

# Reward offered for info on hit-and-run suspect

BY QUINN WILSON  
qwilson@bakersfield.com

The family of July 22 fatal hit-and-run victim Deborah Ann Geneau is offering a reward for information that leads to the arrest of the suspect responsible for the crash near Cal State Bakersfield.

Geneau's family and the law firm Chain, Cobn and Stiles are offering a \$2,500 reward to the person who helps identify the driver of the suspect vehicle. On Tuesday, the Bakersfield Police Department said the suspect vehicle is a 2013 to 2019 dark gray Nissan Sentra with very minor driver-side damage.

That vehicle turned into the bike path parking area across from CSUB immediately after the collision, BPD said.

"I spent yesterday at the mortuary collecting my mother's belongings, including her crash earrings and wedding ring. I couldn't help but think about what the driver of the other vehicle might have been doing yesterday?" Dawn Elliott, Geneau's daughter, said in a statement.



July 22 fatal hit-and-run victim Deborah Ann Geneau with her husband, Rick Geneau.

"We really just want this person to come forward, or assistance to find the person responsible."

On Wednesday, the Bakersfield Police Department released a new video of surveillance camera angles to The Californian. The angles include traffic cameras and footage from a Golden Empire



**Vehicle turns into bike path parking area across from CSUB after collision. 2013-2019, Nissan, Sentra, gray**

COURTESY OF THE BAKERSFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Bakersfield Police Department has released additional information regarding a suspect vehicle and its driver involved in a fatal hit-and-run accident last Wednesday on Stockdale Highway.

Transit bus that was in the vicinity of the crash, according to BPD Sgt. Robert Paul. The accident occurred at

1:09 p.m. on Stockdale Highway just west of Coffee Road, according to BPD. Anyone with information is

urged to call Officer Ott at 326-3967, BPD at 327-7111 or Kern County Secret Witness hotline at 322-4040.



Amtrak conductor Christian De Ponte gets all on board his northbound afternoon Amtrak train it prepares to leave Bakersfield in this 2017 photo.

## Amtrak changes up service to respond to decrease in ridership

THE BAKERSFIELD-CALIFORNIAN

Amtrak has suspended and altered several of the routes on its Thruway Bus Network that have been impacted from reduced ridership since the coronavirus pandemic began.

Route 12 from Bakersfield to Victorville, has been indefinitely suspended, while Route 19 has been truncated at Bernardino. Amtrak said three daily round trips on Route 19 will stop at La Crescenta, Pasadena, Claremont, Ontario, Riverside and San Bernardino. Eliminated stops include Calozon, the Palm Springs downtown and airport, Palm Desert, La Quinta, Indio, Moreno Valley, Perris, Sun City/Menifee, Hemet and the Simpsons Center.

Passengers will be able to book tickets from San Bernardino to Palm Springs using Pacific Sunliner buses, available at amtrakjoaquins.com, amtrak.com and the Amtrak app.

Route 18b, from Hanford to

Visalia, has been terminated. Riders can still travel on Route 18a between Hanford and San Luis Obispo or Santa Maria. Route 7, from Martinez to McKinleyville, has been truncated at Arcata.

The San Joaquins rail service operations have also been reduced from seven daily round trips to four daily round trips.

"We are proud to continue to provide transportation service to our communities for essential travel during this crisis, but there is no doubt that additional cuts and cost-savings measures are needed at this time to align our service levels to current and near-term ridership demand," Stacey Mortensen, executive director of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority, said in a news release. "We see these route changes as a necessary step due to constraints on state budgets and severely reduced ridership and revenue."

## International Medical Corps deploys field units to Adventist Health Bakersfield, Tehachapi

BY EMA SASIC  
emasasic@bakersfield.com

International Medical Corps is deploying emergency medical field units, personal protective equipment and other medical supplies to support Adventist Health Bakersfield and Adventist Health Tehachapi Valley in the fight against COVID-19.

The International Medical Corps field units enable hospitals to expand triage and treatment space at existing facilities, improve patient flow and keep COVID-19 patients separated from other patients, according to a news release. Depending on the configuration, hospitals can potentially treat hundreds of COVID-19 patients within field units, which can include patient beds, medical examination supplies, portable sinks, power, lighting and HVAC units.

The field units can be constructed in approximately six to 12 hours and be operational within 24 hours and withstand winds up to 80 mph.

The Bakersfield unit, set up Wednesday, will be incorporated as part of the hospital's triage process just outside the



At Adventist Health Tehachapi Valley, the field unit was set up Tuesday and will provide overflow space for non-COVID-19 patients.

Emergency Department, separating patients who are symptomatic from those who are not. At Adventist Health Tehachapi Valley, the field unit was set up Tuesday and will provide overflow space for non-COVID-19 patients.

International Medical Corps has now deployed emergency medical field units in Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Detroit and Puerto Rico, with collaborator FedEx providing related logistical and shipping support. In addition, it's provided personal protective equipment and other medical supplies and equipment to facilities and municipalities across the country.

## Greenfield Union School District accused of free speech violations

BY EMA SASIC  
emasasic@bakersfield.com

The American Civil Liberties Union Foundations of Southern and Northern California sent a letter to the Greenfield Union School District Wednesday, expressing concerns and alleging "the district has created a hostile environment for Black students and staff in its schools by subjecting them to differential treatment and degrading, off-handed comments."

The letter details the treatment of seventh grade English teacher Keckson, whose contract was not renewed after she filed a formal complaint on May 13, 2019, alleging that the district maintained a racially hostile environment, violated staff and students' rights to free speech and expression, and failed to ensure that Black staff and students felt welcome and supported in the district.

The letter was signed by Abre' Conner, staff attorney at ACLU NorCal, and Peter J. Eliasberg, chief counsel of ACLU SoCal. Jackson, who taught at Ollivier Middle School, was allegedly prevented from wearing a shirt that read "Phenomenally Black" on April 3, 2019. According to the letter, Principal (Sheila) Johnson reprimanded Ms. Jackson for showing pride in Black culture by wearing a shirt that read "Phenomenally Black" and subsequently prevented Ms. Jackson from wearing it again at school. Principal Johnson justified her ban on the shirt by supposedly comparing it to a shirt that included the "Make America Great Again" (MAGA) slogan.

The principal also asked another Black staff member if Jackson was attempting to further a "Black power" agenda, the letter added.

The letter states Jackson previously wore a "Phenomenally Woman" shirt at school "without any interference from Principal Johnson or other staff." Jackson was also allegedly asked to be the sole voice to defend how all Black students performed at the school, as when one non-Black teacher in a meeting described the students as a group being "standoffish" and acting "too cool" to perform well in class.

"While working at Ollivier Mid-



A letter from the American Civil Liberties Union Foundations of Southern and Northern California to the Greenfield Union School District alleges seventh grade English teacher Keckson was prevented from wearing a shirt that read "Phenomenally Black" on April 3, 2019.

dle School I experienced many forms of mistreatment and micro-aggressions," Jackson said in a news release. "The hostility and cultural insensitivity toward Black staff and students is deplorable. The 'Phenomenally Black' shirt I wore was a positive message to show pride in my culture and the principal took that as an opportunity to reprimand me and compare it to her wearing a 'Make America Great Again' shirt."

In addition, the letter alleges that students at the school were told that they were required to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance, which is in violation of their First Amendment rights. The U.S. Supreme Court has long affirmed that public school students have the right to not participate in the pledge, and federal courts have ruled that includes the right to not stand for its recitation, according to the letter.

Greenfield Union School District planned to provide a comment today.

"In Kern County and across the Central Valley, districts continue to demonstrate how they miss the mark regarding creating a welcoming environment for Black students and teachers," Conner said. "Greenfield Union is no different. At a time when the country is reckoning with authentically

creating space for Black voices, Greenfield Union's actions prove why dismantling systemic racism in education must be a priority."

Shortly after filing the complaint, the letter states, the district asked Jackson not to return to the district due to credentialing reasons. "However, before these incidents, the school had not mentioned that Ms. Jackson's credentialing was inadequate or otherwise at issue," according to the letter.

The ACLU letter asks the district to take administrative steps toward establishing a safe, inclusive and equitable school environment in its schools.

"Although we look to education to help overcome obstacles like systemic racism, the school district seems to lack the ability to service the diverse needs of their staff, teachers and students," said Patrick Jackson, president of NAACP Bakersfield. "Challenging the status quo from inside out on racial biases requires the participation of district officials and school leaders which is necessary to bring about real change."

The district has until Aug. 5 to respond, according to the letter.

Emma Sasik can be reached at 661-395-7392. Follow her on Twitter: @emasasic.

## LA County sees hopeful signs amid virus surge

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — Los Angeles County, which recently appeared headed for another lockdown amid escalating coronavirus cases, now is seeing fewer hospitalizations and a lower transmission rate that health officials said Wednesday are evidence people are heeding the call to change their behavior.

The nation's most populous county said 2,045 people were hospitalized, 28 percent of them in intensive care units. But the number of new hospitalizations is showing a "very gradual downturn" and projections call for a slight decline in cases over the next four weeks, said Dr. Christina Ghaly, director of the county Department of Health Services.

The county saw 91 additional deaths — a new daily record due in part to lagging reporting — but the number of fatalities has generally been decreasing since May, county Health Director Barbara Ferrer said.

Ghaly said that statistically, the transmission rate shows any infected person is passing on the virus to fewer than one other person.

"While we are seeing the results of strict adherence to best practices — like wearing the face coverings, washing hands, quarantining and isolation, physical distancing — these practices need to continue," Ghaly said.

The county had seen drops in its COVID-19 cases after months of stay-at-home orders that shuttered many businesses, beaches and other recreational areas and banned large social gatherings. But after easing of those health orders began, the virus began surging in early June, prompting Gov. Gavin Newsom to reimpose some shutdown orders early this month.

The county's declining hospitalization rate "does coincide with the paring back of reopening at the local and statewide level a few weeks ago," Ghaly said.

Every one of California's 58 counties now has COVID-19 cases. Modoc County on Tuesday confirmed its first two cases. The remote county bordering Oregon and Nevada was the first to defy state shutdown orders to prevent spread of the coronavirus.

Statewide, California reported 197 additional deaths on Tuesday — a grim new daily record — and nearly 8,800 new cases. The state now has had more than 466,500 cases and more than 8,500 deaths, according to the California Department of Public Health.

Los Angeles County has had a significant role in those figures, with more than 183,000 confirmed cases and more than 4,500 deaths.

Earlier this month, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti had warned the situation in LA had become so tenuous that a city lockdown might be needed. But on Wednesday, he said there wouldn't be any additional closures if hopeful signs continue.