



# The San Diego Union-Tribune

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## TRUMP FUELING GOP SPLIT

Many Republican lawmakers say they will not back him as party's nominee

BY JULIE PACE & JILL COLVIN

VALDOSTA, Ga.

On the eve of Super Tuesday's crucial primaries, a sharp new divide erupted between Republicans who pledge to fall in line behind Donald Trump if he wins their party's nomination and others who insist they can never back the bombastic billionaire.

The fissure could have major implications beyond

the primaries, exposing the looming challenges in uniting the party after the election, no matter who wins.

Nebraska's Ben Sasse, a rising star among conservatives, became the first current senator to publicly raise the prospect of backing a third party option if Trump clinches the nomination. In a letter posted on Facebook last Sunday, Sasse urged Republicans to consider whether a party led by Trump would still represent

■ A2 • Trump rally in Virginia turns violent.

their interests.

"If our party is no longer working for the things we believe in — like defending the sanctity of life, stopping Obamacare, protecting the Second Amendment, etc. — then people of good conscience should stop supporting that party until it is reformed," he wrote.

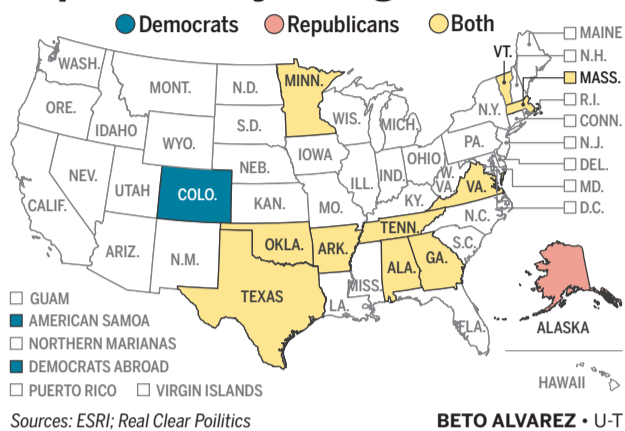
The Associated Press asked Republican senators

and governors across the country if they would support Trump if he secured the nomination. Just under half of those who responded would not commit to backing him, foreshadowing a potentially extraordinary break this fall.

"I am increasingly concerned by Donald Trump's statements and behavior, and I have serious concerns about his ability to win the general election and pro-

SEE PRIMARIES • A5

### Super Tuesday voting



JOHN GASTALDO U-T

Carlsbad's Flower Fields, with rows of ranunculus, open to the public today. Admission is \$14 for adults, \$7 for children 3 to 10.

## Bloom county

January rains and February heat are producing a profusion of blooms across San Diego County. Fruit trees are blossoming, wildflowers are dotting hillsides, and the Flower Fields at Carlsbad Ranch are starting to pop with color. Last month was San Diego's hottest February on record, and also one of its driest. March starts dry and a little warmer than normal, but the weather service expects a pattern shift this weekend. A storm forecast to arrive Sunday night might not signal the full-fledged return of El Niño, but forecasters say it could usher in an extended period of cooler and wetter weather.



More than 50 acres in Carlsbad are planted flowers, including ranunculus of many different colors.

## TARGETING ALZHEIMER'S WITH NEW PROTOCOL

Clinical group sets guidelines to help diagnosis and treat

BY PAUL SISSON

Today there are not enough neurologists, geriatricians and psychologists to care for the estimated 5.1 million Americans suffering from Alzheimer's disease — a number projected to reach 7.1 million by 2025.

This means that family doctors often end up diagnosing and treating the devastating neurodegenerative disease and related forms of dementia alongside myriad other conditions that arrive in their exam rooms daily.

While there are good guidelines to follow for some conditions, such as high blood pressure, that is not the case for Alzheimer's. Physicians are often left to follow whatever method they think is best to divine who has the disease and who doesn't and how to treat those who do.

This lack of standardization can lead to the wrong diagnosis, inappropriate prescriptions and delayed access to counseling and other resources that help patients and their loved ones cope, said Dr. Michael Lobatz, a local neurologist.

The doctor co-chairs the Alzheimer's Disease Clinical Roundtable, which has worked to distill the best research-proven diagnostic methods into a new set of guidelines they believe can transform care for the 62,000 people in San Diego County already diagnosed with the disease and help the thousands more to avoid pitfalls when care isn't coordinated.

Roundtable members are scheduled to present their work to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors today, and local doctor groups affiliated with Scripps Health, Kaiser Permanente and Sharp HealthCare are poised to launch

SEE ALZHEIMER'S • A6

## LEGISLATION COULD PROVIDE LEGAL SHIELD FOR MONSANTO

House version of measure includes exemption for PCBs

BY ERIC LIPTON

WASHINGTON

Facing hundreds of millions of dollars in lawsuits, the giant biotechnology company Monsanto last year received what some describe as a legislative gift from the House of Representatives, a one-paragraph addition to a sweeping chemical safety bill that could

help shield it from legal liability for a toxic chemical only it made.

Monsanto insists it did not ask for the addition. House aides deny it is a gift at all. But the provision would benefit the only manufacturer in the United States of now-banned polychlorinated biphenyls, chemicals known as PCBs, a mainstay of Monsanto sales for decades. The PCB provision is one of several sticking points that negotiators must finesse before Congress can pass a law to revamp the way thousands of chemicals are regulated in the United States.

"Call me a dreamer, but I wish for a Congress that would help cities with their homeless crises instead of protecting multinational corporations that poison our environment," said Pete Holmes, the city attorney for Seattle, one of six cities, including San Diego, suing Monsanto to help cover the costs of reducing PCB discharge from their sewers.

The House and the Senate last year both passed versions of legislation to replace the 40-year-old Toxic Substances Control Act, a law that the Environmental Protection Agen-

SEE MONSANTO • A8

## CARUSO CONGRATULATES MEASURE A OPPONENTS

■ B1 • Developer behind controversial project near Carlsbad lagoon says he's proud of effort, despite defeat.

Tamara Lafarga-Joseph, a major donor for Miracle Babies, dressed as Audrey Hepburn for the charity's "Breakfast at Tiffany's" luncheon last week in Rancho Santa Fe. The nonprofit provides support for families of babies in NICU.

EDUARDO CONTRERAS U-T



### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

#### Helping Miracle Babies is a personal cause



PAM KRAGEN

loves most is being a mom, and it's through that role she discovered her latest passion: Miracle Babies.

Lafarga-Joseph, 60, is a major donor and the 2016 gala chair for Miracle Babies, a San Diego nonprofit that provides cash grants and support to the families of critically ill babies in neonatal intensive care, or NICU.

Like her 17-year-old cat, Calvin, Tamara Lafarga-Joseph says she has lived nine lives. She's been a missionary in Central America, a fitness coach to the stars, a real estate developer, film producer, geriatric counselor, author, artist and philanthropist. But the job she

The Rancho Santa Fe mother of three nearly lost her grandson, Max, when he was born 15 weeks premature and spent five months in NICU. Now 13, "Miracle Max" is thriving, but after seeing the toll it took on her daughter's family, Lafarga-Joseph said she was compelled to help when she discovered Miracle Babies three years ago.

"It resonated on every level with me because I know firsthand that there's no way a family can prepare for that kind of trauma," she said. "For my grandson, I was strong in the hospital, but it was heart-wrenching. I found it draining emotionally, physically and fiscally and it was extremely stressful."

Reducing some of those external pressures was the goal when Dr. Sean Daneshmand and his wife, Marjan, started Miracle

SEE DIFFERENCE • A10

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A lemon bar recipe for a more sophisticated palate. **Food**

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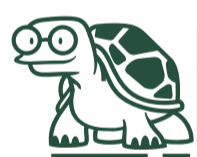
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**ALZHEIMER'S • Goal is to help clear path for busy physicians**

FROM A1 pilot projects this year.

Lobatz said he and his colleagues believe that their work over the past 18 months will eventually upgrade the caliber of Alzheimer's care countywide and may serve as an example in other cities as the nation grapples with the growing Alzheimer's population.

"Until there's a cure, there's a better way to do this. We need to give people the appropriate diagnosis and prognostic information to get them on the right medications, avoid the wrong medications and provide them with the resources to be able to take care of themselves as long as they can," Lobatz said.

A better way, added Dr. Lisa Heikoff, a geriatric medicine specialist who represents Kaiser on the roundtable, includes finding ways to avoid overuse of anti-psychotic medications often prescribed to patients who don't really need them, a practice that studies have shown can lead to premature death for Alzheimer's patients.

"It really focuses away from the standard medical model, which is, use a pill for everything," Heikoff said. "It is about trying to understand what drives certain behaviors and how we can make changes, through trial and error, that are tailored to each patient."

The 18-month effort fits under the umbrella of the Alzheimer's Project, a multi-year initiative launched in 2014 by county Supervisors Dianne Jacob and Dave Roberts. The project brings experts from throughout the area together around research, caregiving, clinical standards and public awareness.

It is one thing to launch an initiative, but it's another to have it start producing results nearly two years later, especially when tangible results require often-competing organizations to work closely together and find agreement.

"This is good news for San Diego families who are worried sick about an older loved one and want to make sure they are getting a proper diagnosis," Jacob said by email. "It marks a real coming together of our medical experts around a disease that is taking an escalating toll on our region."

Dr. Helen Kales, director of the Program for Positive Aging at the University of Michigan — whose work is referenced in the San Diego Alzheimer's protocol — said she is not aware of a county-level collaborative similar to the one unfolding in San Diego.

"Cutting through academic and political and clinical boundaries to get people working together, I think



PEGGY PEATTIE U-T

**Dr. Michael Lobatz has co-chaired the Alzheimer's Disease Clinical Roundtable and its 18-month effort.**

that's what's really novel here," Kales said.

The first step will be getting doctors to use a new screening method designed to help physicians quickly separate those who are just fine from those who need a full Alzheimer's workup. Doctors are instructed to use one of two short cognitive tests to determine whether memory problems are significant, in conjunction with a standardized set of interview questions for the patient's spouse or caregiver.

Together, evidence shows that these tests are more than 80 percent effective at identifying who may have cognitive impairment. The screening algorithm also highlights red flags, such as rapid progression or young onset of symptoms, that mean a specialist should be involved right away.

The idea, Lobatz said, is to create something quick but effective for doctors who have a lot of other responsibilities on their plates.

"The primary care doctor today has to worry about diabetes, hypertension, cholesterol and a million other screenings ... we wanted to give them a tool that allowed them to screen the patient in a few minutes with a reasonable degree of accuracy," Lobatz said.

There are also guidelines for deeper diagnosis, recommended for those who are flagged during screening. The key here is that doctors should use one of two tools, the Montreal Cognitive Assessment or the St. Louis University Mental Status test, to make a definitive di-

agnosis. These tests take an hour to perform, meaning that anyone who is positive on screening should come back for a full work-up. A third visit is also necessary for follow-up. While a specialist is not necessary for these tests, Lobatz said, general practitioners should make sure they give the diagnosis the full amount of time that is required.

"Any physician or nurse practitioner can do this, but in order to avoid inaccurate diagnoses and inappropriate treatments, they should hopefully follow the algorithm and not wander into this without the knowledge of what needs to be done," Lobatz said.

Finally, there are recommendations for treatment. The recommendations can be very different depending on the type of memory impairment diagnosed. Common problem areas such as wandering, mixing up night and day and violent behavior are frequent challenges that can end up with a prescription for anti-psychotic medications.

Heikoff, the roundtable member from Kaiser, said providing a structure for when to use medications, and what to try first, should be transformative, but not immediately.

"This is setting the stage for what, hopefully in the next five to 10 years, is going to become a much more structured approach to the diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer's and all dementia," she said.

paul.sisson@sduniontribune.com (619) 293-1850

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