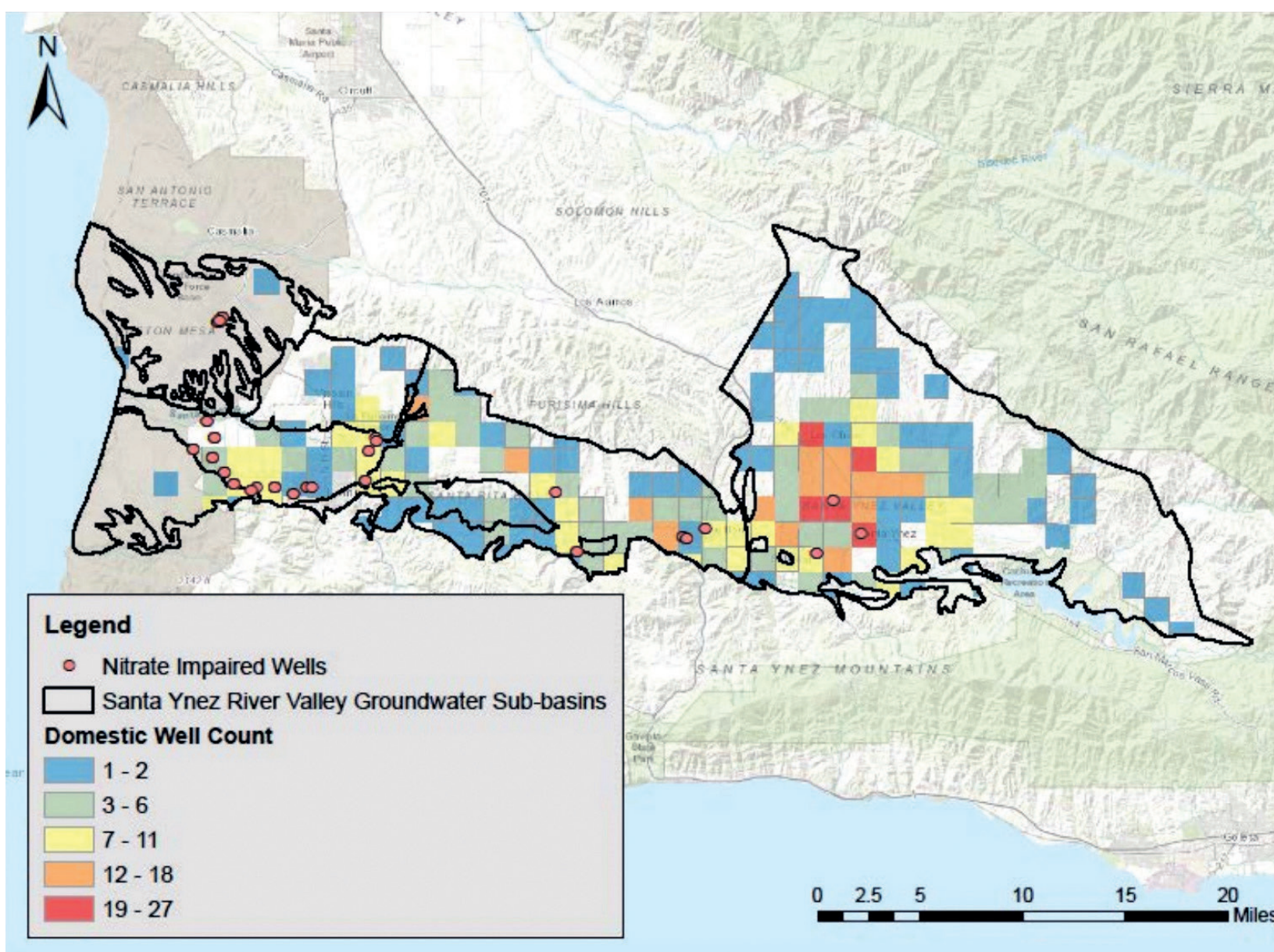
LOTTERY

Thursday's SUPER LOTTO: 1-6-14-15-45 Meganumber: 13	Thursday's DAILY 4: 6-7-2-6
Tuesday's MEGA MILLIONS: 8-16-31-48-52 Meganumber: 23	Thursday's FANTASY 5: 10-19-23-24-39
Thursday's DAILY DERBY: 10-06-09 Time: 1:40.23	Thursday's POWERBALL: 19-43-47-60-68 Meganumber: 10
Thursday's DAILY 3: 9-0-3 / Midday 0-0-6	



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California & THE WEST



A map courtesy of the Santa Barbara County Groundwater Characterization Project showcasing nitrate-impaired wells.

Study points to nitrate-impaired wells in determining that water is contaminated

WATER

Continued from Page A1

high levels of nitrate is harmful, especially for babies.

"Excessive nitrate can result in restriction of oxygen transport in the bloodstream," according to the United States Geological Survey. "Infants under the age of four months lack the enzyme necessary to correct this condition," which is known colloquially as the "blue baby syndrome."

A commonly accepted benchmark for safe drinking water is 10 milligrams per liter, and some areas surveyed in the study had water levels that surpassed the benchmark by more than five times.

The statistical model was conducted for the entire Santa Ynez River Valley groundwater basin and also for just the Santa Ynez subbasin. While the results for the entire groundwater basin was not statistically significant, results for the Santa Ynez subbasin were highly significant, with p-values of less than 0.01.

The statistical equations predict that in areas where there are 425 septic tanks per one square mile — such as near the Janin Acres subdivision or the town of Santa Ynez — one septic tank will increase the groundwater nitrate concentration by about 5 to 7.5 mg/L.

Rick Merrifield, the former Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services Director, told the News-Press that septic tanks

"are not bad things, but the problem is that some of them are built in places that aren't really appropriate."

What makes a place inappropriate for a septic tank? A small area of land. Mr. Merrifield said that there should be a septic tank in a lot that is at least one acre.

"The problem with Los Olivos is that those lots were created in the 1980s, and most of them are very small," said Mr. Merrifield. "They're nowhere near as large as they should be."

Mr. Merrifield also added that "many of the (septic) systems in the Santa Ynez Valley are getting old" and need to be moved to different disposal sites.

"Everyone who builds a septic system gets a permit, and everyone's supposed to identify the areas within their lot they can dispose effluent at," said Mr. Merrifield. "But not everyone's doing that."

In Santa Barbara County, "septic systems newly installed or repaired have stricter requirements for protection of water quality," according to Thea Tryon, an engineering geologist with the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.

When asked about prohibition in areas where water quality is extremely contaminated, Ms. Tryon said, "We need evidence of direct discharges from the septic systems that cause significant impacts to water quality before we begin working towards prohibiting discharges which would lead

to sewerage."

Sewering projects, however, may upset community members that like to live in a rural area, according to Mr. Merrifield.

"They like controlling their own property, their own destiny," he said.

The transition from septic system to sewage system, however, is inevitable, Mr. Merrifield said.

"The longer you wait," he said, "the higher the cost goes up."

The community's residents are typically responsible for the cost of building and connecting to a sewage system, according to Ms. Tryon, who added that there are "potential offsets from grants, low interest loans, or businesses that can't meet septic design criteria and want to expand or build."

Until such projects are undertaken, however, communities in the Santa Ynez River Valley are left with contaminated water. The research findings suggest that "domestic well users may be at risk of drinking water above the drinking water standard." The areas at the highest risks are near the towns of Los Olivos, Santa Ynez and Janin Acres, according to the study.

In the Lompoc Plain Subbasin, the highest levels of pollutants found are as followed. Level of arsenic was more than four times the benchmark; iron, almost 250 times; nitrate, more than 10 times; sulfate, more than eight times; and total dissolved solids, almost 25 times.

In the Lompoc Terrace Subbasin, level of arsenic was more

than 250 times; iron, more than 1,000 times; nitrate, more than eight times; sulfate, more than 10 times; and TDS, more than 150 times.

The Lompoc Upland Subbasin was the only region where the maximum nitrate level was lower than the benchmark.

Arsenic was five times higher than the benchmark; iron, almost 15 times; sulfate, more than three times; and TDS, almost four times.

In the Santa Rita Subbasin, arsenic was more than five times higher than the benchmark; iron, almost 90 times; nitrate, almost three times; sulfate, almost five times; and TDS, more than five times.

In the Santa Ynez Subbasin, nitrate was almost 40 percent higher than the benchmark while arsenic was three times higher than the benchmark; iron, more than 100 times; sulfate, more than five times; and TDS, more than three times.

The study, whose data was compiled and digitized by Cal Poly San Luis Obispo graduate Riley Haas, was funded by the nonprofit Heal the Ocean, whose advisory board includes Mr. Merrifield. Howard Kolb and James Bishop of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board also worked on the report, titled "Santa Barbara County Groundwater Characterization Project: Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin."

email: stha@newspress.com

Deputies raid rapper YG's Hollywood home in connection with fatal shootout

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

LOS ANGELES — Authorities executed a search warrant at the Hollywood Hills home of rapper YG on Thursday in connection with a police pursuit and shootout that left one man dead earlier this month.

Homicide detectives from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department served the warrant at the home on Thursday morning, said Deputy Grace Medrano, a spokeswoman for the department.

They arrested one man, Tyquan Williams, 29, on an unspecified weapons charge, she said. Several other people were detained and released.

Keeton Jackson, otherwise known as YG, lives at the home but was not there when the warrant was served, according to investigators.

Mr. Jackson is the registered owner of an armored Cadillac SUV that led sheriff's deputies on a pursuit through Compton and Inglewood on July 3, the Sheriff's Department confirmed.

The rapper has tweeted that he was not in the vehicle at the time.

"I was nowhere near the scene of this incident, I was in Hollywood recording in the studio all day. I was there until after midnight on the 4th of July and didn't learn of these events until after they happened!"

The pursuit began in Compton about 11 p.m. after deputies tried to stop the SUV for reckless driving and the vehicle sped away, the

Sheriff's Department said.

A person in the SUV opened fire on the deputies with an assault rifle, prompting multiple exchanges of gunfire and turning the chase into a rolling gun battle, authorities said.

Caught in the crossfire was Rickie Cornell Starks, 65, who died after he was shot multiple times in Compton. Investigators think he was a bystander and not involved in the gun battle.

As deputies pursued the SUV into Inglewood, someone in the vehicle fired a weapon at a helicopter tracking the chase, the department said.

Bullets also struck a patrol car, grazing a deputy's hand and shoulder.

Investigators have said that at least 40 rounds were exchanged over the 12-plus-mile route, with at least 16 of those rounds coming from the suspect's assault rifle.

The pursuit came to an end when the SUV stopped outside an apartment complex, where at least four people jumped from the vehicle and ran away, according to authorities.

Deputies said they arrested one of the suspects, James Earl Harris, 28, of Lakewood. He is being held without bail on suspicion of murder, police records state.

Investigators also seized the Escalade, which was outfitted with bulletproof windows, but found no weapon inside, the Sheriff's Department said.

How Joe Biden won friends in Hollywood by helping studios get their movies into China

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON — When then-Vice President Joe Biden hosted Chinese leader Xi Jinping for a five-day diplomatic blitz in 2012, a Hollywood Democratic mega-donor kept popping up with them.

There was Jeffrey Katzenberg, then the head of DreamWorks Animation, dining alongside Xi, the then-vice president of China, at a State Department welcome lunch in Washington. And there he was again, standing just behind Xi, then-California Gov. Jerry Brown and then-Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa at a Lakers game in Los Angeles. And there was Mr. Katzenberg hanging out in a nearby hallway with Disney CEO Robert Iger to provide last-minute counsel as Mr. Biden closed a deal in which China committed to considerably expand its market for American films.

On the final day of Mr. Xi's visit, Dreamworks announced Mr. Xi had signed off on the company's own deal — the launching of Oriental DreamWorks, a \$330 million joint venture with Chinese companies to develop and distribute animated films in China.

Several of the candidates vying for the Democratic presidential nomination have significant support in Hollywood — Mr. Katzenberg, for example, has kicked in \$2,800 each to 14 of them already — but none has as long a history of delivering for the industry as Mr.

Biden. His deep ties to studio executives and decades-long advocacy for their agenda has helped cement Mr. Biden's support even as it may also open him to criticism for too cozy a relationship with big donors. Mr. Biden is returning to Hollywood this week for another round of fundraisers, including the second Mr. Biden event co-hosted by Mr. Katzenberg and leaders of several major studios. Mr. Biden's first Southern California fundraiser, which Mr. Katzenberg co-hosted in May, netted more than \$700,000 in one night.

"Joe was our champion inside the White House," said former Sen. Christopher Dodd, who led the Motion Picture Association of America for much of the Obama era.

"There is no question about it. Even before Joe Biden decided to run, I would get calls and have conversation with the major studio figures, with them saying, 'You tell Vice President Biden 100 percent we want him to run.' This wasn't waiting around to see who would do well in polls."

"During some very tough days, he was one of the few people who stood up and believed they had a legitimate case," Mr. Dodd said.

But as with so much of Mr. Biden's history, his long support for the movie industry creates both benefits and problems.

At a time when money in politics is a central issue, Mr. Biden's big donors taint him for some Democratic primary voters.

'Manholes' are out as Berkeley removes gender-specific language from city code

A manhole will become a maintenance hole, artisans will replace craftsmen and firefighters and police officers no longer will be identified by their gender in Berkeley's city code under an ordinance passed by city leaders Tuesday.

The City Council voted unanimously to replace more than two dozen terms often used in the city's municipal code with gender-neutral words.

"In recent years, broadening societal awareness of transgender and gender nonconforming identities has brought to light the importance of non-binary gender inclusivity," council member Rigel Robinson wrote in a letter to the council in March.

Berkeley's current municipal code contains mostly masculine pronouns, according to a city staff report.

"It is both timely and necessary to make the environment of City Hall and the language of city legislation consistent with the principles of inclusion," Mr. Robinson said.

Broadening social awareness of transgender and gender nonconforming identities has led to sweeping changes across the state. In 2014, then-Gov. Jerry Brown signed into law a measure that replaced "husband" or "wife" in state law with the gender-neutral term "spouse." In 2017, California became the first state to provide a third gender option on state driver's licenses, identification cards and birth certificates with the passage of Senate Bill 179.

Berkeley has also instituted some other changes. In February, the city began extending the option to all employees to receive a name badge with a preferred pronoun printed alongside their professional title.

Tribune News Service

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