

COLUMN ONE

'Father' of birth control fights on

At 92, the still sly Bill Baird, who won his own battle for women's reproductive rights in the '70s, warns of 'civil war.'

By JEFFREY FLEISHMAN
REPORTING FROM
BUCKS COUNTY, PA.

Bill Baird has been called many things: butcher, murderer, piper of sex, unholy deviant. It's hard to imagine the 92-year-old man on the white couch once evoked so much wrath. But it was a dangerous time when Baird — who was shot at and punched, who lost his family and was jailed — won a 1972 Supreme Court decision that legalized contraception for unmarried women, earning him the nickname the "father" of birth control.

The privacy issues raised in Eisenstadt vs. Baird were cited less than a year later when the court voted to protect a woman's right to abortion in Roe vs. Wade. Baird was elated but prescient about what was to come. He knew the persuasions of preachers and the power of the Bible to provoke America's morality police. He warned a complacent abortion rights movement that the victory was in danger from a well-organized Christian right that would galvanize the Republican Party.

In 1980, he appeared like a party-crashing, secular prophet at a Dallas religious convention where televangelist Jerry Falwell and other right-wing pastors were mobilizing Christian voters and calling for Supreme Court justices to oppose abortion: "This is the first time in the history of this great nation of ours," Baird said at the time, "that any single group has tried to seize control of the U.S. Supreme Court to force a particular religious viewpoint."

And he says it's happen- [See Baird, A10]



SEAN RAINS, who left Bakersfield two years ago and moved to Havilah with his girlfriend and their pit bull, assesses the damage to his shaker table while digging through the rubble of his home days after the Borel fire.

Like many gold rush towns, Havilah reaches a fiery end

Recent wildfires have reduced rich California history to ash

By TONY BRISCOE
AND ROBERT GAUTHIER

HAVILAH, Calif. — There was gold in these hills.

Hidden in the rugged Sierra Nevada amid sprawling pine forests, Havilah was once a bustling mining town where stamp mills pulverized rock from the region's mines and prospectors panned for precious metals in the late 19th century.

In its heyday, the town's main drag featured saloons, dance halls, inns and gambling houses. Townsfolk witnessed midday gunfights, manhunts for wanted killers and stagecoach robberies, and they wagered gold dust on horse races, according to Los Angeles Times archives.

But for nearly a century, long after the feverish search for gold subsided, Havilah had been considered something of a ghost town, with only about 150 residents. Foundations were all that remained of most of its historic buildings when fire swept through the town July 26.

The fast-moving Borel fire, which has scorched more than 59,000 acres, destroyed some of the [See Havilah, A7]



JANET KUTZNER, a member of the historical society, passes the remains of Havilah's roadside museum days after the Borel fire scorched the town.

Kuehl inquiry closed without charges

Prosecutors cite lack of evidence of graft by onetime supervisor in a case started by ex-sheriff's team.

By KERI BLAKINGER

Two years after Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies showed up with guns and battering rams for an early morning raid on Sheila Kuehl's home in Santa Monica, the investigation is officially over — and there will be no criminal charges.

Instead, Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge William Ryan approved an agreement Wednesday in which the California Department of Justice said there was a "lack of evidence of wrongdoing." The department had taken over the politically charged investigation originally launched by then-L.A. County Sheriff Alex Villanueva's controversial public corruption squad.

"The DOJ has conducted a thorough and independent investigation into the allegations that formed the basis of the LASD investigation," state prosecutors wrote. "The DOJ has concluded, based on this independent investigation, that there is insufficient evidence to support the filing of any criminal charges."

The case had centered on more than \$800,000 worth of contracts Metro awarded to Peace Over Violence, a non-profit run by Patti Giggans — one of Kuehl's friends and Villanueva's critics. The organization had been tasked with running a hotline for reporting sexual harassment on the public transit system, but the agreement to do so came under scrutiny after a whistleblower alleged that Giggans had been unfairly awarded the contract as a quid pro quo for supporting Kuehl, a former Los Angeles County supervisor.

The investigation eventually ballooned into other allegations, including the incendiary claim — re- [See Investigation, A7]

With lives at stake, LGBTQ+ people pulling for Harris

Many say a second Trump presidency amid assault on rights poses an existential threat

By KEVIN RECTOR

SAN FRANCISCO — At a recent celebration of San Francisco's vibrant transgender past, one speaker after another directed the crowd's attention to a worrisome future, casting November's presidential election as a turning point for the LGBTQ+ community and the nation as a whole.

"This election will determine our fate," said Sofia Sabina Ríos Dorantes, deputy director of El/La Para TransLatinas, a local advocacy organization. "It will determine whether we continue to face discrimination and marginalization at [a] disproportionate rate, or whether we can continue walking toward the recognition and respect we deserve."

Last week's third annual kickoff to Transgender Pride Month — the first to be rec-



KAMALA Harris, at a Pride event in Washington in June, has received a letter of endorsement from more than 1,100 LGBTQ+ leaders, organizers and celebrities.

ognized at the state level as well — was a chance to celebrate the advances of the transgender community in one of the nation's most enduring havens for LGBTQ+ people, with champagne served beneath the ornate dome of San Francisco City Hall. It was also a show of defiance at a dangerous time for queer folks nationally.

In three months, Americans will choose between Vice President Kamala Harris, who is a Bay Area native and longtime LGBTQ+ ally, and former President Trump, who has a long record of attacking queer rights and has aligned himself with some of the nation's most virulently anti-LGBTQ+ political groups.

In chats with family and on nights out with friends, at gay bars and organizing meetings and on a virtual call of some 20,000 queer people last month, many [See LGBTQ+, A5]

Girardi's fraud trial begins

Prosecutors say lawyer stole millions from his clients. Defense team points finger at subordinate. CALIFORNIA, B1

Snoopmania sweeps Games

D-O-Double-G evolves from gangsta rapper to America's sweetheart during Paris Olympics. ENTERTAINMENT, E1

A milestone for House of Mouse

Disney reports profitability in its streaming business for first time, but its theme parks unit lags. BUSINESS, A6

Weather Partly sunny.

L.A. Basin: 85/63. B6

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