



Photographs by PAUL KURODA For The Times

JUAN GARCIA, right, explains to police officers how he was sprayed with mace on International Boulevard last month in Oakland.

Oakland tackles law, lawlessness

Haunted by legacy of police misconduct, the city struggles with a crime surge

By JAMES RAINEY

OAKLAND — Along gracious, leafy College Avenue, you can luxuriate with a traditional Thai massage, slip into an artisanal cocktail at an Italian spot or claim a grain-free treat for your canine companion at a charming Mediterranean cafe.

Privileged Rockridge hardly seems the sort of neighborhood that would generate grist for the crime blotter. But that changed last year, when one of Oakland's more upscale enclaves suffered a string of retail break-ins and armed robberies and, most spectacularly, a series of full-frontal assaults on a neighborhood liquor store.

Eddie's Drive In Liquors, sadly, came to embody its name when thieves plowed a truck through its glass front



IN-N-OUT BURGER plans to shut down its lone Oakland location this month, citing concerns over safety.

doors — on four separate occasions in just four months — plundering tens of thousands of dollars' worth of cigarettes, cognac and other high-end liquor.

In the decade leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic, Oakland was making national headlines because so much was going right: Rockridge and other North Oakland neighborhoods had a high-energy nightlife that offered a chic, soulful alternative to San Francisco. Downtown bustled with people and commerce, and housing was affordable by Bay Area standards.

The city's distressed east and west ends remained more dangerous terrain, particularly at night, but violent crime rates were nowhere near the highs of the 1980s and '90s.

That all changed last year, when [See **Oakland**, A5]

Biden draws ire over protections for gig workers

Critics cite his support for California's AB 5 as they decry Labor rule now in effect.

By NOAH BIERMAN

WASHINGTON — San Francisco's city attorney last month reached the kind of settlement many gig workers have been seeking for years: An app-based hospitality company called Qwick agreed to reclassify thousands of bartenders, servers and dishwashers as employees, giving them back wages and, for the first time, sick pay and other legal benefits.

But advocates' dream that such settlements would spur new deals for gig workers across the country appears to be on hold. The San Francisco settlement, the first of its kind, applies only to Qwick's workers in California, which has among the most aggressive gig worker protections in the country.

President Biden's promise to replicate California's law at the national level has fallen victim to congressional gridlock and industry clout. Last week, his Labor Department began enforcing a new administrative

rule outlining which employees should be classified as gig workers. But industry experts say it amounts to a half-measure that falls short of California's protections and is unlikely to result in the same type of benefits for the increasing number of Americans who rely on contract work to pay their bills.

That hasn't stopped critics from claiming that Biden's action "takes a destructive California idea national," as a commentary in National Review recently proclaimed, or that the president is "spreading California's war on gig workers" to the rest of the country, as a Republican senator wrote for Fox News. In reality, experts say Biden's new rule essentially restores the federal approach to gig work that was in place under President Obama.

Even California's groundbreaking 2019 law, known as Assembly Bill 5, has faced headwinds, including an industry-backed ballot initiative in 2020 that severely limited the ability to force Uber, Lyft and delivery companies to treat their drivers as employees. San Francisco has ongoing suits against Uber and Lyft and has settled cases with Door- [See **Workers**, A7]



CHRIS SZAGOLA Associated Press

AN ICEBERG floats in Greenland's Scoresby Sound last September. By mid-century, the Arctic could see consistent ice-free conditions during that month.

'Ice-free days' in Arctic Ocean

Troubling milestone could occur as soon as 2020s or '30s — much earlier than projected, study says

By HAYLEY SMITH

The loss of Arctic sea ice has long been a graphic measure of human-caused climate change, with wrenching images of suffering polar bears illustrating a worsening planetary crisis. Now, new research has found that Arctic Ocean sea ice is shrinking even faster than previously thought — and that the Arctic may start to see its first "ice-free days" within the current decade.

That troubling milestone could occur before the end of the decade or sometime in the 2030s — as many as 10 years earlier than previous projections, according to a study published recently in the journal Nature Reviews Earth and Environment. The study defines "ice-free" as when the Arctic Ocean has less than 1 million square kilometers, or 386,000 square miles, of ice.

"It's no longer a remote possibility that might happen at some point," said

Alexandra Jahn, the study's lead author and an associate professor of atmospheric and oceanic sciences at the University of Colorado Boulder. "Unfortunately, it basically occurs under all the emission scenarios in our climate models, so it seems like it's going to happen, and so we need to be ready for that."

By mid-century — 2035 to 2067 — the Arctic could see consistent ice-free conditions in September, the month when sea ice concen- [See **Arctic**, A7]

A PLAN TO CLEAR DEATH ROW SOONER

San Quentin will transfer section's last inmates elsewhere by summer, officials say.

By HANNAH WILEY

California is accelerating its efforts to empty San Quentin's death row with plans to transfer the last 457 condemned men to other state prisons by summer.

The move comes five years after Gov. Gavin Newsom signed an executive order that imposed a moratorium on the death penalty and closed the prison's execution chamber. It coincides with his broader initiative to transform San Quentin into a Scandinavian-style prison with a focus on rehabilitation, education and job training.

The condemned prisoners will be rehoused in the general population across two dozen high-security state prisons, where they will gain access to a broader range of rehabilitative programming and treatment services, according to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The changes do not modify their sentences or convictions.

The plan unveiled Monday builds on a pilot program that experimented with the transfer of 104 death row prisoners from January 2020 to January 2022. An additional 70 people on death row have been moved from the legendary men's facility in Marin County over the last month, the department said. The 20 condemned women incarcerated at the Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla will remain there, but have been rehoused in the general population.

The changes align, in part, with Proposition 66, a statewide ballot measure approved in 2016 that allows for condemned prisoners to be housed in institutions other than San Quentin, requiring them to work and pay 70% of their income to victims.

[See **Prison**, A5]

Court upholds firearm ruling

Ban on gun possession by two defendants is deemed to be in line with historical restrictions. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Parasite poses a danger to dogs

Pet owners are warned to be on the lookout for symptoms after liver fluke is found in the state. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Israel to discuss Gaza in D.C.

Prime minister and President Biden hold first call in weeks as tensions grow between the allies. **NATION, A4**

Weather

Sunny intervals. L.A. Basin: 74/52. **B5**

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