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Interim police chief promises more transparency

By SARA BUSH
NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENT

The Santa Barbara Police Department's interim police chief, John Crombach, promises to bring more transparency to the embattled office.

Chief Crombach stepped into the role Monday after Chief Cam Sanchez officially retired last week, following 15 years in the position.

"I'm an advocate and a believer in transparency," Chief Crombach told the News-Press. "It's one way you develop trust in the community."

The public's trust in the Police Department, which includes 200 sworn

and civilian staff, has been tested on several occasions in recent years from numerous allegations of police misconduct, and questions over how an Police Department employee was able to embezzle more than a half million dollars in parking ticket payments over the course of seven years.

Safety violations reported at the department's headquarters, and infighting within the department have caused some officers to criticize Chief Sanchez's leadership.

Just weeks before announcing his retirement, the Santa Barbara Police Officers Association slammed Chief Sanchez in an election mailer, cit-

ing unsafe working conditions and staffing deficiencies. A message from the association's board of directors claimed a "steady decline" in the department over the past 14 years.

Chief Crombach, who is expected to remain in the position for four to six months, said he is committed to ending division within the department.

While he said he would not comment directly about the relationship between his predecessor and the Police Officers Association, Chief Crombach said he would not tolerate dissension within the department.

"I've met with both command staff and managers and with leadership

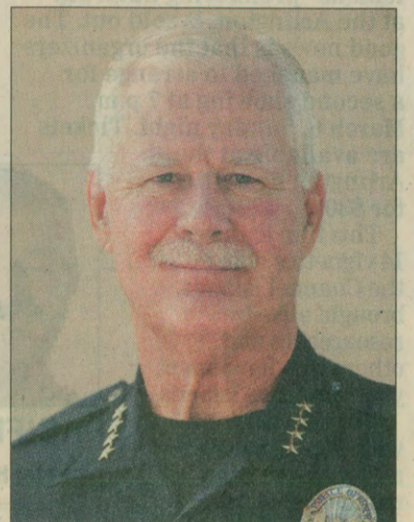
of the POA, and we have an agreement that we're going to work well together," he said. "And we're going to have an open dialogue, and we're going to resolve our issues internally. We're going to be a good, high-functioning team."

Members of the association are looking forward to the changes Chief Crombach has promised.

"It was time for a change. We're excited about what he's saying," said association President Sgt. Eric Beecher. "Now it's about follow-through — something we haven't had."

Chief Crombach said he would have to familiarize himself with

Please see **POLICE** on A5



KENNETH SONG / NEWS-PRESS
John Crombach

RACE TO THE WHITE HOUSE

Clinton wins big over Sanders in South Carolina

By JULIE PACE
and LISA LERER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Hillary Clinton overwhelmed Bernie Sanders in Saturday's South Carolina primary, drawing staggering support from the state's black Democrats and seizing an increasingly strong position as the presidential race barrels toward Super Tuesday's crucial contests.

Mrs. Clinton's lopsided win — she led by 48 points with nearly all precincts counted — provided an important boost for her campaign and a moment to wipe away bitter memories of her loss to Barack Obama in South Carolina eight years ago. She won the support of nearly 9 in 10 black voters, crucial Democratic backers who abandoned her for Mr. Obama in 2008.

During a raucous victory rally, Mrs. Clinton briefly revealed in her sweeping support from South Carolina voters, hugging backers and posing with them for selfie photos. But then she pivoted quickly to the contests to come.

"Tomorrow this campaign goes national," she said. "We are not taking anything, and we are not taking anyone, for granted."

Please see **PRIMARY** on A3

Voices from the big stage



HELENA DAY BREESE / NEWS-PRESS

Jackson Cocciolone gets a hug and applause as he is announced the winner of Saturday's Teen Star contest at the Arlington Theatre.

San Marcos High junior wins seventh annual Teen Star vocal competition at the Arlington Theatre

By JOSEF WOODARD
NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENT

On Saturday night, the familiar phrase "Teen Star" once again lit up a prominent block of State Street, as it has for one gala night out each year — same luminous brand, different marquee, larger venue.

What had settled into the Granada Theatre for several years headed up to the larger Arlington Theatre this year, upping its audience capacity (2,000 versus

1,500) and generally upping its game as an enterprise and institution on the local cultural calendar.

To cut to the evening's finale, this year's grand prize went to Jackson Cocciolone, a San Marcos High School junior, who moved to Santa Barbara from New York and has battled diabetes and other health challenges partly through the power and commitment to music.

Mr. Cocciolone easily won over the audience, and the judges, with his varied one-two punch of a powerful blues song,

"The Sky is Crying," then shifting gears to opera in the "finalist" portion of the evening, for the well-known aria "Nessan dorma," from Puccini's "Turandot."

Now in its seventh year, the well-established singing competition was founded by impresario Joe Lambert as a locally based variation spun off the general format of high-profile television competitions such as "American Idol" (the Santa Barbara competition was originally called

Please see **STAR** on A5

Train death suit moves to federal court

By SCOTT STEEPLTON
NEWS-PRESS CITY EDITOR

A federal wrongful death and negligence lawsuit filed over a train-versus-pedestrian incident near Refugio State Beach two years ago is heading to alternative dispute resolution.

Mingyue Yuan, a 26-year-old Chinese scholar visiting UCSB, was killed, and three Santa Barbara County residents — Li Wang, Yuzhou Xu and Hui Xiao — were injured when they were struck by an Amtrak train as they walked on a trestle Oct. 11, 2014.

The survivors along with the victim's parents filed suit in Santa Barbara County Superior Court, and the matter was moved to U.S. District Court in Los Angeles.

Ms. Yuan and two others were part of USCB's Visiting Scholar program, which numbered 450 students that fall quarter.

The four were walking on the trestle taking photographs shortly before 6 p.m. and became surprised by the train, according to the Santa Barbara County Fire Department.

In addition to Ms. Yuan's death, one survivor suffered major injuries to his upper torso, extremities and head, while another suffered moderate injuries. Both were treated at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital.

Defendants include Union Pacific Railroad, National Railroad Passenger Corp., Caltrans, city of Goleta, Santa Barbara County, and train engineer Mark Ludwick.

The plaintiffs claim premises liability, dangerous condition of public property and negligence in that all should have done more to prevent death and injuries to those walking on the trestle adjacent to the Arroyo Hondo Old Highway 101 bridge that fateful day.

Court papers state the trestle is located "at the end of a well-identified hiking trail that provides access to pedestrians who regularly utilize the path for transit."

Plaintiffs claim there were no signs warning of any danger or that the trestle is not wide enough to handle train and pedestrian.

"Consequently this condition created a hidden trap whereby pedestrians are enticed to (cross the trestle) without knowledge of the danger they will be exposed to."

When the train in question came through, attorneys for the plaintiffs claim, the engineer failed to see the pedestrians and failed to stop the train.

The plaintiffs are seeking general damages to be determined at trial, reimbursement of medical, burial and other expenses, and to be made whole from loss of earnings.

If alternative dispute resolution doesn't work and the parties can't resolve the matter, then the case would move forward, possibly to trial.

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HELENA DAY BREESE / NEWS-PRESS

A team of Special Olympians heads for a Polar Plunge.

Getting wet for the Special Olympics

Teams raise \$23,000 by running into the ocean

By TED MILLS
NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENT

Maybe the water was 10 degrees warmer this year thanks to El Niño but it was still chilly enough for a Polar Plunge, Santa Barbara Special Olympics' annual fundraiser.

At noon Saturday at Leadbetter Beach, around 100 people who had raised money in return had to run into the ocean, brave the icy water (technically it's still winter here), and return to shore. Some did it in swim wear, some did it in shorts and

a T-shirt, and one woman went in wearing a full tiger costume along with her kids who were dressed as superheroes.

Around a dozen Special Olympics athletes, include one man holding the Olympic torch, went for the dip as well.

In all, the event, which began with a breakfast organized by Hugh Montgomery and his fellow firefighters, raised \$23,000.

Among the sponsors taking part, teams from the Deputy Sheriffs' Association, Santa Barbara County fire-

fighters, the District Attorney's Office, city firefighters and UCSB ran into the water in groups, as did 1st District Supervisor Salud Carbajal, whose wife Gina is head of the Santa Barbara Special Olympics.

Polar Plunge has been a Special Olympics activity/fundraiser for various groups around the nation, but this was Santa Barbara's second annual version of it. Shortly after Gina Carbajal took over the three-person office in Santa Barbara (not including their many volunteers), she decided to make her fundraisers about

the ocean.

"I didn't want to throw on a gala, and I didn't want to put on an evening dress and heels, so I said let's do a polar plunge!" she said. "And Santa Barbara's a perfect place, as it's not cold enough."

All money raised supports local athletes and their annual programs, including high school programs and clubs, and school games in spring and fall.

For those who wanted to raise money, but wanted to stay dry and warm on shore, the event also put up a "chicken coop" area, decorated

Please see **PLUNGE** on A8

SUNDAY

LOCAL / A2
Film examines the history of the Channel Islands

NATION & WORLD / A4
Cruz, Rubio escalate attacks on frontrunner Trump

WEATHER
Partly sunny
Coast: 75/48
Inland: 78/41

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LOTTERY

Saturday's SUPER LOTTO: 2-8-10-28-47 Meganumber: 10	Saturday's DAILY 4: 5-5-6-5
Friday's MEGA MILLIONS: 3-15-19-62-74 Meganumber: 14	Saturday's FANTASY 5: 2-23-24-29-34
Saturday's DAILY DERBY: 01-07-09 Time: 1:46:58	Saturday's POWERBALL: 10-11-21-22-53 Meganumber: 18
Saturday's DAILY 3: 7-9-0 / Midday 8-7-4	

CMYK