

CALIFORNIA

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CHRISTINA HOUSE Los Angeles Times
AQUILINA SORIANO VERSOZA has seen a steady decline in immigrant workers coming to California.

Immigration shortfalls help fuel state's population drop

Federal delays in processing migration requests could lead to a workforce 'crisis.'

BY SARAH PARVINI

When people call Aquilina Soriano Versoza looking for at-home caretakers to hire, she often has to tell them she doesn't have any available workers to refer.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began two years ago, she's seen a steady drop in the number of immigrant workers migrating to California to fill those jobs, including Filipino immigrants, who constitute much of the caretaker industry. Filipinos are over-represented among workers in a variety of healthcare occupations in the United States, studies show.

[See **Immigration**, B10]



JOSE LUIS MAGANA Associated Press
IMMIGRANT RIGHTS supporters march on Capitol Hill in Washington last year to demand citizenship for essential workers.

Timely wisdom on raising kids amid racism

After Buffalo shooting, new Ibram X. Kendi book is especially crucial

ANITA CHABRIA

When an advance copy of Ibram X. Kendi's new book, "How to Raise an Antiracist," arrived in my mailbox, the massacre in Buffalo hadn't yet happened.

Nor had the shooting in Laguna Woods, where another gun-toting man is accused of killing out of hatred.

So much sorrow in a single weekend. Few of us were shocked, but for me, the mother of two mixed-race girls, the Buffalo shooting and Kendi's book collided in a painful and deeply personal way I didn't expect.

The 18-year-old accused of the carnage in New York left behind a disjointed and childish manifesto that singles out not only Black people, but mixed-race marriages — and the children of them — as something to be eliminated.

In his worldview, my children deserve to die. I've seen my kids deal with racism before, and conversations about race are common in our house. But to read those words, and know someone who had never met my kids could hate them so much simply for *what* they are, not even who they are, scared me — in the way Black and brown parents in America have long been terrified at the vulnerability of their children.

That kind of racism is an ugly reality, but one that also took on new importance for Kendi in 2017, when his 1-year-old daughter, Imani, developed an attachment to a blue-eyed, blond-haired doll, and later when she began preschool. He began to think about what it would take to help her grow up without the pervasive "smog" of white supremacy surrounding her.

How would he speak with her about race and racism? How would she experience race as a toddler, a teen and a young woman? How are our kids affected by the structures of racism, when so often we barely see them ourselves, or at least, barely acknowledge them?

How could he and his wife, Sadiqa, a pediatrician, protect this beloved child, and surround her with promise and strength? Kendi is a humanities professor at Boston University, founding director of the BU Center for Antiracist Research, and the author of eight books — five for adults and three for children — including "Stamped From the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America," winner of the National Book Award for nonfiction in 2016, as well as the 2019 bestseller "How to Be an Antiracist."

"How to Raise an Antiracist," which comes out June 14, is aimed at teachers, caregivers and parents like me who don't just want to do better, but feel an urgency to find ways to ensure our children have the armor and insight to

[See **Chabria**, B4]



GARY CORONADO Los Angeles Times
THE REV. STEPHEN "Cue" Jn-Marie of skid row's Church Without Walls is headed to Buffalo, N.Y., to visit with local activists and attend a vigil.

Buffalo attack ignites safety worries for Black Angelenos

BY MARISSA EVANS

The Rev. Stephen "Cue" Jn-Marie could feel the heaviness of his stress like water in his chest.

The leader of the Church Without Walls in skid row had tried to stay strong in the days since hearing the news that a self-described white supremacist killed 10 people and wounded three others at a Buffalo, N.Y., grocery store mostly patronized by Black people. But as Jn-Marie continued working and providing words of comfort to others concerned about the shooting and intensified racist violence that Black people and communities of color are facing, the stress and trauma were too much to bear.

"It finally hit me like a ton of bricks," Jn-Marie said.

He found himself taking more naps to rest, working out to clear his mind and praying. He has blocked commenters on his Instagram page who try to argue that the shooting was not about race. He even posted on his Facebook page asking for people to pray for him, something he said he rarely does.

But taking care of himself last week became even more important as he prepared to travel more than 2,000 miles over the weekend to visit Buffalo and meet with local community activists and clergy, attend a vigil for the victims and see how he can help.

"I knew this one kind of hit me a little

[See **Buffalo**, B4]

Long-banned DDT still puts California condors at risk

Study finds over 40 related chemicals accumulating in bird at top of food chain.

BY ROSANNA XIA

When Christopher Tubbs joined an ambitious multinational effort to save California condors from the brink of extinction, he knew the odds of success were long.

There were wind turbines that could strike the giant birds and lead bullet fragments in hunted animals that could sicken and kill.

But Tubbs, who studies hormone-disrupting chemicals, suspected there was yet another threat to condor survival — a particularly problematic pesticide dumped decades ago off California's coast.

Now, after years of study, Tubbs and a team of environmental health scientists have identified more than 40 DDT-related compounds — along with a number of unknown chemicals — that have been circulating through the marine ecosystem and accumulating in this iconic bird at the very top of the food chain.

In a sophisticated chemical analysis published Tuesday in Environmental Science & Technology, the team found that DDT-related chemicals were seven times more abundant in coastal condors than condors that fed farther inland. Looking at the birds' coastal food sources, researchers found that dolphin and sea lion carcasses that washed ashore in Southern California were also seven times more contaminated with

DDT than the marine mammals they analyzed along the Gulf of California in Mexico.

One mysterious chemical that is likely connected to the DDT dumping in California was 56 times more abundant in coastal condors and 148 times more abundant in California dolphins.

"This DDT story, and contaminants interfering with reproduction, is what we call a sublethal exposure," said Tubbs, a reproductive sciences expert at the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance. "They don't kill a bird outright, but ... they could interfere with estrogen receptors or any other endocrine pathway."

This latest study builds on much-needed research into DDT's toxic — and insidious — legacy in California. Public calls for action have intensified since The Times reported that the nation's largest manufacturer of this pesticide once dumped its waste into the deep ocean. As many as half a million barrels could still be underwater today, according to old records and a UC Santa Barbara study that provided the first real glimpse of this pollution bubbling 3,000 feet under the sea near Catalina Island.

Significant amounts of DDT-related compounds are still accumulating in Southern California dolphins, and a recent study linked the presence of dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane to an aggressive cancer in sea lions. Another study based in Oakland found that DDT's hormone-disrupting effects are affecting a new generation of women — passed down from mothers to daughters, and now granddaughters.

Just because we banned DDT 50 years ago doesn't mean it has gone away — especially in California, said Eunha Hoh, whose lab at San Diego State's School of Public Health led the chemical analysis in the new condor study. If the California condor is accumulating such high amounts of DDT, that means that every link of the coastal food chain — including people — is also exposed.

"The abundance is so high in Southern California," said Hoh, who keeps finding this forever chemical reappearing in new and unexpected ways. "We can't just move on ... our ocean is so much more polluted with DDT."

Condors commanded the skies as early as the Pleistocene, when mammoths, saber-toothed cats and other megafauna

[See **Condors**, B6]

Grove of Titans has boardwalk

Once-trampled (and secret) redwood stand reopens to public with walkway that protects forest's ecosystem. **B3**

Parents call for action on drug

After fentanyl-laced pills killed their kids, families put pressure on lawmakers and social media firms. **B2**

101 shut through downtown L.A.

Portion of the freeway will reopen at 10 p.m. Sunday after crews complete roadwork, officials say. **B6**

Man sentenced in Big Sur fire

Ivan Gomez gets 24 years for blaze that injured firefighters and killed endangered California condors. **B10**

Lottery **B4**



KEN BOHN San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance

IF THE California condor has such high amounts of DDT, each link in the coastal food chain is exposed too.

Study reveals DDT in condors

[Condors, from B1] prowled California. Many native people such as the Chumash have come to see the giant birds as central to their culture. The Yurok know them as *prey-goneesh*.

With its bald, prehistoric-looking head and a wingspan that stretches almost 10 feet, *Gymnogyps californianus* remains the largest land bird in North America and is a sight to behold in the wild. Its numbers plummeted, however, in the wake of trophy hunting and an increasingly contaminated environment. By 1982, there were only 22 California condors left on the planet.

Federal and state wildlife officials, with the support of conservation advocates, agreed to capture every last bird in hopes of breeding the population back to vitality.

Saving this critically endangered species is particularly tricky: It takes more than six years before a condor is ready to reproduce, and even then, the birds tend to lay only one egg every other year. After decades of painstaking work, there are now 537 California condors, supported by a network of breeding centers and reintroduction sites from Baja California to Northern California.

Given the lead poisoning that often befalls a condor scavenging farther inland, many point to marine mammals as a critical food source for the species' long-lasting survival in the wild.

But in 2006, when condors released along the Big Sur coast finally started to mate, many of their eggs failed to hatch. Researchers started studying how remnant DDT in the environment could be at play.

"Our ongoing work has demonstrated that the more years a female condor

spends on the coast, and thus likely feeding on marine mammals, the lower the probability her egg will hatch," said Myra Finkelstein, an environmental toxicologist at UC Santa Cruz whose research group has also been instrumental in pinpointing the cause of lead poisoning in condors.

A huge challenge for her field, she said, is the overwhelming number of chemicals polluting the environment. Research like this new study, which Finkelstein reviewed but was not a part of, goes a long way in helping toxicologists figure out where and how to focus their analyses.

For this latest study, researchers at San Diego State's School of Public Health teamed up with the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance to connect more of the chemical dots.

They took blood samples from 19 condors that soared along the Big Sur coast and 20 condors that lived primarily inland. Using a high-tech instrument known as a mass spectrometer, they sorted through hundreds of chemicals and methodically identified each DDT-related compound in the blood samples — and applied the same technique to the blubber of marine mammals from the Southern California coast and the Gulf of California.

They cataloged a suite of DDT compounds, including two suspicious chemicals — TCPM and TCPMOH — that are likely a byproduct of DDT manufacturing, explained Nathan Dodder, an environmental analytical chemist at San Diego State. These unmonitored chemicals were also present in the dolphins they studied, as well as the sediment collected near the barrels dumped in the deep ocean.

Very little is known about these chemicals, said Mar-

garet Stack, an environmental health scientist at San Diego State and first author of the paper. She pointed to one study so far that tested TCPMOH on zebrafish — the aquatic-version of lab mice — and found that the chemical is acutely toxic to its embryos at elevated concentrations.

These are all clues that could help determine what to look for when tracing the legacy of DDT through the coastal ecosystem, said Lihini Aluwihare, a marine chemist at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography who was not affiliated with the study.

"We really need to understand where these animals are accessing the DDT. ... What [this study] adds is a more comprehensive look at the fingerprint of pollutants in the condors," said Aluwihare, who has been piecing together how various sources of DDT have been entering the food web. "This gives us something to compare, once we get the kind of data that we're looking for from the dumpsites."

David Valentine, whose UC Santa Barbara research team first came across the submerged barrels, said that the discovery of TCPM in such high concentrations is a big piece of the puzzle.

He convened key scientists, regulators and policymakers in a conference last week to discuss next steps. Researchers recently received a round of funding from Congress to do more chemical analysis and gather more data — including more mapping of the seafloor to determine the scope of the dumping.

Many agree that better monitoring is needed— not just for the DDT-related chemicals that we know about but also the ones that might be emerging after so many decades of interacting

with the environment.

"We now see it in marine mammals, particularly dolphins. We've known about some of the fish in shallow water. We know that sea lions have higher burdens of DDT-related compounds, and now we're seeing the condors are also accumulating both DDT and these other DDT-related compounds in the form of TCPM," Valentine said. "To me, that says that we've got a problem. ... We need to now go back and understand what the legacy of those compounds really was — and understand where it's coming from, and what we might be able to do moving forward."

Back on the southernmost reaches of the condor's historic habitat, Ignacio Vilchis has been guiding the recovery team down in Baja California to help these endangered birds thrive again in the wild.

With the latest findings showing that the Gulf of California is much less contaminated for condors, he hopes that releasing more birds in Baja could help the overall population sustain itself well into the future.

An oceanographer by training, Vilchis sees the condor as inseparable from the health and future of our ocean. If we are able to save the condor, he said, that means we are also saving so much other life along the way.

His face lights up as he describes the awe he feels when a condor soars overhead. Their wings are so immense that you can hear them beating the air.

"It's just ... it's very majestic," he said, at a momentary loss for words. "There's something very magical about them. You look up and there's a 10-foot wingspan flying above. It always gives me chills."

101 Freeway through downtown L.A. shut until Sunday night

By ALEX WIGGLESWORTH

A 2½-mile portion of the 101 Freeway through downtown Los Angeles is expected to be closed into the late hours of Sunday for roadwork.

The closure of the 101 between the 10 Freeway interchange and the 60 Freeway was set to start at 10 p.m. Saturday and last until 10 p.m. Sunday, the city Bureau of Engineering said in a news release.

The closure is to allow for median restoration and road reconstruction to the freeway under the 6th Street Viaduct, according to the release. The California Department of Transportation will also be doing slab replacement work, officials said.

Drivers traveling north on the 5 Freeway from the Orange County area, or west on the 60 from the Pomona

area, toward the 5/10/101 interchange east of downtown L.A. are advised to take the 710 Freeway north to the westbound 10, or the 10 Freeway to the northbound 10.

Drivers traveling south on the 101 from the San Fernando Valley area toward the 10/101 split are advised to take the southbound 110 Freeway to the eastbound 10, or the eastbound 10 to the southbound 710 Freeway.

A map of the closure and detour routes is posted at sixthstreetviaduct.org/schedule.

The 6th Street Viaduct is being rebuilt to replace the original structure, which was constructed in 1932 and is seismically deficient, authorities say.

The new, \$588-million bridge will reconnect the downtown Arts District and historic Boyle Heights. It is expected to be completed this summer, according to the release.

Reseda man gets 10 years for theft and sale of guns

By CHRISTIAN MARTINEZ

A Reseda man who pleaded guilty to trafficking firearms he took from self-storage units in Southern California was sentenced to nearly 10 years in federal prison.

Rick Eric Herst, 36, pleaded guilty in February 2021 to one count of conspiracy to traffic in firearms and one count of selling firearms to a convicted felon, federal prosecutors said in a release.

Herst was sentenced Wednesday to 115 months in prison.

The charges stemmed from an investigation into Herst and two other men, Jeffrey James LaFraniere, 39, of Van Nuys and Alan Elperin, 31, of Mission Hills, who burglarized self-storage units in places including Los Angeles, Valencia, Thousand Oaks, Valencia and Rancho Mirage, stealing numerous guns and other items.

They would then offer the guns for sale either in person or through text messages, with Herst and LaFraniere offering to sell guns to people they knew were convicted felons, prosecutors said.

In a sentencing memorandum, prosecutors said

many of the guns have not been recovered and those that had been were found "in the hands of felons or recovered at crime scenes."

In May 2019, the three men burglarized a facility in Valencia and took 35 firearms, including pistols, shotguns and "high-powered rifles," prosecutors said. Later that day, Herst and LaFraniere sold two pistols to a person they knew to be a convicted felon.

Herst was arrested in March 2020 when investigators served a search warrant at his home and found a loaded Glock 9-millimeter pistol that was stolen in a residential burglary that January.

Investigators also found ammunition, dozens of stolen debit and credit cards, multiple stolen or fake California driver's licenses and stolen merchandise.

Elperin is serving a 100-month prison sentence after pleading guilty to conspiracy and receiving stolen firearms in November 2020.

LaFraniere pleaded guilty in September 2020 to conspiracy, receiving stolen firearms and selling firearms to a felon, and he is due to be sentenced May 26. He faces a maximum sentence of 25 years in federal prison.

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Employment

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Employment

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