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A WARM WELCOME HOME



Lucy Anderson, who served in the WAVES during World War II, greets a homecoming crowd as she and 77 other veterans of the war return to San Diego International Airport on Sunday after taking an Honor Flight San Diego-sponsored tour of Washington.

HAYNE PALMOUR IV U-T

PLEGGED DELEGATE SUPPORT FOR CRUZ FADING

Trump holding double-digit lead in latest poll in Indiana

BY JEREMY W. PETERS

Even as Donald Trump trounced him from New Hampshire to Florida to Arizona, Sen. Ted Cruz could reassure himself with one crucial advantage: He was beating Trump in the obscure, internecine delegate fights that could end up deciding the Republican nomination for president.

"This is how elections are won in America," Cruz said after walking away with the most delegates in Wyoming last month.

Now, as he faces a potentially candidacy-threatening contest on Tuesday in Indiana — where a new NBC News/Wall Street Journal/Marist poll, released Sunday, showed him trailing Trump by 15 percentage points — Cruz can take little solace from his vaunted delegate-wrangling operation, even if he prevails there.

It turns out that delegates — like ordinary voters — are susceptible to shifts in public opinion. And as the gravitational pull of Trump's recent primary landslides draws more Republicans toward him, Cruz's support among the party's 2,472 convention delegates is softening, threatening his hopes of preventing Trump's nomination by overtaking him in a floor fight.

With each delegate Trump claims, he gets closer to the 1,237 he needs to clinch the nomination and Cruz's chances of stopping him — even with an upset victory in Indiana — shrink.

Before Trump's crushing victory in Pennsylvania last week, Cruz's campaign boasted that it had 69 people devoted to acquiring as many as possible.

SEE GOP • A9

ILLEGAL TUNNELS SMALLER AND SIMPLER

High risk of discovery driving Mexican drug cartels to shrink investment with routing under the border

BY TATIANA SANCHEZ

In just a single month this spring, U.S. immigration officials uncovered three cross-border drug tunnels, the latest of more than 75 cross-border tunnels discovered in the past five years.

What's different about the recent tunnels is that most are significantly smaller and don't boast the technological advances that officials saw a few years ago.

William Sherman, special agent in charge for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration in San Diego,

said drug cartels have moved toward tunnels that require a smaller investment because of the high risk of being discovered.

"It saves them money. ... In at least the previous six tunnels, we've hit those before they got any narcotics through. So it was a tremendous amount of money and resources that they wasted when we took those off," Sherman said. "I think (they're thinking), 'Hey, they're finding these pretty quick, we maybe shouldn't put as much money into them, even if it takes us more time to get the loads through.'"

David Shaw, special agent in charge for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations, said the cartels' primary goal is simply to get their product to the United States as quickly as possible.

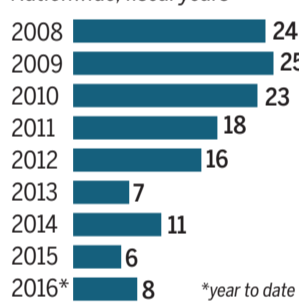
"It's all about the investment," he said. "So less investment, they get more bang for their buck."

Also notable in the recent discoveries is the emergence of drug organizations other than the dominant Sinaloa cartel, among them the Cartel de Jalisco Nueva Generación.

SEE TUNNELS • A16

Illegal border tunnels

Nationwide, fiscal years



Sources: U.S. Customs and Border Protection; Frontline U-T

PROTESTERS EXIT GREEN ZONE IN BAGHDAD AFTER STORMING PARLIAMENT

BY SUSANNAH GEORGE & SINAN SALAHEDDIN

BAGHDAD

Anti-government protesters disbanded at least temporarily Sunday from the heavily fortified Green Zone they had stormed a day earlier after the Islamic State carried out its second major attack in Iraq in as many days — a pair of car bombs that killed more than 30 people.

The country's political crisis intensified Saturday when hundreds of supporters of Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr tore down walls and poured into the zone that is home to the seat of the Iraqi government and most foreign embassies. Loudspeaker announcements on Sunday evening urged protesters to leave peacefully. When the call came, hundreds calmly packed up and left, carrying flags and overnight bags away with them.

Later in the day, families walked through the compound's smoothly paved streets and snapped pictures beside its well-watered gardens, and young men bathed in a fountain. Such scenes are entirely divorced from the rest of the city's crumbling infrastructure and neglected public spaces.

The Green Zone, surrounded by thick blast walls topped with razor wire, is off-limits to most Iraqis because of security procedures that re-

SEE IRAQ • A8



JOHN GASTALDO U-T

Dr. Ted Chan visits with patient Rosalind Stroud at UC San Diego's Thornton Hospital. UCSD and West Health Institute are creating a geriatric emergency department.

UCSD BUILDING ER FOR SENIORS

Region's first geriatric acute care unit coming with nonprofit's generosity

BY PAUL SISSON

An emergency unit being planned for UC San Diego's Thornton Hospital will be the first in the region to focus solely on seniors, a group whose sheer numbers and complex medical needs are expected to strain available resources as the baby boom generation reaches retirement age.

Geriatric emergency departments, physical manifestations of America's rapidly

advancing average age, have been popping up across the nation as hospitals seek a more efficient and dignified way to serve patients age 65 and older.

An \$11.8 million grant from the Gary and Mary West Foundation is making the university's project possible and signals a new, deeper geriatrics research collaboration between UC San Diego and the West Health Institute, which has recently tightened its focus on aging issues.

Shelley Lyford, West's chief executive, said the multifaceted nonprofit — which has research, philanthropy and policy divisions — sees aging issues as an area that requires urgent action on multiple fronts.

"We know that 10,000 people a day are turning 65, and we believe that this is not a time for us to stand by and wait," Lyford said.

Indeed, the demographic

SEE SENIORS • A12

PROPRIETY OF WALL STREET, PUC MEETINGS QUESTIONED

Critics say talks raise doubts about whose side regulatory agency is on

BY JEFF MCDONALD

State electricity regulators have accepted frequent meetings with Wall Street analysts and hedge fund investors, often discussing pending matters with direct bearing on the value of utility stocks.

The meetings may indicate that California Public Utilities Commission members do a thorough job overseeing a significant sector of the California economy. But critics say the discussions raise a now-familiar question — whose side is the PUC on?

The commission is already under scrutiny for its backchannel dealings with utility executives, seeking \$12 million for criminal defense attorneys to help respond to ongoing investigations of apparently close ties. Little attention has been paid to the undisclosed Wall Street meetings as a secondary level of commission activity affecting the companies.

"We need private investment in California utilities to build and upgrade infrastructure," commission spokeswoman Terrie Prosper said. "Low interest rates help keep those costs down for consumers, and a clear understanding of California's policy goals helps investors to better understand the utility and our policies that the utilities must

SEE WATCHDOG • A6

COMING THIS WEEK

TUESDAY
HEALTH: Tips for how to get a grip on extreme or chronic stress.

THURSDAY
NIGHT+DAY: World-premiere play "Hollywood" at the Playhouse.

FRIDAY
WEEKEND: Finale approaches for CBS drama "The Good Wife."

SUNDAY
ARTS: Billy Joel tunes up for big Petco Park concert.

TODAY'S DEAL



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SENIORS • Getting ahead of need to treat nation's growing elderly population

FROM A1
shift is accelerating.
According to the U.S. Census Bureau, about 6 million Americans turned 65 between 2010 and 2014 and 26.5 million more are expected to cross that threshold by 2030. San Diego County is projected to reach 723,572 residents in the 65-and-over category during the next 14 years, about 70 percent more than in 2014. The number of adults 85 and older is also expected to grow, reaching 84,048 by 2030, according to estimates.

Focusing on seniors

Studies show that as people age, they consume more medical resources per capita, and their needs change. Age-related ailments such as Alzheimer's disease become more common, and patients become more sensitive to the noises and bright lights common in most emergency situations.

Dr. Ted Chan, chair of UC San Diego Health System's Department of Emergency Medicine, said the university has worked with West, scrutinizing national guidelines to create an environment that caters to this demographic. In 2017, plans are to break ground on an 8,500-square-foot addition to Thornton's existing emergency department that would have between 10 and 16 additional beds for seniors.

The new unit, which is expected to cost between \$12

million and \$14 million, would be designed with non-skid floors, contrasting paint, larger signage and other features shown to make navigation easier for older patients. Even the chairs in the waiting room would have contrasting backs and seats. Designers are researching how to minimize the amount of noise on the ward and are even considering, Chan said, equipment with quieter alerts and alarms. Better gurneys that can lessen the chances of skin breakdown and bed sores are also being considered.

But all of that is just stuff. The most important part of having a separate space for seniors, Chan said, is that the doctors, nurses and technicians working in the geriatric emergency department will be able to follow a process tailored to the needs of seniors. Each patient can routinely be asked questions about factors beyond the specific medical problem that brought them to the hospital.

Asking questions like "have you fallen in the last month?" or "when was your last meal?" or "have you missed any medications?" or "have you had any issues getting to the bathroom when you need to?" can help medical personnel determine whether a patient has enough support at home to avoid another injury.

Chan said geriatrics training has started for staff members who will work in the unit, hopefully providing extra know-how in spotting common age-related symptoms from gait problems to signs of memory loss, that can be addressed if they are detected during an emergency stay.

"There are a lot of times where we take care of the acute problem and we don't think about, maybe, the long-term needs of an individual," he said.

Research opportunities

This type of emergency room is still new on the health care scene.

The American College of Emergency Physicians published its first set of guidelines for creating geriatric emergency departments in 2013, laying out a basic framework of best practices that UC San Diego and many others take into consideration when setting up their own operations.

But there is still much to learn about the best ways to practice emergency medicine with seniors, and the grant from West Health comes with a hefty commitment to advancing understanding in this area. Only \$6.3 million of the grant will go toward building the new ward. The remaining \$5.5 million will be used to fund geriatric research.

Dr. Zia Agha, West's execu-

utive vice president of clinical research and medical informatics, said there are plenty of opportunities to study what works, what doesn't and why.

"The evidence base needs to be built out. We need to study what are the best clinical pathways and what screening tools are best to identify the seniors that are most at risk of having a bad outcome," Agha said.

West's goals for this research go far beyond San Diego. One of its three main organizations, the Gary and Mary West Health Policy Center, has an office in Washington, D.C., providing access to government officials who decide how big programs such as Medicare operate.

Lyford, West's president, said she believes West's structure, with divisions in policy research and philanthropy, make it uniquely suited to transform research into policy.

"If you add all of those things together, you've created a really interesting recipe that you don't find in other parts of the country," Lyford said.

The university and the institute are not limiting their collaboration to the ER. They recently embarked on a new "Acute Care at Home" pilot project that will study ways to prevent older patients from being admitted to the hospital.

The program, which seeks to enroll 70 patients over a six-month period, starts with the premise that many seniors are put in hospital beds because doctors are not confident that they have enough support at home.

Agha, who directed research at the San Diego VA Healthcare System before joining West, said there are often concerns about whether a patient will be able to change his or her dressings, take medication, get enough nutrition or suffer a fall if they are sent home. But the pilot project seeks to solve those issues by sending nurses and other service providers to patients' homes as often as necessary. A special computer system keeps the in-home caregivers in touch with the emergency docs who are in charge of their care.

"We're exploring how all of those things that a patient needs can be started in the ER and continued in the home setting," Agha said.

So far, three patients have been enrolled, Chan said, two with infections who require intravenous antibiotics and a third who had a significant leg injury.

Opening soon

The new emergency unit should be complete in 2018. However, UC San Diego is scheduled to open Jacobs Medical Center, its new 10-

story hospital tower adjacent to Thornton in mid-October. Opening Jacobs will add 245 beds to the university's La Jolla medical campus, freeing up some space in Thornton.

Patty Maysent, the health system's chief executive, said that relieving pressure on Thornton will allow the geriatric emergency department plan to start before the physical addition is complete by assigning older patients to certain beds serviced by providers with additional geriatric training.

She noted that UC San Diego is already known for its work on senior issues, including its Center for Healthy Aging, which makes the collaboration with West fit nicely.

"I think we're a perfect fit. They're interested in the same kinds of things that we are," Maysent said.

The collaboration cements the Wests even deeper in the region's philanthropic community. The couple, who were successful in telecommunications, have allocated more than \$162 million in grants, forming their foundation in 2006. They opened a downtown San Diego senior center in 2010, and their institute has many ongoing research initiatives nationwide.

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