

Opinion
MARCOS BRETON



mbreton@sacbee.com

JFK lore wears thin for some

A common refrain from those who fondly recall John F. Kennedy was that he governed in a more innocent and hopeful time and that his assassination 50 years ago this Friday shattered that dream.

Many people are repeating this default setting of JFK lore – a belief that may have applied to them and their families but not to all.

Those of us who are descendants of people from the barrios, the ghettos and the anonymous margins of 1963 America have more complicated feelings about the man and those times. They weren't very innocent years for our ancestors fighting to gain a foothold in America when discrimination was open and overt.

In California, some of us grew up hearing stories of our parents being mugged for speaking Spanish in public. Our ancestors toiled in hard-labor jobs, and our families viewed trips to McDonald's as a luxury in the '60s. We remember being the first in our little circles to go to college. Of being the first to confront the cultural complexities of integrated workplaces after being raised by families with little or no experience with which to guide us.

Within that context, JFK is a distant figure who means less to us than he did to our parents. Within the Latino community, our parents were thrilled when JFK actually paid attention to them. They were blown away when Jacqueline Kennedy spoke Spanish in political ads targeting Latino voters in the 1960 presidential election.

The night before his assassination, JFK addressed the League of United Latin American Citizens in Houston.

But as many scholars have written since, Kennedy did not deliver on the hope he inspired among Latinos. African American civil rights heroes also had been frustrated with Kennedy, despite being enamored of him personally.

And then JFK went to Dallas, and then he was gone. My parents always remembered him frozen in time, just before the shots rang out on Dealey Plaza.

Those of us who came of age after Vietnam and Watergate had a harder time maintaining such reverence, when questioning authority became what you were supposed to do. As a journalist today, you are called a hack for waxing poetic about any politician or person in power. It's just not done. We have too much access to current information and a fuller history of JFK that didn't make into the record when he was alive.

JFK mentioned African Americans and Latinos in his first presidential push of 1960, for which he deserves praise. However, decades of venerating JFK should not come at the expense of an undeniable truth – many people living in America had a very hard road on Nov. 22, 1963, and beyond. For them, hope and innocence were in short supply. Hard battles still lay ahead and good intentions were not enough. They weren't enough for JFK any more than they are for Barack Obama or any other leader to be held accountable by our democracy.

That's also what history teaches us – to view and accept our leaders beyond our idealized versions of them.

Call The Bee's Marcos Breton, (916) 321-1096.

Winters slaying suspect was accused of stalking

GARDNER FACED CHARGES OF VANDALISM, MAKING THREATS

By DARRELL SMITH AND BILL LINDELOF
dvsmith@sacbee.com

Leslie Pinkston's suspected killer faced charges of stalking and threatening her earlier this year and was set to face trial on the allegations in December.

William Carl Gardner III, 30, of Sacramento faced felony allegations of stalking, threats to commit crimes re-

sulting in death or great bodily injury and vandalism, according to information filed May 13 in Yolo Superior Court in Woodland. Authorities say Gardner was a former boyfriend of Pinkston, 32, of Winters.

Gardner remained at large Tuesday.

The alleged threat against Pinkston was "so unequivocal, unconditional, imme-



Leslie Pinkston



William Carl Gardner III

diately and specific as to ... cause that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for his or her own safety," records show. Pinkston was identified as the victim by the initials "L.P."

The court issued a criminal protective order to protect Pinkston from Gardner

in connection with the case, said Michael Cabral, Yolo County assistant chief deputy district attorney, who declined to comment further.

Court records show Gardner failed to appear for an Oct. 15 Yolo Superior Court hearing related to the case.

Pinkston was shot and killed at close range about 9:30 a.m. Monday as she sat in her car in downtown Winters. She was listed as a witness expected to testify at Gardner's scheduled Dec. 9 SLAYING | Page B4

No jury verdict in care home death

STATE WON'T SEEK NEW TRIAL OF FORMER HEAD NURSE

By MARJIE LUNDSTROM
mlundstrom@sacbee.com

When 77-year-old Johnnie Esco died in 2008 after a short stay at a Placerville nursing home, her husband of 60 years wanted someone held responsible – civilly and criminally.

Don Esco of Cameron Park settled his civil lawsuit against the El Dorado Care Center and its owner in 2010 for \$2.9 million. The criminal matter ended quite differently this week, with California's attorney general declining to seek a new trial against the facility's former head nurse following a mistrial.

More than five years after the elderly woman's death, an El Dorado County jury failed to reach a verdict in the case against Donna Darlene Palmer, charged with felony elder abuse.

Palmer, the former director of nursing at the facility, was one of two nurses charged criminally last year by the California attorney general's office. At the time, Attorney General Kamala D. Harris' office had announced plans to intensify efforts statewide to bring criminal cases against nursing home administrators and employees whose failings harm vulnerable patients.

In Palmer's case, the jury tipped decidedly in the nurse's TRIAL | Page B2

Board calls on Quinn to resign

'OUTRAGE' OVER TWIN RIVERS TRUSTEE CITED

By DIANA LAMBERT
dlambert@sacbee.com

Trustee Cortez Quinn was not at the Twin Rivers Unified School Board meeting Tuesday night, but it didn't stop the board and parents from calling for his resignation.

Quinn, 46, was arrested Nov. 6 on three felony and five misdemeanor charges that include allegedly falsifying his paternity test and accepting illegal gifts from a district employee.

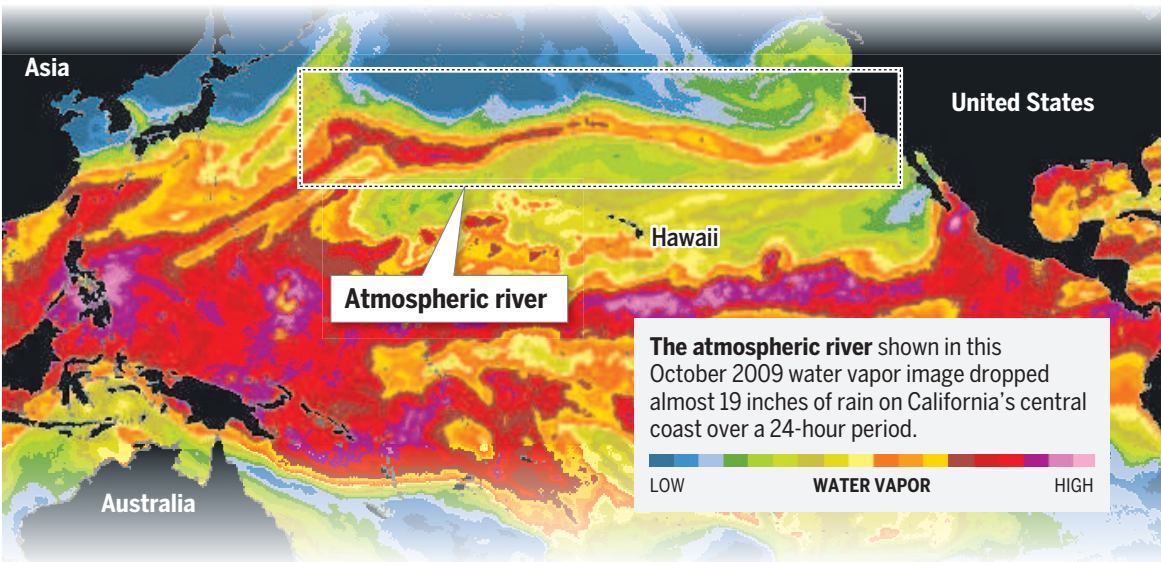
On Nov. 8, Quinn announced he would take a 90-day leave of absence from the board.

But the school board and a handful of parents were clear Tuesday that they want him off the board. Ross Hendrickx, speaking on behalf of the Del Paso Heights Community Association, demanded that the board vote unanimously to seek Quinn's resignation.

"The community is going into its third year, at least, of Mr. Quinn being an embarrassment to the school district, rather than the example that he was elected to be," Hendrickx said.

The board voted 5-1, with Trustee Walter Garcia Kawamoto dissenting, to approve a resolution asking Quinn to step down from his Area 5 seat immediately. Quinn represents the North Natomas and Robla areas. The resolution said there has been "con- QUINN | Page B3

'ATMOSPHERIC RIVERS' LINKED TO STATE'S FLOODS



NASA sees hurricane-force culprits behind big storms

By EDWARD ORTIZ
eortiz@sacbee.com

Scientists at NASA say they have identified a rare weather pattern that will help forecasters predict when California will experience periods of intense and potentially prolonged wet weather.

The new findings will help officials assess the possibility of floods, mudslides and levee failures, the scientists say, and will prove critical to regions where rivers are a big part of the landscape – like the Sacramento region, where the American and Sacramento rivers converge. The rivers absorb run off and melting snowpack from the Sierra Nevada, where storms typically deposit much of the state's precipitation.

"We have found a strong connection between certain phases of two systems and the frequency of winter storms in California," said Bin Guan, an earth sciences re-

searcher at the University of California, Los Angeles and NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

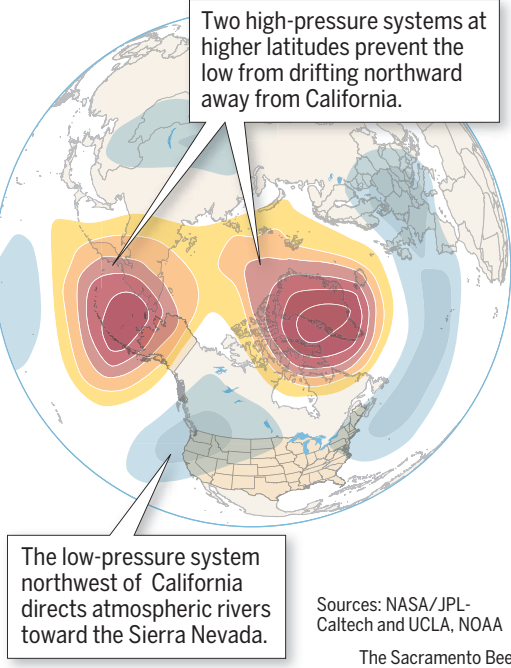
Guan's study – a collaboration among scientists at UCLA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – found a conclusive link between the alignment of two weather patterns in the Northern Hemisphere and the formation of an "atmospheric river" headed for California.

The results were gleaned in part from data provided by NASA's 11-year-old Aqua weather satellite – one of more than 40 weather-related satellites that circle the globe.

Atmospheric rivers are narrow bands of wind, often a mile high, that can pack the punch of a hurricane. As they move over the ocean, they become laden with water vapor – and can carry with them as ATMOSPHERE | Page B2

RIVERS IN THE AIR

NASA scientists have linked the rare alignment of two weather systems in the Northern Hemisphere to the creation of an atmospheric river that they say could bring prolonged wet weather to California.



DAMAGE ON THE GROUND

The potential impact of atmospheric rivers through the years:



Sacramento History Archives

1861-1862 The entire Central Valley was flooded by a 45-day storm that might have been caused by an atmospheric river.



Randy Pench The Sacramento Bee

1986 A neighborhood in Del Paso Heights was inundated. At least 14 people died statewide, and floods displaced 50,000.



Lezlie Sterling The Sacramento Bee

2009 Dry conditions before a large storm meant no major flooding, but high winds downed many trees and power lines.

Jury hears closings in wife-killing trial

DEFENSE: HUSBAND SNAPPED AT NEWS OF DIVORCE

By ANDY FURILLO
afurillo@sacbee.com

Up until the time he sat his wife down on a love seat and shot her six times in the North Highlands apartment they once shared, Daniel Weddle had hoped that somehow they could make their relationship work.

He loved his wife, he said, and he couldn't believe he

drilled a .38-caliber slug through her heart. That wasn't him, he said. It was the heat of passion, brought on by her serving him with divorce papers and then giving him a dirty look that suggested he didn't have what it takes to squeeze the trigger when he pulled a pistol on her.

Then, after he called his

mother first and the 911 operator second, and after he cried to the dispatcher about wanting to kill himself, and after sheriff's deputies put him in the back seat of a patrol car and he sat all by himself inside with the camera still running, Weddle, 50, had a little something to say.

"I wonder," Weddle said, "if the bitch is dead."

That remark was the subject of some discussion Tuesday in the closing arguments of Weddle's murder trial, brought on by the fatal Dec. 1, 2011, shooting of his wife, Margaret, 46, in the apartment in the 3600 block of Bellinger Court.

Deputy District Attorney Aaron Miller played it as his ace card. He told the Sacramento Superior Court jury hearing the case that out of KILLING | Page B4