



The San Diego

Union-Tribune.



Thursday
September 20, 2007

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Regional Final

S.D. schools chief Cohn to resign at year's end

San Diego Superintendent **Carl Cohn** says his "energy, heart and passion" for the job have declined since he was hired in 2005.



By **Helen Gao**
STAFF WRITER

San Diego Superintendent Carl Cohn, who came out of retirement in October 2005 to lead the state's second-largest school district, said yesterday that he will leave 18 months before his contract expires. His last day is Dec. 31.

He gave written notice to the board of the San Diego Unified School District yesterday in a closed-door meeting.

"I don't have the energy, heart and passion that I did when I first took the job," he said after tendering his resignation.

Cohn, who turns 62 this month, is a high-profile educator with four decades of experience and numerous awards. He has a solid reputation in urban-education circles nationwide, and many considered it a coup when the school board hired him.

Cohn spent much of his time trying to restore a measure of peace to a district that struggled with infighting and teacher unrest under his predecessor, Alan Bersin, a one-time U.S. attorney hired to be a change agent.

In his letter to trustees, Cohn said he is looking forward to reviving his consulting business and "getting retirement right" in Kensington. He and his wife, a San Diego State University administrator, have a \$1.1 million home in the Mid-City neighborhood.

His \$250,000-a-year contract expires June 30, 2009, but the agreement allows him to leave with 90 days' notice. As a consultant, he said he can probably make more money and have time to travel and enjoy life.

Cohn's short tenure is not unusual in urban districts. Big-city superintendents last an average of two to three years, according to the Council of the Great City Schools.

Rumors about Cohn's exit have been swirling since March, when he told the board of his desire to leave.

At the time, he dismissed the rumors as "water-cooler gossip," but yesterday, he acknowledged he's been thinking about leaving for some time. He said he stayed on because he wanted

SEE **Superintendent, A11**

"I decided to lead with my heart, which is probably obvious at the moment."

SAN DIEGO MAYOR JERRY SANDERS

Sanders changes mind on gay marriage



Mayor Jerry Sanders paused as he explained his change of heart on the issue of same-sex marriage during an emotional news conference yesterday. Sanders was joined by his wife, Rana Sampson. *K.C. Alfred / Union-Tribune*

Mayor supports effort to overturn state ban

By **Jennifer Vigil**
STAFF WRITER

A tearful Mayor Jerry Sanders made a dramatic shift yesterday, explaining that he can no longer oppose same-sex marriages because he does not want to deny justice to people like his daughter, who is a lesbian.

Joined at a late afternoon news conference by his wife, Rana Sampson, the San Diego mayor announced he will back a City Council decision to support same-sex marriage before the state Supreme Court, where California's ban on it awaits review.

"I decided to lead with my heart, which is probably obvious at the moment," said Sanders, moments before he revealed his daughter's sexual orientation.

The mayor's new stance marked a reversal of his pledge Tuesday to use his veto power to block the council's move. At the time, he repeated his preference for civil unions, partnerships between same-sex couples that offer some but not all of the legal protections given to those who marry.

SEE **Sanders, A10**

Mayor Sanders to attend re-election fundraiser on same day Steve Francis plans to file candidacy papers. **Our Region, B1**

Army tests brains of deploying soldiers

Base-line data sought in case of major injury

By **Kristin M. Hall**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. — Before they leave for Iraq, thousands of soldiers with the 101st Airborne Division line up at laptop computers to take a test: basic math, matching numbers and symbols, and identifying patterns. They press a button quickly to measure response time.

It's all part of a fledgling Army program that records how soldiers' brains work when healthy, giving doctors base-line data to help diagnose and treat the soldiers if they suffer a traumatic brain injury — the signature injury of the Iraq war.

"We don't want to wait until the soldier is getting out of the Army to say, 'But I've had these symptoms,'" said Lt. Col. Mark McGrail, division surgeon for the 101st.

The mandatory brain-function



Soldiers with the 101st Airborne Division took a cognitive-skills test this month in preparation for deployment to Iraq. *John Russell / Associated Press*

tests are starting with the 101st and are expected to spread to other bases in the next few months. Base commanders will decide whether to adopt the program.

The tests provide a standard mea-

surement for each soldier's reaction time, short-term memory and other cognitive skills. Those data would be used when the soldiers come home to identify mild brain traumas that can often go unnoticed and untreated.

ed. About 7,500 Fort Campbell soldiers have completed the tests, said Dr. Robert Schlegel, a University of Oklahoma researcher who administers the 10-minute exams.

One question asks soldiers to memorize patterns on the screen and then identify them later among several other patterns. Other questions require soldiers to match numbers and symbols or complete simple addition and subtraction problems.

Brain injuries caused by explosions have become one of the most common combat wounds suffered in Iraq. Thirty percent of soldiers taken to Walter Reed Army Medical Center since 2003 suffered traumatic brain injuries, according to the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center.

The brain-injury center, which has seven facilities around the country, has seen 2,669 patients between 2003 and 2007. But doctors believe many less-obvious cases go undetected.

SEE **Brain injury, A10**

Mexico City drill marks deadly '85 quake

More than 3 million participate in exercise

By **S. Lynne Walker**
COPLEY NEWS SERVICE

MEXICO CITY — A shrill whistle pierced the air. Then came the command: "Everybody out."

A tremor registering 6.9 on the Richter scale had just struck Mexico City — in theory, that is — propelling more than 3 million people into the streets yesterday in the largest earthquake drill ever staged in North America.

Earthquake experts from around the world, including California, had traveled to Mexico City for an international quake conference and watched the exercise.

Ellis Stanley, general manager of the Emergency Preparedness Department in Los Angeles, said five Southern California counties north of San Diego are planning their own full-



During yesterday's earthquake drill yesterday in Mexico City, Anabel Lopez (left) stood with fellow office workers while civil defense coordinator Victor Paredes explained the procedures. *Luis J. Jimenez / Copley News Service*

scale earthquake drill in November 2008. The drill in Mexico City gave him a hint of what to expect.

"Move faster. Quickly, please," a

civil defense worker shouted as smartly dressed men and women came out

SEE **Earthquake, A10**

Bush, Schwarzenegger differ on global-warming approach

Next week, both taking global stage on issue

By **Michael Gardner**
COPLEY NEWS SERVICE

SACRAMENTO — When the U.N. secretary-general extended an off-the-cuff invitation to participate in a global-warming conference in New York City, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger didn't hesitate.

"Of course. I feel honored. Thank you," Schwarzenegger answered without pause as he and Ban Ki-moon wrapped up a July tour of a San Jose company researching ways to limit greenhouse gases.

In contrast, President Bush has withstood growing international pressure to become more aggressive in setting a national agenda to curb global warming.

The world will be reminded of

the stark difference between the two Republicans when Bush and Schwarzenegger take separate stages next week.

On Monday, Schwarzenegger will be at the United Nations to promote California's landmark law to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and urge all nations to answer what he considers one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century.

Schwarzenegger "has become the de facto president on the world stage because President Bush has been so absent," said Frank O'Donnell, president of Clean Air Watch, a national advocacy group.

Bush, meanwhile, has invited leading nations to Washington Sept. 27 and Sept. 28 to begin drafting a long-term, largely voluntary program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with an eye on the effects

SEE **Global warming, A11**

