

Local

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KARLA PETERSON
Columnist

S.D. native choreographs the stories of Black lives

Of course, Jeremy McQueen wants to be relevant. The San Diego-born, New York City-based performer and choreographer would not have formed the socially conscious Black Iris Project if he didn't want to tell relevant stories about Black lives and Black history. He would not have created a ballet inspired by the life of anti-apartheid activist Nelson Mandela if he didn't have something serious to say.

And he certainly would not have choreographed "A Mother's Rite," a 2018 piece that follows the emotional journey of a grieving mother whose son was shot and killed by a White police officer. In the wake of George Floyd's May 25 death while in police custody in Minneapolis, McQueen's 2-year-old ballet is so in tune with our current tumultuous reality, it could have been created yesterday.

As an artist, McQueen is thrilled that his work feels more relevant than ever. As a Black man, he can't help wishing it didn't.

"The things we are experiencing now are not very different from the things we experienced in 2018, which were not different from what Emmett Till's mother experienced (in the 1950s)," McQueen said during a recent phone interview from the apartment in the Bronx that he shares with his partner. "We wanted to make something that was timeless, but it's heartbreaking for me that this is still relevant the way it is. It is very heavy."

For McQueen, art wasn't always an instrument of social change. But from the moment he saw "The Phantom of the Opera" from the upper balcony of the San Diego Civic Theatre, art felt like something that could change him.

"I sat on the edge of my seat the entire time, with the binoculars glued to my face," said McQueen, who was raised in Oak Park and attended La Jolla Country Day School, Francis Parker School, the Oak Park Music Conservatory and the San Diego School of the Creative and Performing Arts.

"From the costumes to the push red seats to the lighting and the curtains, everything just gave me chills up my spine. When it was over, I just looked at my mother and said, 'Can I do that?' I didn't care if I was a stagehand or if I was playing an instrument. I just wanted more of it."

So he took violin lessons at La Jolla Country Day, followed by acting classes at San Diego Junior Theatre. Ambitious even then, McQueen knew he wanted to be a "triple threat" performer who could act, sing and dance. The problem was, he wasn't very good at dancing. Not only that, he didn't like it much either.

It wasn't until he started taking ballet classes at SCPA that McQueen really took to dance. That was all due to the influence of the legendarily demanding dance teacher Donald Robinson, who was able to convince McQueen that there was room in the rarefied ballet world for a kid like him.

"What really helped me was the fact that I had a

SEE PETERSON • B6

DIANE BELL
has the day off.

PANEL DRAWS VARIETY OF RESIDENTS

Revived Human Relations Commission has 20 members, 11 seats to fill

BY CHARLES T. CLARK

Two months ago county supervisors unanimously agreed to revive the region's long-defunded Human Relations Commission and a month later tasked the commission with defining the scope and mission of a new countywide Office of Equity and Racial Justice.

That office will likely play a role in directing millions of dollars in taxpayer funds, making the membership of the 31-person Human Relations commission even more important — especially as protests persist over police brutality and systemic racism.

Although 11 seats remain unfilled, San Diego County has at least 20 new commission members. They come from a variety backgrounds, ranging from longtime community activists and behavioral health specialists to artists and gun rights advocates.

Each San Diego County supervisor nominates three members to the commission, including one who is supposed to be between the ages of 16 and 24.

Supervisor Greg Cox, who represents the South Bay, has had all three of his nominations confirmed: Daphne Watson, Enrique Morones and Ryan Joseph Garcia.

Watson is executive director of Mental Health America of San Diego County, serves on two county behavioral health commissions and has worked on disparities in mental health care and foster care.

Morones founded and until as of last year was executive director of Border Angels, a non-profit that has fought more than 30 years to reduce fatalities along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Joseph Garcia is Cox's youth appointee to the commission. Garcia graduated from San Diego State University in May with a major in social science and previously worked on U.S. Rep. Mike Levin's congressional campaign in 2018 as a paid canvasser. In his application he said, "As a Filipino-American who has

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EDUARDO CONTRERAS U-T

Luis Gonzalez self-administers a COVID-19 test at the homeless shelter at the San Diego Convention Center as public health nurses Janette Wolski (standing) and Stacey Sundling supervise. Almost 3,000 tests also have been conducted at the shelter.

CASES LOW AMONG HOMELESS

COVID-19 positives, hospitalizations rising in general population, but impact on S.D.'s unsheltered not as dire

BY GARY WARTH

SAN DIEGO

The number of homeless people who have contracted or been hospitalized with COVID-19 has remained relatively low in San Diego County while cases continue to rise among the general population.

San Diego County has reported 15,696 coronavirus cases among residents this year and 387 deaths as of Thursday. Among the area's homeless population, 147 people have tested positive for the virus and none have died. While almost 500 county residents were hospital-

ized with COVID-19 on June 29, only 41 homeless people have been hospitalized with the disease this year.

Cases among the homeless are increasing, but not rapidly. Numbers released Thursday showed only 32 more cases and nine additional hospitalizations since June 19. People who tested positive included 16 in shelters, 26 in vehicles, 25 outside without shelter, 23 couch-surfers and 43 in hotels or hostels, with the remainder in unknown lodging.

While the data suggests homeless people in San Diego County have not been hit hard by the pan-

demic, it's difficult to know for sure.

A person's housing status isn't asked when tests are administered, so there's no way to know how many homeless people outside of shelters have been tested. Without that number, it's impossible to know what percent of homeless people have tested positive.

But while that exact number is not known, it is clear that thousands of homeless people have been tested. About 2,000 tests have been conducted on about 1,650 people at the Father Joe's Villages health center, and many of those people are known to be homeless and living

without shelter.

Almost 3,000 tests also have been conducted at the shelter in the San Diego Convention Center, where about 1,300 people are staying. Only seven clients have tested positive, or about 0.46 percent. In comparison, the county reported a 7 percent positive rate on June 28.

It's also clear the disease has had a greater impact on the homeless population in other cities. A shelter in San Francisco saw 66 percent of its clients testing positive for the coronavirus this year while a Boston shelter had 36 percent positive tests

SEE HOMELESS • B6

LA JOLLA OUTDOOR DINING PLAN SCRAPPED

Expense of parking enforcement halts two months of preparation

BY ELISABETH FRAUSTO

LA JOLLA

With no resolution to a last-minute, expensive roadblock, the La Jolla Shores Association says it can't proceed with its proposed outdoor dining on Avenida de la Playa.

"It's really a slap in the face to any small community trying to help its mom-and-pop businesses," LJSA President Janie Emerson said July 2.

The plan was intended for restaurants to be able to serve more customers while observing social-distancing guidelines related to the coronavirus pandemic.

After more than two months of preparation to obtain permits and complete paperwork on behalf of restaurants, LJSA said it received a letter from the city of San Diego saying the association would need to pay for any ticketing and towing of cars each day before setting up tables for outdoor dining on Avenida de la Playa between El Paseo Grande and Calle de la Plata.

The one block would be closed from 10:30 a.m. to midnight Thursdays through Sundays, with dining furniture set up every morning and cleared after service ended at 10 p.m.



FILE

Patio dining and tables along the sidewalk are pictured in 2016 at Osteria Romantica on Avenida de la Playa in La Jolla.

LJSA has been working with the city's Special Events & Filming Department, following an "existing process" to permit the closure of Avenida de la Playa, according to city spokeswoman Nicole Darling.

Following the department's notification regarding the ticketing and towing fees — which LJSA board member Phil Wise estimated would run nearly \$17,000 — Wise asked representatives of the department and City Council member Barbara Bry's District 1 office for a workaround.

Wise said special-events directors called the \$17,000 estimate a worst-case scenario and said that after a few days of towing, police probably wouldn't have to be called because people would stop parking there, though no guarantees

could be made.

"We can't agree to [the worst-case scenario]," Wise said.

"Had we known this expense from the get-go, we would have stopped our efforts at that time," Wise said in an email to the special-events directors.

Stopping the project now means a financial loss for the restaurants, many of which have already purchased additional liability insurance for the street space they would occupy, Wise said.

"This is an expense that will be hard to recover," he said. "Additionally, some of the restaurants have ordered additional tables, chairs and umbrellas that they hoped to place onto the street. They made these financial com-

SEE DINING • B3

IMMIGRANTS IN S.D. FOCUS OF STUDY ON WORKERS

They're employed in more than a third of health care, food and agricultural jobs

BY GREG MORAN

SAN DIEGO

A new report on immigrants in the city of San Diego shows that more than a quarter of the city's population is foreign born, they constitute more than a third of all essential workers in the health care, food and agriculture industries, and immigrants from African and Middle Eastern countries make up the fastest-growing segment of new arrivals.

The "Immigrant Integration in the City of San Diego" report is a product of the U.S. Immigration Policy Center at UC San Diego. The findings are based on the center's own analysis of 2018 American Community Survey data compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Among the findings in the report:

- There are about 344,000 immigrants in the city, or 27 percent of the population. That is nearly twice the 13.7 percent national average of the U.S. population that is foreign born.
- A little under 20 percent of those

SEE WORKERS • B6

EDÉN PASTORA • 1937-2020

'COMMANDER ZERO' IN 1979 REVOLUTION IN NICARAGUA

BY ROBERT D. MCFADDEN



stora had contracted COVID-19. The government has been widely accused of listing pneumonia as the cause of

death in COVID cases as a way to dispel reports that the pandemic was out of control in Nicaragua.

Pastora, in a life of danger and adventure that stretched from the jungles of the Miskito Coast to the halls of Congress in Washington, was instrumental in toppling the military dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza Debayle, the last of the line in a repressive family dynasty that had ruled their Central American country for nearly a half century.

But deprived of a major role in the revolutionary gov-

ernment he had helped to install, and increasingly disillusioned by its Marxist-Leninist tendencies, Pastora went into exile and for years challenged the regime, led by Daniel Ortega, first with an international campaign of political pressures, and later with hit-and-run guerrilla attacks inside Nicaragua.

Along the way he courted sympathizers and bankrollers in the United States, Europe and Latin America; took money and air support secretly from the Central Intelligence Agency; attacked cities in Nicaragua; was denounced by Managua as a traitor and tried in absentia; was seriously wounded by an assassin's bomb that killed eight people; and once ran for the presidency of Nicaragua. He lost — and two years later, in 2008, announced that he

had reconciled with the Ortega government.

Known for bold stratagems that captured world headlines and romanticized his daredevil exploits, Pastora was an early leader of the Sandinista National Liberation Front and a charismatic figure in the struggle against a dictator who had looted the national treasury and ordered the deaths of countless opponents, including Pastora's father.

On Aug. 22, 1978, Pastora, a former medical student, led some 25 Sandinista guerrillas on a daring raid into the National Palace in Managua. The invaders killed or disarmed the palace guards and seized more than 1,000 hostages, including the entire Nicaraguan Congress and most of the senior officials of the Somoza dictatorship.

For three days, as a shocked world watched, the revolutionaries held out until Somoza capitulated to their demands for the release of scores of political prisoners, a \$500,000 ransom and safe passage to Panama. The spectacular raid established the legend of "Comandante Cero."

The raid reignited a revolution that had been simmering for years. Within days, six cities rose in revolt. Insurrections soon spread across the country. By spring, a civil war was under way, pitting Somoza's well-equipped National Guard against a ragtag coalition of rebel forces. Pastora commanded the southern front in an offensive that slowly closed in on Managua.

With battles raging on the city outskirts, Somoza resigned on July 17, 1979, and flew to Miami. As triumphant

rebels drove through the city firing automatic weapons in the air, a Junta of National Reconstruction was installed. The war had left 50,000 people dead and 600,000 homeless.

Despite his efforts for the revolution, Pastora, who had voiced presidential ambitions, was not named to the junta or to a ruling directorate.

In 1981, Pastora quit the government and disappeared. Ten months later, he surfaced in Costa Rica and, echoing United States charges, denounced the Sandinista government as a betrayal of the revolution, saying that it had imposed censorship, delayed elections and aligned itself with Cuba and the Soviet Union. The Sandinistas dismissed him as a renegade.

Mcfadden writes for The New York Times.

PETERSON

FROM B1
Black male teacher. I really attribute my success to a lot of the things that he taught me," the 34-year-old McQueen continued. "Not just about dance, but about what life would be like navigating the arts world as a person of color. He was very honest with us. He never sugar-coated anything."

After graduating with academic honors from SCPA in 2004, McQueen went to the Ailey School at Fordham University, graduating in 2008 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in dance performance. Many dream jobs followed, including dancing stints in the national touring companies of "Wicked" and "The Color Purple" and awards, grants and residencies for his choreography.

But along with the dream scenarios came tough learning experiences, as McQueen dealt with the kind of negative attention and scrutiny that can come with being the only Black person in the room. So in 2016, he formed the Black Iris Project, a ballet collective that includes Black artists from various disciplines and Black dancers who also perform with other companies.

The group's mission is to create original ballets that reflect Black history and celebrates Black lives. The Black Iris Project was chosen to present McQueen's Nelson Mandela ballet,

"MADIBA," at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The collective's gorgeous film version of "A Mother's Rite" was recently nominated for a 2020 Emmy Award by the New York Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

Before the coronavirus shut down the live performance world, McQueen and the Black Iris Project were planning to give the Hurricane Katrina-inspired "The Storm" its New York premiere in the Bronx later this summer. That performance is on hold, but McQueen's creative mission is roaring ahead.

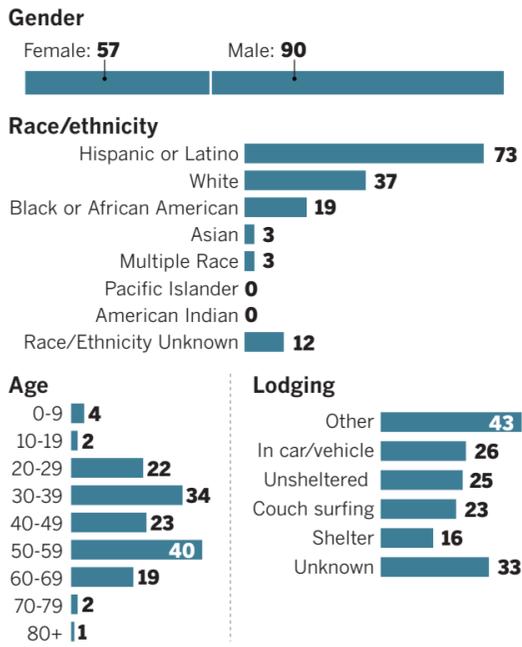
He is currently working on "The Wild," a ballet that will use Maurice Sendak's classic "Where the Wild Things Are" to look at the injustices of the juvenile justice system. He can't take dance classes into juvenile detention centers, so McQueen is hoping to get a pen-pal program going so that these unheard voices get the platform they deserve.

The platform so many Black voices deserve. "I feel like what helped me over the years is mentorship and having someone who looks like me in my corner," McQueen said. "I hope that by getting into these detention centers and working with the young men in there that I can be someone who is encouraging them to achieve their dreams."

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HOMELESS • COVID-19 cases among homeless

There have been 147 cases of the novel coronavirus in the county's homeless population as of Wednesday.



Cases may indicate multiple types of usual lodging; counts may add up to greater than the total cases. Other types of lodging include hostels, hotels, etc. Unsheltered includes on streets and riverbed.

Source: San Diego County

MICHELLE GILCHRIST U-T

Dr. Jeffrey Norris, chief medical director of Father Joe's Villages, has theories about why the local homeless population hasn't been hit harder by the disease.

Norris credits the city with moving homeless people out of shelters with tight quarters where the disease might have rapidly spread and into the more spacious Convention Center shelter. He also credited the county with providing hotels for people to isolate in if they tested positive or showed symptoms, and he noted that service providers were quick to refer people to them when needed.

Residential service providers also began screening clients early in the pandemic, and clients in the Convention Center or at Father Joe's are screened daily, he said.

Homeless advocate Michael McConnell, who interacts with people living on downtown streets almost daily, also has theories about why the impact has been low.

For one, he sees people on the street largely keeping to themselves and in small groups, not in crowds or mingling with people they don't know.

"They tell people to quar-

antine with their family, and people on the street have their street family, so they're just hanging out with the same people," he said, adding that they haven't had many places to go during the shutdown, anyway.

McConnell also said people on the street are in-

formed about the pandemic and are taking precautions.

"I've been handing out masks, and people are happy to have them," he said. "Nine out of 10 folks say, 'Yeah, give me one.' They either don't have one or they want a clean one."

While there have been

many efforts to shelter more homeless people during the pandemic, a monthly count taken by Downtown San Diego Partnership has found the number of people living on the streets actually has increased.

The count found 721 homeless people were on the street the night of June 25, the highest number since February, when there were 744 people on the street.

Although about half of the people inside the Convention Center shelter had been living outdoors when it opened April 1, the number of people on the street just blocks away from the venue has steadily increased since its opening.

The most significant drop in the downtown homeless population this year happened before the Convention Center shelter opened. The population on the street dropped from 744 in February to 529 in March. The Downtown Partnership count found it increased to 545 in April, then to 595 in May before hitting 721 in June.

McConnell said he isn't sure what to make of the increase, especially as he personally knows people who moved from the street into the Convention Center over the past few months. He speculates that there could be more people outside because police have stopped arresting homeless during the pandemic in an effort to make jail cells less crowded.

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WORKERS

FROM B1
344,000 people are undocumented immigrants.

While the total number of immigrants in San Diego has grown, their percentage of the total city population has remained largely unchanged for 20 years — it was 25.7 percent in 2000, the report says.

Immigrants make up 34 percent of all essential health care workers in the city. Some 37 percent of the health care workforce that is foreign born are undocumented, the study said.

Immigrants also account for 35 percent of all essential workers in the food and agriculture sectors. The percentage of foreign-born workers who are undocumented climbs to 63 percent.

Right now 87 percent of the foreign-born population comes from countries in Latin America (43.7 percent) and Asia (42.9 percent). The study says by 2030 people from Asian countries will form the plurality of all foreign-born residents.

The immigration picture has started to change in the past five years, the report says.

The fastest growing foreign-born populations in the city come from five Middle Eastern and African nations:

Syria, with an increase of 866.3 percent; Kenya, 303.5 percent; Sudan, 303.4 percent; Iraq 278.7 percent and Nigeria, 224.4 percent.

The study says by the end of the decade African nations will be the third-largest region for new arrivals, supplanting Europe.

UCSD Associate Professor of Political Science Tom Wong led the study, which was released in June, national Immigrant Heritage Month. In a news release he said the study gives insight into the city's foreign-born population.

"These data make vivid the important role that immigrants play not only in San Diego's present but also in the future growth of the city," he said.

The study did not say what total population of the city was used to calculate the findings. Wong did not respond to a request for comment last week.

The ACS uses data collected through a survey at the individual or household level representing one percent of the nation's population.

The data show the top 20 occupations for immigrants, with maids and housekeeping at the top, followed by cooks, janitors, personal-care aids and retail salespersons.

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2 DISTRICTS PREP TO REOPEN

BY KAREN BILLING

The Del Mar Union and Solana Beach School Districts are refining two instructional models as they plan to reopen schools this fall under state and county guidelines: a full five days a week on-site learning and a more structured distance-learning model online.

Solana Beach's reopening plans are guided by bringing back as many students as possible as many days as possible, maximizing teaching and learning and providing for the social and emotional needs of students, families and staff.

A recent survey of 1,861 district families showed that 63 percent preferred an

on-site learning model, 22.9 percent a hybrid model and 14 percent selected remote learning as their first choice. The most support for on-site model was at Solana Vista and Skyline Schools, with 71 and 69 percent respectively. Only 55 percent of families at Solana Ranch preferred the on-site model.

The most support for a hybrid model was the 26 percent at Solana Pacific and the highest percent for remote learning was 20 percent at Solana Ranch.

Sixty-two percent of certificated teachers surveyed preferred the on-site model.

Billing writes for the U-T Community Press.

Life Tributes

The San Diego Union-Tribune

Everlasting memories of loved ones

Gloria N Scott

September 17, 1935 - June 4, 2020

SAN DIEGO — Gloria was born Sept 17 1935 in Corcoran, CA to W.R. and Jessie Harbuck. She graduated from Corcoran High School in 1953 from which she learned and proudly carried a lifelong love of Home Economics. She moved to San Diego in 1956 where she worked at Convair Aeronautics for 3 years. In 1957 she met her husband Arthur Scott and in 1960 they married and raised their son Shannon and daughter Shelli Scott, in San Diego where she spent the rest of her life.



great passion was caring for her ever present dogs, as well as being the best friend to every dog, cat and horse that she ever met.

Ever the selfless, dedicated and energetic mother and housekeeper, her home and everything that came from her kitchen were a great source of pride just as it was with her mother Jessie Harbuck. From her husband Art and their vast circle of friends she picked up a love of camping and being in the outdoors which was to continue her entire life, RV camping across the Western US. Her other

To the end she was a force of nature with her happiness, energy and laughter. Gloria will continue to live in the hearts of all that loved her and whose many lives she touched

In lieu of flowers, we encourage you to make a donation to the San Diego Humane Society in Gloria's name

Please sign the Guest Book online obituaries.sandiegouniontribune.com

IN MEMORIAM

Karen Lynn Gibson

November 3, 1968 - July 4, 1987



No fireworks down here this year, so we hope heaven puts on a great show for you!

Love, Bob, Nanc, Trish, Bri, Jon, Kristen & Karen
Please sign Guest Book online @ obituaries.sandiegouniontribune.com

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