

Holtville Tribune



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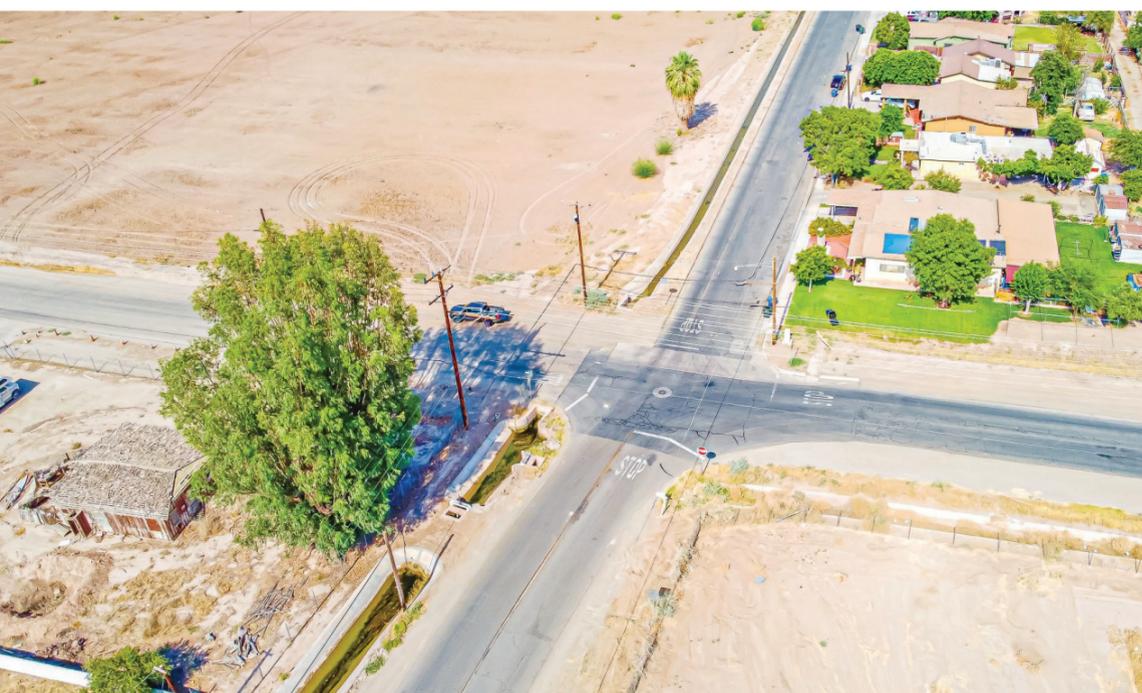
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CITY



The Imperial Irrigation District will cover most of the cost to underground the Pear Canal as it runs along Ninth Street in Holtville, but the city at the moment is short some of the \$216,000 share of cost on the project. It has identified \$121,000 in Senate Bill 1 funds to cover a portion, but more is needed. | CAMILO GARCIA JR. PHOTOS

Ninth St. Sidewalks Still Need Money

City Council Adds Improvement Project to SB 1 List, But Funding Comes Up Short

BY JULIO MORALES
HOLTVILLE TRIBUNE

HOLTVILLE — Though the addition of the Ninth Street sidewalk improvement project to a list of state-funded projects will help ensure work begins on schedule, additional funds will need to be sought to complete certain portions.

That was the news City Manager Nick Wells delivered to the City Council prior to its decision to add the



The Pear Canal at Ninth Street in Holtville will be put underground by the Imperial Irrigation District as part of the first phase of work on the city of Holtville's Ninth Street improvement project, but already a portion of the project — some sidewalks and gutters on Ninth — has to be eliminated for lack of funds.

Ninth Street project to its proposed list of projects that will be funded by the state's Senate Bill 1 Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account.

See NINTH ST., PAGE 6

FIREWORKS SALES A GO FOR CHAMBER

BY JULIO MORALES
HOLTVILLE TRIBUNE

HOLTVILLE — As in years past, the city's single vendor's permit to sell fireworks in the week preceding Independence Day was awarded to Holtville Chamber of Commerce during the City Council's meeting on Monday, June 14.

The city's ordinance regulating the sale of fireworks solely allows one permit for a temporary stand to be awarded on an annual basis. The Holtville chamber has successfully applied for the \$500 permit since 2013, except for in 2016, when no permit was issued.

See FIREWORKS, PAGE 3

COVID-19

Imperial County Says, 'Good Morning, California'

Locals Contemplate, Officials Explain Life After June 15

BY ELIZABETH VARIN
AND MARCIE LANDEROS
FOR THE HOLTVILLE TRIBUNE

IMPERIAL COUNTY — California's mask guidelines have loosened, but not totally disappeared, and that was apparent by looking around at all the covered faces.

The change comes as California's same-day capacity limits, social distancing requirements and most COVID-19 restrictions on businesses ended on Tuesday, June 15.

Yet there are still some restrictions in place, Imperial County Public Health Officer Dr. Stephen Munday said.

If fully vaccinated, those visiting businesses don't necessarily need to wear masks, he said. However, those working still must have coverings.

While throughout the country mask mandates have been met with resistance, indifference, enthusiasm, and all points in between, not everyone is ready to let them go.

"I'm wearing my mask till we are 100 percent over it, and so are my kids and grandkids. You never know who is actually vaccinated, so it's not worth the risk for our little ones," 67-year-old Seelye resident Marc Brooks said on Wednesday morning.

Although Dr. Munday said there is still a requirement that the unvaccinated wear masks in certain

See REOPENING, PAGE 6

REGION

Calexico Cop Kills Man Who Slashed Another Officer Placed on Leave Per Department Policy

BY RICHARD
MONTENEGRO BROWN
HOLTVILLE TRIBUNE

CALEXICO — A 65-year-old homeless man who had been in a fight with another homeless man was shot more than three times and killed by a Calexico police officer at the bus stop at Paulin Avenue and Third Street in downtown Calexico this week.

The shooting death of the unnamed Hispanic man came after he reportedly slashed the other homeless individual shortly after 6 p.m. Monday, June 16, ending a tragic day in which Calexico police responded to three gun-related incidents.

Police fired on the man just minutes after an Imperial County Transit bus pulled up to the curb around 6:11 p.m., according to police.

Contrary to reports, the incident did not happen on the bus, but passengers did witness the fight between the two homeless men that preceded the of-

See SHOOTING, PAGE 3

PART II IN A TWO-PART SERIES

Refuge Becomes Poe Black's Resting Place

Murdered Trans Man Seeks Life Off the Grid. Meanwhile, Friends, Family in Nashville Mourn His Death

BY RICHARD
MONTENEGRO-BROWN
HOLTVILLE TRIBUNE

NILAND — Slab City has been both romanticized and vilified, yet the truth is far more complicated for a spot referred to as "The Last Free Place in America."

Those who have paid any attention to the former military installation owned by the state teachers' union know that the lawless label isn't exactly accurate,



BLACK

as those who live there permanently have their own system of checks and balances to maintain order and keep John Law off their backs.

Yet there is crime. There are drugs. There is a degree of lawlessness. And there have been murders, like that of

Poe Black.

But there's freedom, too, and it's that kind of wide-eyed, aspirational way of life out West for a Southern kid from a troubled home that might have been a siren song of the counterculture.

"We believe that this was his idea," said Lori Brammer of the man that Poe Black traveled to California with. "Because I don't think Tommi even knew anything about this place."

Lori Brammer is speaking of her second cousin, Poe Black, a trans man who was stabbed to death and whose body was dumped into the Coachella Canal the runs alongside Slab City.

Poe's remains were recovered from the canal on May 11 by the Imperial County Sheriff's Office, which some days later identified the trans man by the only legal identity investigators

See POE BLACK, PAGE 7

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LOCAL NEWS

CONTACT EDITOR RICHARD MONTENEGRO BROWN | richardmontenegrobrown@gmail.com

COMMUNITY



Four of the five new members of the American Legion Bradley-Keffer auxiliary Post 138 include (from left) Denise Kilgore, Lorenza Carpenter, Jamie Vioria, and Martha Castro. | PHOTO COURTESY OF KAREN GIBBS

Legion Auxiliary Adds New Members

BY JULIO MORALES
HOLTVILLE TRIBUNE

HOLTVILLE — The American Legion Bradley Keffer auxiliary Post 138 welcomed 17 new members to its organization this year, with four of them being formally welcomed during an initiation ceremony

on June 7.

The members' mission is to support and advocate for veterans and their families, as well as helping educate the youth and the community through auxiliary programs at the schools.

The new members included Denise Kilgore, Lorenza Carpenter, Martha Castro, Jamie Vioria, Lyn Mavila, Zoe Nilson, Georgina Camacho, Patty Snead, Chris Sharp, Adelina Combs, Melanie Cherry, Lucretia Jay Munger, Amanda Baldwin, Tania Collins, Traci Mullins, Melissa Felix and Anthony Felix.

During the initiation ceremony, four candles represent-

ing the four pillars of justice, freedom, democracy, and loyalty that were lit.

Prior to the ceremony, the auxiliary presented its 2020 Girls State Conference delegate, Abigail Garewal, with a scholarship.

Those interested in joining or finding out more about the American Legion auxiliary Post 138 are encouraged to contact unit president Karen Gibbs at 760-791-2311.

The auxiliary meets the first Monday of every month at 6 p.m. at the American Legion Hall, at the northeast corner of Cedar Avenue and Sixth Street. It is not scheduled to meet until September.

LOCAL

Holtville's Meyer Library Reopens to Community

STAFF REPORT

HOLTVILLE — After 15 months of closed doors and limited activity, the Meyer Memorial Library branch of the Imperial County Free Library reopened its doors to limited hours on Tuesday, June 15.

"People need the library," said library assistant Lorenza Carpenter on Tuesday. Although the library isn't quite open for people to come in and hang around, Carpenter said, "people can come in and get whatever they want."

"We're starting very slow," she said, adding she doesn't know when hours of operation will be extended.

For now, the Meyer Memorial Branch is open from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, and for "Grab and Go" doorside service only from 10 a.m. to noon and 2 to 6 p.m. on Fridays.

The library is at 101 E. Sixth St. and it can be reached at 760-356-2385.



The Meyer Memorial Library branch of the Imperial County Free Library system is at 101 E. Sixth St. in Holtville. | CAMILO GARCIA JR. PHOTO

IN BRIEF

JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION TO HONOR AFRICAN AMERICAN VETS

STAFF REPORT

EL CENTRO — The community is invited to attend the annual Juneteenth celebration on Saturday, June 19 at the El Cen-

tro Community Center, where organizers will honor local African American veterans.

The event is being hosted by the Imperial Valley Social Justice Committee, in partnership with the city of El Centro, Vo Medical Center and Vo Neighborhood Medical Clinic and Black Lives Matter Imperial Valley.

A vaccination clinic will be held from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Those who get vaccinated will have an opportunity to win in the Vax for the Win state prizes by signing up at <https://covid19.ca.gov/vax-for-the-win>

Festivities will run from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. For more information contact Sonia Carter at 442-271-5806 or the IVSJC office at 442-231-8550.

POLICE BRIEFS

STAFF REPORT

HOLTVILLE — The following reports were collected from the Imperial County Sheriff's Office call logs for the Holtville substation from June 8 through June 14.

TUESDAY, JUNE 8

2:40 p.m.: A garbage truck driver called deputies to report a vehicle blocking his access to an alley on Walnut Avenue.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9

6:55 a.m.: Police were called to the Blossom Valley Inn elder care facility after a male resident hit two housekeepers and fled on foot toward Fifth Street. The man was wearing a white sweater, dark colored pants, and a bow on his head.

10:45 a.m.: A Fern Avenue resident called deputies to report that he believes he's being set up but he doesn't know who is trying to set him up or why. The man was advised to document the incidents in his journal.

THURSDAY, JUNE 10

12:10 a.m.: A Beale Avenue resident reported that a subject came to his residence and "threatened to get him." The caller advised deputies that he believes the subject is on meth and his concerned that they may return.

Holtville Tribune

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The southeast corner of Paulin Avenue and Third Street was the site of a shooting on Monday evening, June 14, where a local man was killed. Calexico police can be seen combing the crime scene. | CAMILO GARCIA JR. PHOTO

SHOOTING

From page 1
 officer shooting the elder homeless individual, Calexico Police Chief Gonzalo Gerardo said in an interview on Tuesday, June 15.

A press release from the Calexico Police Department issued on Tuesday stated the man who was shot “had a knife in his hand tethered to his wrist” and the officer fired after he refused to comply with commands to drop the weapon, but the release reveals little about what happened prior to the shooting.

There is no mention whether the man advanced on the officer, moved in any threatening manner, or what exactly happened, and witness accounts are unclear.

A call to the Donut Shop, which sits directly to the north of the bus stop on Third and Paulin, on Tuesday afternoon was met with inconsistent third-hand information.

An employee said they didn’t see what happened but heard about it from customers who said there was a fight, one man pulled a knife, police arrived, and shot that person. The employee acknowledges their account might not be accurate.

A post to this newspaper’s Facebook page, which was flagged for profanity, so it is not visible to the public, claimed a first-hand account of the incident, stating a younger man was beating up the older man, who then took out his knife and began to defend himself.

What makes that account confusing is, the alleged witness reports that he saw another man separate the two men before the shooting occurred. Again, even this account does not really say what happens from that point to the point where the officer fires.

“No tazer (sic), no other means. (Was the) old bearded man was such a threat. He was getting his a** kicked by the young guy,” the post states.

All Calexico police officers at the scene were wearing their department-issued body cameras, according to the press release, with their “cameras on.”

It’s unclear this early into the investigation when a clearer picture of what happened will emerge.

The department has 60 days to release the body-camera footage by law, but to the extent it could hinder an investigation, an extension can be sought, Gerardo said on Wednesday, June 16. That extension could last up to 180 days.

Gerardo clarified on Tuesday that the older man who was shot had slashed the forehead of the other individual in the fight, which likely could account for the blood at the scene, which appears to be spread over a large area, including near the benches and by a small retaining wall separating the stop from the larger parking lot.

It’s unknown how many times the officer fired on the elder man, but three shell casings were seen in a photograph this newspaper took the night of the shooting. Chief Gerardo confirmed there were more than three shots fired but he would not say how many.

Only one officer was involved in the shooting — one of two who made up the initial response to the

stabbing call, Gerardo said — and he has been placed on “administrative leave per Calexico Police Department policy and protocol,” according to the department’s press statement.

The elder man was alive at the scene and Calexico first-responders did render aid before transporting him to the El Centro Regional Medical Center by ambulance, where he would later die from his injuries.

Gerardo was at the hospital briefly Monday evening; his arrival back to the shooting scene from El Centro Regional could be heard over the radio scanner.

Gerardo was asked about the man who was killed, adding that while he did have a Calexico residence, there was apparent difficulty locating his next of kin due to his homelessness.

Imperial County sheriff’s officials still have not be able to reach the family of the deceased man as of Wednesday afternoon. Chief Deputy Robert Benavidez said even though the man did have a phone on him, there were no contacts in the phone that have aided the investigation.

Police do have an identity but releasing a name will not be done until family is informed first.

An autopsy is also pending and is not scheduled until Tuesday, June 22, Benavidez said, although he said efforts are being made to try to get the autopsy done this week with the assistance of the contract medical examiners Imperial County works with.

The shooting is being investigated by both the Calexico Police Department and the Imperial County Sheriff’s Office, which Gerardo called in to assist Monday evening. The Sheriff’s Office crime scene investigators were brought in to process evidence and secure the scene.

“Under Sheriff Fred Miramontes, his investigators, and the special investigations unit arrived, and the scene was turned over to them. The Imperial County Sheriff’s Office is conducting the criminal investigation portion of this incident, and the Calexico Police Department is leading the internal investigation. Further information will be provided as it becomes available,” according to the Police Department release.

Monday was a troubling day overall for the department, Gerardo said, but the type of day that he fears will be happening with more frequency due to the existing brazenness of suspected criminals, lax sentencing laws and the state’s no bail law.

While the department has unfortunately grown accustomed to the repeat property crime, violent incidents appear on the uptick, too, Gerardo explained.

Three gun-related incidents occurred, starting Monday morning, when police arrested a transient in the 200 block of West Cole Road who police said first threatened a property owner in the area with a loaded gun but then briefly waved that gun at police when they arrived on scene.

CONTINUE READING THIS STORY AT: HOLTVILLETRIBUNE.COM



A fireworks booth in Holtville sits at the corner of Fifth Street and Holt Avenue in summer 2020. | HOLTVILLE TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

FIREWORKS

From page 1

“The city reached out the first couple of years to see if anyone else wanted to do it and nobody else put their hand up,” City Manager Nick Wells said.

Were the city ever to receive more than one permit application, it would resort to a lottery

system to select the permit recipient, City Council member Richard Layton said.

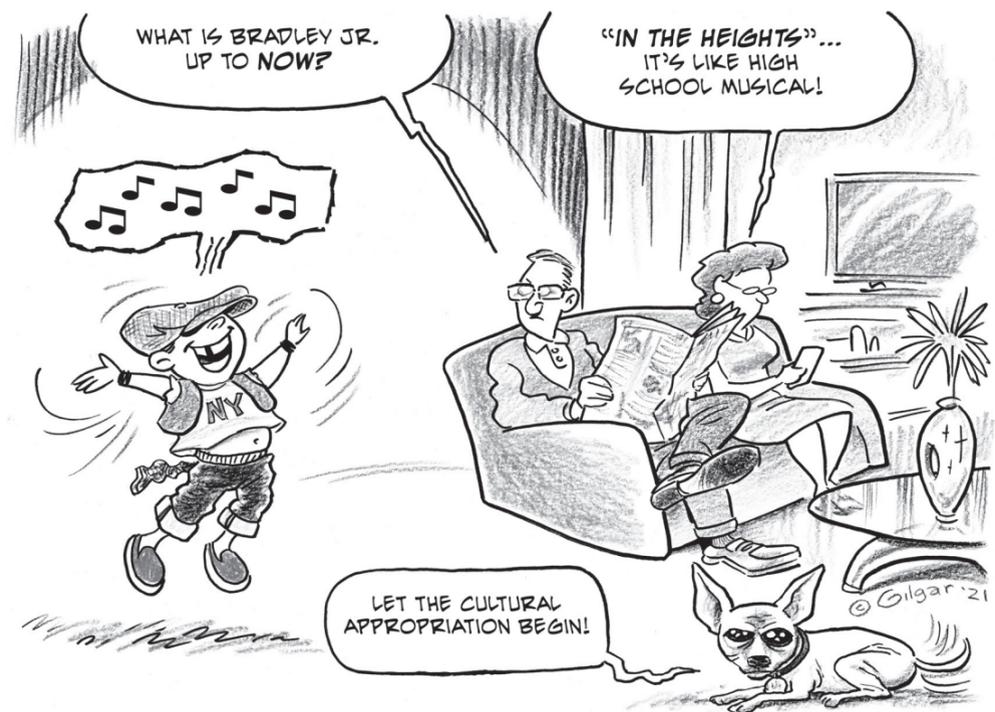
The city can also expand the number of firework vendor permits but would need to go through state permitting requirements, the resolution’s staff report stated.

The sale of fireworks is estimated to bring in about \$15,000 in proceeds, which the chamber

splits with the fireworks distributor, Wells said.

In other news at the City Council meeting, the council was presented with information regarding the status of its general fund budget. Similar discussions are expected to take place at upcoming council meetings in preparation of the adoption of the fiscal year 2021-22 budget, which starts July 1.

GILGAR



‘Hamilton’ Moves to the ‘Hood’?

GILGAR | JUNE 15, 2021

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Week of June 21

Mental Health During a Pandemic and Emerging From a Pandemic

Bernardo Ng, M.D., Sun Valley Research Center, INC.

We are still experiencing a global pandemic event caused by a communicable novel (new) virus, COVID 19. This virus has already demonstrated its effects on our daily lives, our routines, and even our mental health. One of the best coping tools for anxiety is information discernment, gathering information, verifying the accuracy of the information, and then specific planning to manage the information is an effective anxiety reduction strategy. We have invited Sun Valley Research Center, Dr. Ng to discuss all things COVID 19, including the adaptations and adjustments from pandemic life to post pandemic life. What have we learned from the past year? How can we bring that knowledge to bear for a better post pandemic life and community.

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Semana del 21 de junio

Salud Mental Durante una Pandemia y Emergiendo de Una Pandemia

Bernardo Ng, M.D., Sun Valley Research Center, INC.

Todavía estamos experimentando un evento de pandemia global causado por un nuevo virus transmisible, COVID 19. Este virus ya ha demostrado sus efectos en nuestra vida diaria, nuestras rutinas e incluso nuestra salud mental. Una de las mejores herramientas para hacer frente a la ansiedad es el discernimiento de la información, la recopilación información, la verifica el n de la precisión de la información y luego la planificación específica para administrar la información es una estrategia eficaz d e reducción de la ansiedad. Hemos invitado a Sun Valley Research Center, al Dr. Ng, para discutir todo lo relacionado con el COVID 19, incluidas las adaptaciones y ajustes de la vida pandémica a la vida pos pandémica. ¿Qué hemos aprendido del año pasado? ¿Cómo podemos aplicar ese conocimiento para mejorar la vida y la comunidad después de una pandemia?

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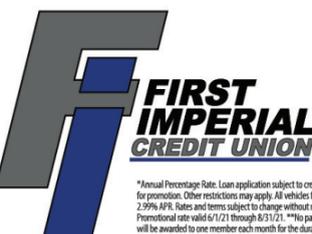
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SPORTS

TRACK & FIELD

Jimenez Wins Title

Distance Runner is First in School's History to Take CIF Crown

BY MURRAY ANDERSON
HOLTVILLE TRIBUNE

VALLEY CENTER — For the first time in school history, Holtville High School has a CIF-San Diego Section track champion.

Senior Alan Jimenez earned the honor by winning the 800-meter race at Valley Center High School here on Saturday, June 12, in the CIF-SDS Division III Track & Field Championships.

Jimenez almost pulled off a double-gold performance but came up two seconds short in the 1,600-meter race, falling to Sage Creek of Carlsbad's Bryce Gilmore.

"It was a bittersweet feeling. Once I finished the 1,600, I just had to focus on the 800," said the 18-year-old Jimenez. "I went back to the tent and just tried to visualize what I had to do to win the 800."

Holtville coach Gerardo Lara thinks the narrow loss in 1,600 motivated the senior to go all out in the 800.

"The 1,600 came down to a kick and normally Alan rises to the occasion but he just didn't rise quite enough in this one, but I think it helped get him more focused and ready for the 800," Lara said.

In the 800, Jimenez wasn't going to be denied again, sprinting ahead of the pack and delivering the fastest split time of his running career with a 54-second first lap.

"My mentality going in was to run as if my life depended on it," Jimenez said. "So the gun goes off and I make my way to the front and then begin to accelerate little by little. That last 200 meters I was just focused on the finish line."

With his winning time of 1:56 in the 800-meters, Jimenez has qualified for the San Diego Champions Meet scheduled for Saturday, June 19, at University City High in San Diego. The Championships meet brings only the top nine finishers from Divisions I, II and III together to crown a San Diego Section champion.

Jimenez's winning time in the 800 qualified him fourth among all 800-meter runners in the section, however the difference in time between the top six runners is less than two seconds, according to Lara.

"There are a lot of very talented runners in the event, it's going to be something to see," Lara said.



JIMENEZ



Holtville High School senior Alan Jimenez won the 800-meter race at the CIF-San Diego Section Division III Track and Field Championships at Valley Center High on Saturday to become the first-ever track athlete from Holtville to win a section title. | CAMILO GARCIA JR. PHOTO

Jimenez will also be competing in the 1,600-meter race at the Championships meet on Saturday, June 19, qualifying with the ninth best time among all section competitors. His time of 4:20 is only four seconds off the top time in the section of 4:16.

Holtville freshman Lillian Strahm competed in the 3,200-meter race at the Division III meet and delivered a personal record of 12:48, shattering her previous best time by 30 seconds.

"Lilly came into the finals ranked 15th and she finished 11th so she upset some people at the event and she's only a freshman," Lara said. "I was expecting her to PR because of all the competition, but not PR by 30 seconds."

Holtville senior Cierra Dammarell finished seventh in the shot put and wasn't able to put up a PR at the championship meet.

BASEBALL

Vikings Fall in D-IV Semifinals

7-6 Loss Eliminates Holtville from Playoffs

BY MURRAY ANDERSON
HOLTVILLE TRIBUNE

SANTEE — Holtville High's baseball team battled back to win an elimination game but couldn't do the same in the semifinals, falling to top-seeded West Hills High of Santee, 7-6, in the CIF-San Diego Section Division IV playoffs here on Tuesday, June 15.

The fifth-seeded Vikings rallied to beat Morse High of San Diego, 12-10, in an elimination game on Saturday, June 12, and reach the semifinals, but came up just short against West Hills. Holtville had previously lost 18-0 to West Hills on Friday, June 11, to be sent into the elimination game against Morse.

In the semifinal game on Tuesday, West Hills jumped out to a 6-0 lead after two innings, but the Vikings plated four runs in the third inning to draw close at 6-4. The Wolf Pack added a run in the bottom of the fourth to take a 7-4 lead but Holtville would rally for two runs in the sixth to make it 7-6 with two runners on base and one out.

The Vikings (15-11 overall) would fail to get the big hit to tie the game in the sixth and went quietly in the final inning.

Senior Erik Garcia had a triple and three RBIs and freshman Bryce Buscaglia had a hit and two RBIs for the Vikings. Junior J.R. Garewal pitched a complete game for Holtville, allowing seven runs, just one earned run, walking one and striking out two.

See BASEBALL, PAGE 8



Holtville High School junior J.R. Garewal crosses home plate during the Vikings' 11-4 win over San Diego in the CIF-San Diego Section Division IV baseball play-in round on Tuesday, June 8, in Holtville. | CATHI PHILLIPS LARIOS PHOTO

SOFTBALL

Vikings in Div. IV Title Game Saturday

Semifinal Forfeit Sends Holtville to Final

BY MURRAY ANDERSON
HOLTVILLE TRIBUNE

HOLTVILLE — The Holtville High School softball team has moved into the CIF-San Diego Section Division IV semifinals without much resistance, winning its two games by a combined 23-1 score.

The second-seeded Vikings (18-4 overall) took care of seventh-seeded Classical Academy of Escondido, 10-0, on Wednesday, June 9, then followed that with a 13-1 win over third-ranked La Jolla on Thursday, June 10.

Sixth-seeded San Dieguito Academy of Encinitas beat Classical Academy in an elimination game on Friday, June 11 and will now face La Jolla in another elimination game on Tuesday, June 15.

The winner of the San Dieguito-La Jolla contest will travel to Holtville for a Thursday, June 17, matchup tentatively set for 7 p.m. If the Vikings win they will advance to the Division IV championship game which is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, June 19, at Helix High School in San Diego.

If Holtville loses on Thursday, June 17, the two teams will square off again in Holtville on Friday, June 18, with the winner of that game advancing to the championship contest.

See SOFTBALL, PAGE 8



Holtville High School sophomore Kamryn Walker approaches third base and is heading home during the Vikings' 10-0 victory over Classical Academy of Escondido in the CIF-San Diego Section Division IV playoffs in Holtville on Wednesday, June 9. | CATHI PHILLIPS LARIOS PHOTO

SPORTS BRIEFS

Youth Football, Cheer Signups Begin

STAFF REPORT

The Holtville American Youth Football organization is holding football and cheer registration from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday, June 17, and also from 6-8 p.m. Thursday, June 24, at Cornerstone Community Church Fellowship Hall.

Registration is being accepted for players ages 5-7 for flag football, ages 8-14 for tackle football and for cheerleaders ages 5-14.

The cost to register is \$125 for flag football, \$250 for tackle football and \$300 for cheerleaders. A \$50 non-refundable deposit is due at registration. Parents need to bring a birth certificate and most recent report card for the child they are registering.

Those interested can call 442-322-4046.

VOLLEYBALL CAMP SET FOR JUNE 28

The Holtville High School volleyball team is hosting its

2021 Summer Volleyball Camp for players ages 5-14 beginning at 8:30 a.m. June 28 in the high school gym.

The camp is scheduled to run from 9 a.m. to noon June 28-30.

Space is limited to the first 50 participants to register and the cost is \$50 per camper with each additional sibling from the same family \$40.

Each camper will receive a camp t-shirt and a drink and snack each day. A snack bar will be available if campers would like to purchase additional snacks or drinks.

The camp is designed to teach the children the fundamentals of volleyball, such as passing, setting, hitting, serving and blocking and is open to all skill levels. The camp is supervised by Holtville High volleyball coaches, alumni and current players.

Those interested can call Chelsey Strahm, Holtville High volleyball coach, at 760-562-9485.

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REOPENING

From page 1

situations, there is a trust factor involved and not all are sure how that will play out.

“I went shopping yesterday and I was so relieved to see people mostly still wearing masks,” said Jean Glass, 38, of Holtville. “I have kids I can’t get vaccinated yet, so it’s a little nerve wracking to have to trust that people are honest on whether they were vaccinated or not.”

That has been a question throughout the run-up to Tuesday. It was no secret that some masking would be “required” of the public and the business sector, but how will that be enforced.

According to state Division of Occupational Safety and Health’s emergency temporary standards, in an employment setting, everyone has to wear masks and practice social distancing regardless of vaccination status, Munday said. Those restrictions were set to be discussed at a meeting Thursday, June 17, to see whether they will be loosened.

“It’s a little bit confusing now as they haven’t moved at the same pace, but we’re going to continue to share messaging and guidance to help people understand what is required and what the recommendations are,” he said. “And things are going to be a little bit different for businesses instead of just the regular public.”

That’s easy for employees in a workplace setting, but how will members of the public be held to account when entering those businesses?

Enforcement of regulations is going to be up to the individual businesses, according to Imperial County Public Health Director Janette Angulo.

Gyms are a good example of this, Angulo said during an interview on Wednesday morning, June 16.

“A gym, the business itself, is subject to CalOSHA and (California Department of Public Health) guidance. So CDPH guidance says ... there’s a couple of different ways that you can verify whether or not an individual has been vaccinated,” Angulo said. There’s a process “where the individual self attests, so that you’re in compliance prior to entry, or require proof of vaccination. ...”

The central point is, the onus of responsibility is on the business, and how they choose to operate is based on a set of options prescribed by the state.

In some places, like healthcare settings, long-term care facilities, public transit and correctional facilities, people are still required to wear masks regardless of vaccination status, Dr. Munday said. However, he added that fully vaccinated individuals will no longer be required to wear masks in crowd settings, indoors or outside, to align



An unidentified man was still wearing his mask as he walked through a mostly empty Imperial Valley Mall in El Centro on Wednesday morning, June 16. Although California’s mask mandates and many other COVID-related restrictions were ended on Tuesday, June 15, there are still some regulations in place.

By CAMILO GARCIA JR. PHOTO

more with U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations.

People are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their final COVID-19 vaccination. For Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, it’s after the second dose, and for Johnson & Johnson, it’s after their single dose.

For those not vaccinated, masks will still be required in most indoor settings outside one’s home and in outdoor settings when someone cannot keep six feet distance from others.

Masks are required for all at “mega events” — those drawing crowds of more than 5,000 people, Munday said.

Gov. Gavin Newsom rescinded the state’s stay-at-home order, ended capacity restrictions, and stopped the tier system for counties this week as well.

“Good morning, California,” Newsom said in a Tuesday tweet. “It’s reopening day. We’ve administered over 40 million vaccines. Now ... No more social distancing. No more capacity limits. No more colors or county tiers. And if you’re vaccinated — no more masks. It’s a good day.”

Tuesday’s changes were not exclusive to the business sector or gatherings. Public health reporting saw changes as well.

Tracking of COVID-19 cases will look different, Angulo said. The last update to the state’s metrics dashboard was June 15, and the local Imperial County Public Health Department dashboard will start displaying case and positivity rates that are now updated weekly.

Angulo explained that the state doing away with the tiered system makes it unnecessary to report adjusted data. What you see is all straight from the county

numbers now.

According to the most recent data for May 30 through June 5, new cases per day per 100,000 people in Imperial County came in at 3.3, according to Angulo’s presentation to the Imperial County Board of Supervisors on June 15. The positivity rate was 2.4 percent.

The county has also retired its vaccination dashboard, instead opting to utilize the state’s vaccination dashboard, she said. The state has an interactive map with vaccinations by zip code. A total of 68.1 percent of Imperial County residents age 12 and older have at least one dose of the vaccine, and 52.1 percent are fully vaccinated. By zip code, Calexico and Ocotillo are both above 70 percent fully vaccinated.

Nearly all county of Imperial government offices reopened for limited walk-up service starting on Tuesday. While several county offices have remained open during the pandemic, the expanded reopening is due to the rapid decrease of COVID-19 cases and restrictions lifted throughout the state, according to a press release from the county.

Safety protocols will be required when visiting and all visitors, including those who are fully vaccinated, will be required to wear masks inside county facilities. Offices will initially reopen with limited capacity and each department will maintain its own schedule.

These plans are subject to change depending on state guidelines and local health orders. The county will do its best to continue to keep the public informed of any changes.

It’s going to be a mix of attitudes moving

forward, because Public Health officials acknowledge that some people in this country and in the Valley were very resistant of any restrictions.

Likewise, due to how hard-hit Imperial County was by COVID-19, there is a certain amount of trepidation moving forward. Through the 15 months of the pandemic, some 738 people in Imperial County have died.

“No person can be prevented from wearing a mask as a condition of participating in anything in any activity, any entry into business, etc. Bottom line is, we are still tracking cases, there’s still transmission. The virus is still here with us, and we are still encouraging our community to take all those needed prevention measures, and to not let their guard down,” Angulo said on Wednesday.

“We are vigilant, we still have all those same programs in place as far as the Public Health Department. So, we still have epidemiology running, we still have our education, our communication team going,” she said. “We still continue to prepare and plan for anything that may be coming down the line.”

And for some in the private sector, they, too, understand that the public might need an easy touch.

“While at work, I’m in and out of people’s houses and will continue to wear a mask,” said Daniel Jones, owner of Jones Brothers Glass Co. in El Centro. “You never know what you’re getting into, or if the person you had contact with cares as much as you do about disinfecting and washing hands.”

Richard Montenegro Brown contributed reporting to this story.

NINTH ST.

From page 1

Nearly \$121,000 from the SB 1 Road Maintenance Rehabilitation

Account is available for the city’s use during fiscal year 2021-22.

The first phase of the Ninth Street project involves the un-

dergrounding of the adjacent Pear Canal, which runs parallel to the north side of the street, at a cost of about \$865,000, the resolution’s backup documents

stated.

Future plans call for the widening and resurfacing of Ninth Street between Olive Avenue and Melon Road, as well as the installation of a curb, gutter and sidewalk, the resolution stated.

“Right away, we’re not going to be able to do the curb, gutter and sidewalk,” City Manager Nick Wells told the council.

As part of a previously established agreement, 75 percent of the canal’s undergrounding expense, or about \$648,000, will be covered by the Imperial Irrigation District, with the city picking up the remaining 25 percent, or about \$216,000.

In response to a question posed by council member Murray Anderson, Wells said that the city has the option to use some of the nearly \$121,000 in SB 1 funds to help offset its \$216,000 expenditure on the canal’s undergrounding, since the city will be doing the project’s road improvement design work.

Wells indicated the city’s resolution accepting the SB 1 funds provides the city with the discretion to redirect the allocated SB 1 funds to additional projects that meet SB 1 requirements.

He also stated that the city will likely have to apply for additional federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant funds to fund the installation of a curb, gutter and sidewalk on the north side of Ninth Street between Olive and Melon.

The road improvement project is expected to be completed in August 2022, the resolution stated.

A resident engineering and construction management services contract for the \$338,000 Cedar Avenue sidewalk improvement project was also approved by the City Council on Monday,

June 14.

The contract, not to exceed \$55,000 was awarded to Imperial-based Dynamic Consulting, which had done some of the project’s preliminary work a few years back.

“We felt like they have a little more knowledge of the project specifics,” Wells told the council.

A second contract bid was submitted by Yuma-based Nicklaus Engineering.

Though the winning bid was greater than the 10 percent that the state Department of Transportation has set as the standard maximum that can be awarded for a project’s resident engineering and construction management contract, Wells told the council that the city has not received any similar bids that fell below the 10 percent threshold in the past five years.

“It really is tough when you’re saddled with a number that is 10 percent and nobody will adhere to that,” Wells said.

The Cedar Avenue project will improve the east side of the roadway between Fourth and Fifth streets, installing curb, gutter, sidewalk, driveways, and curb ramps, the resolution’s staff report stated.

The project is being funded by a \$193,000 grant from CMAQ that requires an 11.4 percent match by the city, or about \$23,000. An additional \$60,000 is being provided by the State-Local Partnership program, which requires a dollar-for-dollar match by the city, the staff report stated.

Both the CMAQ and SLPP grants are administered by Caltrans. The city will utilize Local Transportation Authority funds to match grant requirements and help supplement the cost of the project, the resolution’s staff report stated.



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POE BLACK

From page 1

had, Tommi-Deane Jackson of Nashville, Tenn., who was born female.

Poe's former high school friend who agreed to speak to this newspaper on the condition her name not be used said that it was likely Brammer had no idea what compelled Poe Black. And from way back, Poe, when he was known as Oliver in Nashville, was an artsy youth who painted and had an Instagram account for his work as well as an online store to sell his paintings.

"Poe went to an arts-based high school and was a very talented visual artist. He loved to paint and draw, and he also liked restoring things that he found at thrift stores," his friend wrote.

"He went to the Slabs because he had always wanted to go out West, and he had a sort of idealized image in his head of the Slabs because he had always wanted to live off-grid. He just wanted to feel freedom," she wrote.

Part of Poe's activism could have precipitated the move as well, she said. Shortly before he left Nashville, he had more fully immersed himself in more progressive causes and had taken a larger step forward in his transition, having elective "top" surgery, or the removal of his breasts, before leaving Tennessee.

"He was a strong activist, he was very involved in multiple Black Lives Matter protests and shed blood, sweat, and tears for the cause (in the most literal sense, this happened right before my eyes)," she wrote in the email. "He was also very involved in LGBTQ activism. When he began staying out in the Slabs, he had the goal of trying to help increase access to resources/supplies for trans people living in the Slabs."

There does appear to be a substantial "queer, trans and non-binary" community that has banded together in an area known as Flamingo Camp, which was where Poe Black was believed to have stayed. And a lot of the social life in the LGBTQ community there seemed to revolve around a place called the Handlebar, described as a tavern of sorts by Poe in a YouTube video but also described by others as "another queer friendly camp and community space."

This community within a community is similar to Slab City in the respect that it is both romantic and rough and tumble. At once described as a loving, inclusive place for those within the LGBTQ world, Poe himself reveals in a travelogue interview that it is also a place that is violent and a bit scary.

Rosa Diaz of the IV LGBT Resource Center has met some of the individuals who have dropped in at the center for resources or to take part in support groups. Although, she said she did not know of Poe Black or his story other than what the Sheriff's Office had made public.

Life Back in Nashville
NASHVILLE — Brammer sent along some photos of a candlelight vigil held for Poe at the base of a huge tree in Nashville's Cen-



The artists' enclave known as East Jesus, which is at the north edge of Slab City a few hundred yards west of the Coachella Canal is shown. The body of transgender male stabbing victim, Poe Black, was found about 1.1 miles north of that area around Siphon 9 of the canal. | CAMILO GARCIA JR. PHOTO



A candlelight vigil at the base of a tree in Nashville's Centennial Park attended by family and friends of 21-year-old Poe Delwyn Black was held on May 27. | PHOTO COURTESY OF LORI BRAMMER

ennial Park on May 27, not far from the Parthenon that is the focal point of the public space.

She attended the vigil at the invitation of Poe's former best friend, who organized the event.

"It was very nice. And they did a wonderful job setting up and making things so pretty ... It was really nice," Brammer said. "By the time I got there, there was still at least 10 people there. And I heard that there were even more there before I arrived. So, it was a very good time."

Brammer acknowledged that she was not a big part of Poe's life as a man, but it doesn't bother her. She has no issue with it, just no firm connection to it. Whether it's the little girl she used to dress up in ribbons despite them being about 20 years apart in age, or the slight trans man with the close-cropped hair, love is love.

"I don't care about that. That's neither here nor there," Brammer said. "I just didn't meet her (as that person). I didn't meet the person that people say that she became."

Poe's best friend said he seemed at peace the last time they spoke in mid-April. It was a good conversation, and she said Poe tried to call her a few weeks later, but they missed each other. He would have presumably been killed over the course of the next few days.

"We had a conversation about what was going on in our lives, and he seemed to be having a good time. He had plans. May

1st, he called me, and I missed the call. However, he called two other people and told both of them that he was getting ready to go home," she emailed. "I assume that is what he had wanted to tell me. I couldn't get him to answer me back after that."

Poe did not have an easy life, his friend said, adding that Poe's relationship with his immediate family was complicated and filled with tragedy. Brammer was less kind about how she put it, regularly referring to Poe's mom as abusive, and mentally unstable.

Both agreed that the present life situation of Poe Black's mother does not allow her to advocate on her son's behalf.

Some of the familial strife was alluded to in postings on Poe's social media pages from June 2020.

Around the same time he was ready to get his elective top surgery, he also told people he had left his home to flee abusive family members.

Said Poe's friend: "There was a variety of reasons he left Nashville. His relationship with his family was fairly bad, but his relationship with his mom had actually begun to improve. He told me this firsthand in November, and I also heard it recently from his mother. He had a traumatic upbringing and he only wanted to heal from that."

The friend has been the support system for Poe's mom through this, Brammer said. One of Poe's older brothers, Aubrey, was the victim of a murder in 2011, and Poe's father was killed in a car accident in 1999, before Poe was born. Brammer said Poe's surviving brother is addicted to drugs.

Poe consistently posted about the chronic pain he lived with and about his learning disabilities. The friend was asked about that as well.

"He told me he was recently diagnosed as autistic, and we had both had many conversations about being neuro-divergent," she wrote, referring to the term that is sometimes a catch-all for Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, and other cognitive learning disabilities. "There was suspicion that he had Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, and he used to miss lots of school

towards the end of his time in high school due to chronic pain. Besides this, we don't know why else it was happening to him."

Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome is a condition that affects the body's connective tissue, and Poe on several occasions posted about suffering from chronic dislocations of the hips.

For the high school friend, she said Poe's death has hit her hard.

"We were best friends for years; he told me so much about his life and he was so caring and loving for me. He helped me to be a better person, because he never judged me when I messed up," she said. "He was also really generous and thoughtful. I miss him terribly. His mother is very distraught along with his only living brother. ... He also has several extended family members who miss him terribly."

Brammer's sadness is still like a raw nerve; for her, it's anger, and it needs an outlet. She is hoping to find that at the vigil for Marilyn Cazares, and by making her own trip to the Slabs.

"Tommi was a young, beautiful soul. And he was taken in a terrible way, in such a way that should never happen to anyone's child. And there should be justice, and it should be swift," she said. "This should never happen to anyone, especially someone so young, such a beautiful soul that had her whole life ahead of her."

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Holtville, CA 92250

Full Name of Registrant:
Rita C Munoz De Torrez
821 Holt Ave.
Holtville, CA 92250
This business is conducted by:
An Individual Registrant commenced to transact business under the Fictitious Business Name(s) listed above on:
May 7, 2021.
I, Declare that all of the infor-

mation in this statement is true and correct.

Signature: Rita C Munoz De Torrez, Owner The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this State or a Fictitious Business Name in Violation of the Rights of another under Federal, State or Common Law.

Filed with the Imperial County Clerk on: May 10, 2021.

A new statement must be filed prior to the expiration date. This statement expires on: May 09, 2026.

Chuck Storey/County Clerk-Recorder Victoria Camarillo, Deputy Clerk Legal 9040

Publish: May 27, June 3, 10, 17, 2021

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Holtville High School senior first baseman Emily Zarate makes the out at first during the Vikings' 10-0 win over Classical Academy of Escondido on Wednesday, June 9. The Vikings will host a CIF-San Diego Section Division IV semifinal game on Thursday, June 17. | CATHI PHILLIPS LARIOS PHOTO

SOFTBALL

From page 5

In their first playoff game on Wednesday, June 9, sophomore Kalli Strahm got the complete-game shutout victory on the mound. She got plenty of offensive support, especially from sophomores Kamryn Walker and Sofie Irungaray.

Walker had two hits, including a triple and home run, drove in four runs and scored once. Irungaray delivered a bases-loaded double for three RBIs. Freshman Kaitlyn Havens had three hits and scored twice and Strahm had two hits and scored three runs to help her own cause.

Against La Jolla on Thursday, June 10, the Holtville offense didn't slow down, collecting 13 runs on 13 hits behind the pitch-

ing of senior Zamara Gutierrez. Sophomore Demi Johnston had three hits, scored three times and drove in a run to pace the Vikings. Walker, Strahm and Gutierrez all had two hits with Walker scoring three runs and driving in two as Strahm finished with two RBIs and one run scored.

IVL champion Brawley Union High is still alive in the Division I playoffs and will host an elimination game at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 15, against seventh-seeded Ramona. If the sixth-seeded Wildcats win they will move into the semifinals against second-ranked San Marcos, set for 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 16.

San Marcos edged Brawley, 6-2, in a winner's bracket contest on Thursday, June 10, to push the Wildcats into the elimination bracket.

BASEBALL

From page 5

In the elimination game against Morse on Saturday, June 12, the Vikings rallied from an 8-6 deficit to pull out a 12-10 win.

It was a six-run, bottom of the fifth inning that propelled Holtville past the ninth-seeded Tigers. Morse rallied from a 6-0 deficit to take an 8-6 lead before the Vikings batted 11 people and plated six runs in the fifth.

Junior Rafa Espinoza started the rally with a single, followed by a walk to freshman John Chambers. Sophomore Nick Pacheco bunted the runners to second and third to set up a big two-RBI triple from Buscaglia to tie the game 8-8.

Junior Donovan Johnston got an RBI fielder's choice in the inning, followed by an RBI-double from senior Norbert Irungaray and a two-RBI single from Garewal.

"Energy and emotion, that's what these guys have to play with every inning of every game," said Benny Carter, Holtville's third-year head coach. "We started well but then we let Morse dictate the energy level over the next few innings."

Started well indeed, as Johnston led off the game with a bunt single, followed by Garcia getting aboard by hit-batter. Then Irungaray flexed his muscle with a three-run homer over the right-field fence for a quick 3-0 advantage.

The Vikings would tack on three more runs in the inning to build a 6-0 lead before the Tigers roared back with eight unanswered runs over the next four innings to take an 8-6 advantage.

Senior Arturo Lazos started on the mound for Holtville but didn't make it out of the third inning before Carter went with sophomore Raul Sierra. Lazos uses mostly off-speed pitches to keep the opposition off balance, while Sierra features a strong fastball and



Holtville High School sophomore Raul Sierra is safe at first during the Vikings' CIF-San Diego Section Division IV play-in game against San Diego High School on Tuesday, June 8, in Holtville. The Vikings won the game 11-4 and are now in the semifinals against West Hills of Santee. | CATHI PHILLIPS LARIOS PHOTO

good off-speed stuff.

"With it being an elimination game, the plan all along was to go with Turi (Lazos) for a few innings and then change things up with Raul (Sierra) and his mix of pitches," Carter said.

Sierra was able to work out of jams in the sixth and seventh innings without much damage, including a bases-loaded situation with one out in the last inning. He struck out the first batter he faced with the bases loaded, then gave up an RBI single before getting the final out to ground out to shortstop.

"I was just trying to do my job and get outs," Sierra said. "My off-speed stuff wasn't working that well so I was sticking with mostly fastball. When that final out was hit to Erik (shortstop) I got a little excited."

After defeating 12th-seeded San Diego High, 11-4, in a play-in game on Tuesday, June 8, the Vikings went to fourth-seeded Mission Bay on Wednesday, June 9, and won 8-2 to move into the first showdown with West Hills on Friday, June 11.

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