

POINT LOMA-OB BUSINESS NEWS

Big Blue Swim School opens; City Tacos to celebrate 10 years

Big Blue Swim School — one of the fastest-growing franchise businesses in the learn-to-swim industry — held the grand opening April 1 of its new location at Point Loma Plaza at 3645 Midway Drive.

The 10,543-square-foot Big Blue Swim School Point Loma offers weekly year-round 30- to 45-minute swim lessons for children beginning at 3 months old, led by professional instructors. There is a viewing area for parents, private changing rooms, anti-microbial flooring and free Wi-Fi.

For more information about the Point Loma Plaza location, visit bit.ly/3Qw0Y6k.

CITY TACOS

City Tacos, founded in May 2014, will host a 10th-anniversary celebration Saturday, May 4, at its OB Playground location at 4896 Voltaire St. in Ocean Beach.

Doors will open at 10 a.m., an hour earlier than usual, for a day of free face painting, stilt walkers, a mariachi band and a special of two tacos and a beer for \$10. Also, all guests who bring a pug (the restaurant's mascot) between 10 a.m. and noon will receive a free taco.

For more information, visit citytacossd.com.

— *Point Loma-OB Monthly staff*

CRIME

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crime figures across the nation are returning to pre-pandemic levels.

In an analysis from the Council on Criminal Justice, 32 of 38 cities surveyed reported fewer homicides in 2023 than in 2022. Cases of aggravated assault, burglary and larceny also decreased.

“Overall, the findings suggest that most offenses in the sample cities are bending back toward 2019 levels, though some are not,” the report states. “Homicide, the most serious of the crimes, has yet to fully recede but, except in some cities, is trending in the right direction.”

Nisleit said several strategies helped fuel San Diego's crime decreases, including deployment of large-scale operations designed to crack down on particular types of crime, such as Operation Better Pathways, which

focused on human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

The chief also pointed to the Police Department's focus on gun seizures. In 2023, officers confiscated nearly 2,000 illegal weapons, including 338 unserialized “ghost guns.”

Across San Diego, non-fatal shootings decreased by 23 cases — about 12 percent — as did crimes committed by gang members, which also fell 12 percent, police said.

Nearly all forms of gang crime dropped last year except robberies, which remained the same from 2022 to 2023.

“I think life has returned to what is more like normalcy following the pandemic, but I know that we are still seeing the effects of law enforcement staffing issues, long-term mental health effects, as well as issues related to drug use and homelessness,” said Cindy Burke, senior director of data

science at the San Diego Association of Governments, or SANDAG.

Of the crimes that increased last year, hate crimes jumped from 38 in 2022 to 66 in 2023, department officials said. More than a third were racially motivated, but last year's spike was largely fueled by cases involving religious bias, which quadrupled. Nearly half of those crimes had an anti-Semitic nexus, police said.

Those kinds of incidents led state Assemblyman Chris Ward and other leaders, including Gloria, to get behind Assembly Bill 3024, the Stop Hate Littering Act, which would expand aspects of the Ralph Act, which states that all California residents have the right to be free from any violence or intimidation by threat of violence because of personal characteristics such as race, religion or sexual orientation.

The bill would expand the definition of “intimidation by threat of violence” to include instances when materials such as fliers aim to terrorize people and a complaint is received and verified by local law enforcement or the attorney general's civil-rights department.

Bias against someone's sexual orientation accounted for about 30 percent of hate crimes, police said.

With the spike in cases of animal cruelty, Nisleit said police leaders plan to pay close attention to that type of crime moving forward to determine whether last year's figures were an anomaly.

Despite fluctuations over the past several years, San Diego remains at near-historic lows when compared with the crime rates of the 1980s and '90s. The rates of both violent and property crimes have held fairly steady over the past decade.



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