

LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

Sure, Biden is old. So is Trump

Both have had memory lapses. But only one has flaws that are dangerous.

DOYLE McMANUS

In a career that spans more than half a century, President Biden has long been known all too well for mangling words, names and dates in verbal pratfalls known, perhaps gently, as gaffes.

During the 2020 presidential campaign, then-President Trump publicly charged that Biden, then 77, was suffering from “dementia.” The insult didn’t stick; Biden campaigned effectively enough to defeat Trump that November.

But the controversy over the president’s mental fitness has only intensified as he has sought a second term.

Biden’s age, since he’s the oldest man ever to serve as president, inescapably weighs on voters’ minds.

Thursday’s report from special counsel Robert Hur deepened Biden’s political problem by painting a more damaging official picture of the president than had been seen before.

The report said Biden, now 81, came across as a “well-meaning, elderly man with a poor memory.”

That may have been the nicest thing it said.

In his interviews with Hur, Biden had difficulty remembering which years he had served as vice president and what year his son [See McManus, A7]



FATIMA SHBAIR Associated Press

A CITY ON EDGE

Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, where more than a million displaced Palestinians have taken refuge, has seen increased bombardment. Israel warns that a ground offensive is imminent. **WORLD, A3**

‘Sick of being sick’: A call for relief for neighbors of landfill

Supervisor urges relocation aid even as study finds little risk

By TONY BRISCOE

As a massive underground garbage fire continues to spread sickening odors and noxious fumes over Castaic area neighborhoods, Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger has called on Chiquita Canyon Landfill owners to relocate affected residents until the issue is resolved.

In a letter to John Perkey, Waste Connections vice president and deputy general counsel, Barger urged the company to take immediate steps to address the odor issues and provide relocation assistance to commu-



South Coast Air Quality Management District

CHIQUITA Canyon Landfill odors have affected hundreds of households, Supervisor Kathryn Barger said.

nity members who request it.

“It has become increasingly clear to me that there is no predictable end in sight,” Barger wrote. “As you continue working to comply with oversight and odor abatement requirements, the very real and significant impacts to those living near the Landfill must be addressed.”

At least 900 households surrounding the 639-acre landfill have been affected by the rancid odors, according to Barger’s office. But foul smells have been reported as far away as Stevenson Ranch, suggesting the num- [See Chiquita, A5]

GLIDERS ON THE STORMS

The wind and waves in an atmospheric river can turn normally placid Belmont Shore into a place where kitesurfers try to reach new heights

By JACK DOLAN

As the atmospheric river barreled into Southern California on Sunday, cell-phones throughout the region buzzed with dire alerts about the monster storm and imminent life-threatening floods. Across Los Angeles, last-minute shoppers, who were warned it soon could be too dangerous to drive, raced to grocery stores for emergency supplies.

But on Long Beach’s Belmont Shore, an unsung strip of sand in the far southern end of Los Angeles County, I stood with a small group of local kitesurfers huddled in thick wetsuits a few feet from the crashing waves, weighing our odds.

Strapping yourself to a giant kite and jumping into the ocean is never risk-free. But on a warm summer day with steady wind and predictable seas, Belmont Shore is one of the safest places in the country to learn the sport.

During winter storms, however, when the wind speed more than doubles and towering waves march in from an unusual direc- [See Kitesurfers, A6]



ATRIA ST. PETER

A KITESURFER at Long Beach’s Belmont Shore. It’s a perfect spot for beginners — and for intermediate and expert kites to work on more advanced moves.

A new voice for fast-food workers

Unique union paves the way for half a million employees in the state to bargain as a single sector. **BUSINESS, A8**

Kelly exits UCLA for Ohio State

Football coach is hired as Buckeyes’ offensive coordinator, leaving Bruins searching for solutions. **SPORTS, B12**

Weather
Cool with sunshine.
L.A. Basin: 63/40. **B8**



Waiting in limbo for CARE Court to help her husband

The state initiative on mental health is struggling to find its footing, as one L.A. woman has learned.

By THOMAS CURWEN

Maria Macias pulled into a parking space at the Los Angeles County Superior Court in Norwalk. She had come from Gardena and found herself praying for strength during the drive.

“It is too easy to fall into the sadness of it all,” she said, “too easy to hide and not face every day.”

On the seat next to her was a six-page petition asking the court to provide a treatment plan for her husband, whose schizophrenia and drug use endangered his life and had left them estranged.

For at least 20 years, Macias said, she has lived with the fear, uncertainty and sorrow occasioned by his mental illness. Although they are not divorced, their marriage in effect ended when she had to file a re-

straining order to keep him from harassing her and their three sons.

But on Dec. 1, the day CARE Court opened in Los Angeles County, she believed their lives might change.

Signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom in 2022, the CARE Act is a radical rewriting of the state’s behavioral healthcare law that for the first time gives family members an opportunity to request treatment for spouses, children or relatives experiencing severe psychiatric distress.

It works this way: A person requesting a treatment plan for a loved one submits a petition, which is considered by a CARE Court judge and, if approved, sent to a county’s department of mental health. The department has 14 days to contact and assess the person needing help before scheduling a court hearing to outline a treatment plan.

Macias, first in line that Friday morning, believed her husband, whose name she asked to keep private, would be a perfect candidate for the program. But more [See CARE Court, A7]



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