



PATRICK T. FALLON FOR THE TIMES

**VISITORS HUNT** for gold in the San Gabriel Mountains, where 350,000 acres will be declared a national monument. The San Gabriels define L.A. with their imperfect beauty, writer Thomas Curwen says. **A10**

## Monumental decision

### Obama plans designation for portion of San Gabriels

BY LOUIS SAHAGUN

The lure of a San Gabriel Mountains wilderness teeming with wildlife, rivers and breathtaking panoramas is so strong that it now draws 3 million annual visitors whose presence, paradoxically, has overrun the region and degraded its beauty. President Obama will address that reality Friday by announcing that he is designating part of the mountains a national monument.

Over fierce opposition from some mountain communities, Obama will carve out roughly half of the Angeles National Forest to create the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, officials said. The designation will give the U.S. Forest Service greater ability to manage the crowds and protect its natural wonders.

The designation is in many ways recognition of the San Gabriels' enduring enchantment for Californians. As John Muir wrote: "Here come the Gabriel lads and lassies from the commonplace orange groves, to make love and gather ferns and dabble away their hot holidays in the cool pool. They are fortunate in finding so fresh a retreat so near their homes."

Stretching from Santa Clarita to San Bernardino, the San Gabriel watershed is within a 90-minute drive of 17 million people. It provides Los Angeles County with 70% of its open space and roughly 35% of its water. The rugged slopes and canyons are home to rare and endangered species, including Nelson's bighorn sheep, mountain yellow-legged frogs and Santa Ana suckers.

The chronically underfunded Forest Service cannot keep up with the demand. Graffiti, trash, crowding, crime and wildfires are constant problems. Without uniformed [See Monument, A10]

### New designation in Angeles forest

On Friday, 350,000 acres will be designated as the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument. The exact boundaries are not available, but Wrightwood and Mt. Baldy are expected to be excluded.

■ Angeles National Forest boundary — County boundary



Sources: L.A. Times reporting, ESRI, USGS. KYLE KIM Los Angeles Times

**3 million**

Visitors to the San Gabriel Mountains yearly

**350,000**

Acres up for monument status (out of 655,000 total)

**17 million**

People within a 90-minute drive

## Liberian man with Ebola dies in Dallas

Relatives of Thomas Eric Duncan and others say his hospital treatment was substandard.

BY MOLLY HENNESSY-FISKE AND TINA SUSMAN

DALLAS — Less than three weeks ago, he came to Texas from Liberia to get married. On Wednesday, Thomas Eric Duncan, the first person diagnosed with Ebola in this country, died amid allegations by his family and prominent African Americans that his care was substandard.

Duncan, 42, had just a few days with his fiancée, Louise Troh, before being hospitalized Sept. 28 and put into isolation. As his condition fluctuated from critical to serious and then back to critical, much of the country became transfixed but also concerned that initial missteps in his treatment might have spread the virus further.

Duncan's first visit to Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas on Sept. 25 ended with him being given antibiotics and sent back to the apartment he was staying in with Troh and three others.

Also on Wednesday, the Dallas County Sheriff's Department confirmed that a deputy who had come in contact with Duncan's relatives was now in Texas Health Presbyterian for observation. They described the case as low risk.

Troh, who has not developed Ebola symptoms, said

### Stricter screening

Testing for Ebola signs is set to begin for some passengers at five U.S. airports. **NATION, A18**

in a statement from quarantine that the family was "in deep sadness and grief."

"His suffering is over," she said of Duncan, whom she met in a refugee camp in the 1990s in Ivory Coast, where both had gone to escape Liberia's then-raging civil war. "Our deepest sympathies go out to his father and family in Liberia and here in America. Eric was a wonderful man who showed compassion toward all."

Troh and other family members, in addition to some prominent African American leaders, charged that Duncan had been the victim of substandard care.

"When they listen to your [See Duncan, A13]

## EMAILS REVEAL PUC TIES TO PG&E EXECS

Critics say memos from firm point to a 'cozy relationship.'

BY MARC LIPSHER

SACRAMENTO — Over Memorial Day weekend in 2010, one of California's most powerful regulators hosted a small dinner party at his vacation home on the rugged Sonoma County coast for two top officials at Pacific Gas & Electric Co.

The host was Michael Peevey, a former utility executive who is now the president of the state Public Utilities Commission, which oversees scores of regulated companies, notably PG&E.

The guests were a power couple themselves: Brian Cherry was PG&E's vice president for rates and regulations, and his wife, Sara, is the vice president for investor relations.

The next night, in a lengthy email to his boss, Cherry described the dinner as "social," but noted that "we did delve into some work matters" while drinking "two bottles of good Pinot."

The memo went on to recount at least half a dozen discussion items with direct financial effect on PG&E, including renewable energy, rate increases and a political campaign to defeat a ballot measure that sought to undermine the state's program for curbing climate change.

Cherry's lengthy dinner memo was among emails released this week by PG&E [See Emails, A11]



LOUIS SINCO Los Angeles Times

**DANIEL FESSLER**, in hat, conducts a study at UCLA about how men size one another up when trying to figure out whether they could win a confrontation.

COLUMN ONE

## Sizing up men, violence

### A crude mental shortcut may shed light on conflicts

BY GEOFFREY MOHAN

Daniel Fessler is out at UCLA's Drake Track Stadium to do a bit of discreet academic observation. Spying, really, with a smidgen of fibbing.

It's fall 2013. Headlines are fading about a Florida jury's acquittal of a neighborhood watch volunteer

who had killed unarmed black teen Trayvon Martin. Just about no one outside of Missouri has even heard of the city of Ferguson.

But Fessler, an associate professor of anthropology at the university, believes he's uncovering a crude mental shortcut that may shed light on those confrontations and help explain why men resort to violence.

First, his undergraduate

research assistants will have to lure male students into doing a strange bit of exercise for \$3.

Each volunteer will climb up and down the stadium stairs while holding an electronic metronome and walking to its beat. He'll do this alongside another student whose metronome may or may not be in sync with his.

[See Violence, A16]

## White House grapples with limits of air war

BY DAVID S. CLOUD

WASHINGTON — As warplanes from the U.S. and the United Arab Emirates pounded Islamic State fighters near the Syrian city of Kobani for a third day, the U.S.-led military campaign began running up against the limits of what air power can accomplish.

"Airstrikes alone are not going to save the town of Kobani," Rear Adm. John Kirby told reporters Wednesday at the Pentagon. The militants "are going to continue to grab ground, and there are going to continue to be villages, towns and cities that they take" in Iraq and Syria.

Kirby's frank acknowledgment came after nine weeks of bombing by the United States and its allies, which has not stopped Islamic militants from claiming new territory in both Syria and Iraq, a setback that

military officials said was because of the poor performance of Iraqi and Syrian forces battling them on the ground.

About 500 miles east of Kobani, the limits of U.S. air power are also becoming apparent near Baghdad, where Islamic State fighters are making a less dramatic but potentially more dangerous push to take control of towns and districts within an hour's drive of the Iraqi capital, U.S. officials said.

Despite an intensifying [See Airstrikes, A4]

### Stanford scientist on Nobel team

William Moerner was among the three awarded the chemistry prize for developing microscopic technology for viewing cells. **LATEXTRA**

**Weather**  
Clouds breaking.  
L.A. Basin: 81/62. **AA6**  
**Complete Index** ..... **AA2**





## PG&E releases emails

[Emails, from A1]

When it disclosed that they are part of an investigation by federal prosecutors into the utility and its relationship with the PUC. Virtually every aspect of the utility's vast operations in Northern and Central California is regulated by the PUC.

Cherry and two other top utility executives have been fired. Peevey's chief of staff has resigned her post and been reassigned within the PUC. Critics are calling for Peevey's resignation, and Gov. Jerry Brown recently returned \$9,000 in campaign contributions from PG&E employees.

Meanwhile, PG&E itself has been indicted on federal criminal charges of negligence and obstruction of justice in a case stemming from the September 2010 explosion of a natural gas transmission line. The blast killed eight people and leveled a neighborhood in the San Francisco Bay Area bedroom community of San Bruno. The utility has pleaded not guilty.

The emails have come under attack from critics who say they point to a "cozy relationship" between Peevey and other PUC officials and utility executives.

Cherry's dinner memo is evidence that the PUC "is acting as the personal assistant to the largest public utility monopoly in the state of California and against the interest of the people it is supposed to represent," San Bruno Mayor Jim Ruane said.

Peevey has defended the PUC's conduct throughout and dismissed the Cherry dinner memo as a one-sided "interpretation of events from the perspective of a PG&E employee."

For its part, PG&E said the memos released this week speak for themselves.

"They were absolutely inappropriate," communications chief Keith Stephens said. He noted that Cherry and his boss have been fired and that the utility had tak-



**PUC PRESIDENT** Michael Peevey wined and dined PG&E executives.

en a number of other actions to ensure that such violations of rules against such communications "don't happen again."

On Wednesday afternoon, the PUC unveiled new rules requiring most top agency officials to report in writing their communications with companies regulated by the agency. Commissioners and their immediate aides have also agreed to voluntarily comply.

Peevey, a former president of Southern California Edison Co. in the 1990s, is at the vortex of attacks on the PUC by lawmakers, consumer advocates and governmental watchdogs.

At 76 and near the end of his second six-year term, he is the longest-serving commission president and one of its most controversial.

Peevey and his wife, Democratic state Sen. Carol Liu, own a home in La Cañada Flintridge. They also own a condominium on Lombard Street in San Francisco and the vacation home in the community of Sea Ranch.

Although his coastal retreat offered an ideal setting for a spring holiday weekend dinner, Cherry's dinner email showed that much of the conversation focused on business.

According to Cherry, Peevey strongly suggested that PG&E contribute more than \$1 million to a political campaign to defeat Proposition 23. The ultimately unsuccessful November 2010 ballot measure, backed by oil companies and other business groups, sought to suspend the state's program for curbing global warming.

Peevey, a staunch defender of California's landmark global warming law, known as AB 32, "stated very clearly that he expects PG&E to step up big and early in opposition to the AB

32 ballot initiative," Cherry wrote.

The memo went to his boss, Thomas Bottorff, senior vice president for regulatory relations, who was fired along with Cherry.

"Mike said ... we need to spend at least \$1 million," Cherry wrote. The company later contributed \$500,000 to the No on 23 campaign, according to Maplight.org, a nonpartisan campaign finance information service.

Peevey also suggested that PG&E and two other utilities — Southern California Edison and San Diego Gas & Electric Co. — each contribute \$100,000 for a January 2011 celebration of the PUC's centennial, the email said. "The amount is steep because the Committee expects to spend \$150k or so and use the rest to fund other future Commission events that the state is unwilling to fund," Cherry wrote.

Peevey noted that he encouraged many "individuals and entities" to contribute to the No on 23 campaign. He said a Fair Political Practices Commission investigation found no irregularities in the fundraising for the centennial celebration.

Other issues discussed at the Sea Ranch dinner party included approval of a contract to buy electricity from a proposed power plant, a pending PG&E request for a rate hike increase, the utility's negative public relations image and its future commitments to purchasing more climate-friendly renewable power.

"Mike wants to know the direction we are headed as a Company ... and our communication strategy for getting back in the public's good graces," Cherry wrote.

Ruane, San Bruno's mayor, has called for Peevey's ouster. On Thursday, he plans to join state Sen. Jerry Hill (D-San Mateo) and San Carlos Mayor Mark Oibert to ask for Peevey's removal by the Legislature if he is reappointed by Brown.

At a news conference this week on the steps of the PUC's San Francisco headquarters, Ruane said that the latest batch of emails released by PG&E proves "beyond a doubt that corruption — and possibly — corruption has occurred."

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# HIV close-up could aid quest for vaccine

Scientists can finally see the weaponry of the virus in action.

BY MONTE MORIN

Using powerful microscopes, scientists have observed the weaponry of HIV in action and gained key insights that may finally allow researchers to create a vaccine capable of fighting the virus that causes AIDS.

The sophisticated imaging technology employs lasers and fluorescent dyes to examine molecules 10,000 times smaller than the width of a human hair. The resulting view of the infamous protein spikes that stud the surface of HIV sheds new light on how the virus both evades and attacks key immune cells.

Scientists even videotaped the structures as they changed shape in what researchers described as a rapid, unending "dance." They also observed how a class of rare, super-potent antibodies collected from AIDS patients can halt this dance by locking the structures into a harmless position. Once frozen in place, the spikes were unable to initiate entry into host cells.

The findings, which were published Wednesday in the journals *Nature* and *Science*, provide crucial insights into the behavior of HIV, experts said.

"Personally, working in the HIV vaccine field for 16 years, I have never been so positive," said Rogier Sanders, a Cornell University microbiologist who studies the spikes but was not involved in the new research. "I think the coming year will see some major steps forward thanks to this."

HIV's preferred targets are CD4 T-cells, the white blood cells that help direct the body's immune response in times of crisis. When the virus bumps into one of these cells, the spikes latch

onto the cell's surface and pull the virus so close that it merges with the cell and dumps its genetic material into the host. Then the doomed cell begins mass-producing copies of the virus, which go on to invade more immune cells.

Ideally, the body fends off attacking viruses by producing antibodies — tiny Y-shaped proteins that fasten to the surface of foreign microbes and prevent them from entering cells or flag them for destruction. In the case of HIV, however, the spikes are expertly camouflaged in a coating of sugar that fools the immune system into thinking the virus is part of the human body.

It's this camouflage that has made it so difficult for scientists to develop an HIV vaccine.

To examine the spikes more closely, researchers turned the field of single molecule microscopy — an observation technique that was recognized with the Nobel Prize in chemistry on Wednesday. The technology allows scientists to peer into the inner workings of cells or viruses that cannot be seen with conventional microscopes.

The researchers observed that the HIV spike was not only covered by sugars, but it cycled between three specific shapes, each of which affected the virus' ability to infiltrate cells. These configurations could last for seconds, or just milliseconds, before changing into another shape.

"This was a bit surprising," said Jason Gorman, a coauthor of both studies and a vaccine researcher at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. "Nobody had ever seen how the spike moves in real time before."

The spike's shape-shifting included an open and a closed position, as well as another configuration that researchers have yet to fully describe.

Walther Mothes, a pro-

fessor of microbial pathogenesis at Yale School of Medicine and a coauthor of both papers, said this shape-shifting suggested a critical vulnerability of the virus.

For HIV to latch onto and fuse with a host cell, the spike must assume its open configuration. When it does this, it must remove some of its camouflage and reveal its true nature to circulating antibodies. Because of this, the virus keeps the spike closed most of the time, and opens only very briefly.

"This is a big step forward in our understanding of the structure and dynamics of the spike," Mothes said.

The researchers reasoned that if the spike was frozen in the closed position, the virus could be neutralized. A series of experiments with antibodies taken from AIDS patients appeared to confirm this hypothesis.

In the last few years, scientists have realized that some AIDS patients have developed broadly neutralizing antibodies that are able to see through HIV's disguise. Mothes and his colleagues showed that these antibodies were able to attach to the HIV spike and keep it in the closed position.

"They actually function as inhibitors and don't allow it to open up," Mothes said. "They lock it down."

A successful vaccine would trigger the production of similar antibodies before infection occurs, scientists believe.

In a commentary published in *Nature*, Sanders and John Moore, a Cornell professor of microbiology and immunology, wrote that numerous obstacles remained in developing a vaccine, but that the new structural data would undoubtedly help.

In fact, they wrote that this new research constitutes "a frank warning to the virus."

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