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THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN

Cool times return to the desert

Stay cool, Coachella Valley.

Believe it or not, that might be a fairly easy thing to do – at least in the near term.

As noted by The Desert Sun's Shad Powers, the extended weather outlook for Palm Springs has temperatures steering clear of triple digits for at least the next 10 days.

This should be blessed relief for all who've suffered through the brutal summer of 2017, with its extended extreme heat ad-



visories combined with wilting monsoonal conditions that spurred sky-high electric bills for even the hardest desert denizens who avoid A/C as much as possible.

Enjoy the break, fellow valley residents. Take a dip in the pool – which should drop below body temperature soon if it hasn't already – and get out and about again.

Mosquito-borne disease threat rises

Desert residents, take warning.

Health officials say the mosquito-borne disease factor is the worst it has been in years and everyone should be taking protective precautions.

The Riverside County Department of Public Health reported this week that a La Quinta resident was diagnosed with West Nile virus. Meanwhile, the Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District reports that its traps have collected the most positive samples of West Nile and/or St. Louis encephalitis in 2017 than ever before by this point in the year.

Most of those positive samples were from the eastern Coachella Valley, though vector control reports that mosquitoes known to carry diseases such as dengue, yellow fever and Zika have been found in higher numbers across the valley, with the biggest presence of late in Palm Springs.

Stay safe by keeping your property clear of mosquito-breeding conditions such as



TAYA GRAY/SPECIAL TO THE DESERT SUN
 The Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District sprays larval mosquito treatments by helicopter in Indio on March 11.

standing water and items where water can collect. Also, use insect repellent, wear protective clothing that covers exposed limbs, and shift outdoor activity away from dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.

Why Trump will have to continue working with Democrats

Shortly before Hurricane Irma hit the U.S. mainland, the latest waves of Hurricane Trump hit Washington, reshaping political battle lines in a totally unexpected but potentially productive way.

Many analysts wonder if Trump's new alliance with Democratic congressional leaders can persist past last week's success in raising the debt ceiling, funding the government and making a down payment on Hurricane Harvey reconstruction. After all, these measures HAD to be passed, as opposed to those the president would LIKE to pass.

But it may recur because it reflects two institutional realities that almost certainly will ultimately force the president to seek Democratic votes.

» Senate rules requiring 60 votes for most legislation mean that GOP leaders will generally need more than the 52 Republicans. They weren't enough for the special proce-



Carl P. Leubsdorf

cedure Majority Leader Mitch McConnell used in the effort to repeal-and-replace Obamacare. Except for a few months in 2009, neither party has had 60 votes in nearly 40 years.

» The House GOP's adherence to the so-called Hastert Rule. That is, the refusal to consider measures without support from a majority of Republicans, has weakened the chamber's clout in recent years by preventing consideration of measures with broader support.

Throughout the Obama years, House Republicans

repeatedly passed legislation reflecting the views of a majority of their members, who hail primarily from heavily Republican districts. Multiple appropriations bills cutting social programs and other conservative measures died in the Senate because they failed to attract enough bipartisan support to get the 60 votes needed to surmount the Senate's rule allowing unlimited debate.

On health care, Republican leaders sought to act with only GOP votes, using the rule that allows a reconciliation bill implementing the annual budget resolution to pass each house with a simple majority, meaning 51 in the Senate.

But increased GOP congressional numbers have broadened the party's ideological coalition, requiring the conservative majority to make compromises with more moderate members. That's how House Republican leaders succeeded

in passing Obamacare repeal on their second try, but the legislation cut too many benefits from too many people for some Senate Republicans.

The failure angered Trump, who is far more interested in results than ideological purity. If he had been better prepared for his presidency and been able to set his own congressional priorities, he might have put tax reform or infrastructure reconstruction before Obamacare.

White House legislative director Marc Short conceded Tuesday at a breakfast session with reporters sponsored by The Christian Science Monitor that the Obamacare experience showed the difficulty of trying to pass major legislation with only GOP votes, something likely to become increasingly evident in the months to come. Though Trump's initial infrastructure plan relies more on private and state funds than federal money, it's still too

costly for many House Republicans. But Democrats won't support repairing the nation's roads and bridges without a significant influx of additional federal money.

Trump will also need bipartisan support for his announced intention of protecting the Dreamers.

Forming additional bipartisan majorities like Trump and the Democrats created last week won't be easy. It will require cooperation from GOP leaders. It will be necessary for the only measure Congress MUST pass in December, a bill funding the government for the rest of the fiscal year.

That's why, for Trump, reality requires that he continue to look beyond his Republican majorities if he wants to get things done.

Carl P. Leubsdorf is the former Washington bureau chief of the Dallas Morning News. Readers may write to him via email at: carl.p.leubsdorf@gmail.com.

VALLEY VOICE

Coachella Valley residents can help prevent suicides

This past week was National Suicide Prevention Week, an initiative that has been running for over a decade and is endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO). We as a society, however, need to be aware of suicide prevention 52 weeks a year.

In America, suicide is the 10th leading cause of death, and claims approximately 44,100 lives per year.

In Riverside County, approximately 10.8 percent of adults have seriously considered suicide at some point in their lives, according to the California Health Interview Survey.

Health Assessment and Research for Communities (HARC) 2016 Coachella Valley data reveals that approximately 4.5 percent of local adults have seriously considered suicide within the past year. That equates to more than 13,700 of our friends and neighbors who've come close to taking their own lives in the past 12 months.

The numbers prove that suicide is a health issue here in the Coachella Valley that needs our attention.

What is perhaps most significant to understand about suicide is that it is preventable. Understanding the warning signs of suicide, learning how to respond to these signs, and knowing who to contact for help are critically important skills that provide tremendous help in the effort to support individuals who are at risk.

The theme of this year's World Suicide Prevention Day, "Take a Minute, Save a Life," reflects the ability that we all have to help prevent suicide. A simple moment of intervention to ask if someone is OK or refer him or her to a resource can make all the difference in the life of a person contemplating taking his or her life.

There are a variety of resources available for suicide prevention, and ways we can support suicide prevention, right here in the Coachella Valley.

SHARE YOUR VIEWS

The Desert Sun welcomes guest columns addressing local political and social issues.

General guidelines include:

- » Columns should be 500 to 550 words.
- » We print the author's photo and contact info (typically an email address) with the column.
- » Anonymous columns are never published.
- » Stick to a single topic and avoid personal attacks.
- » We reserve the right to edit and republish (including electronically) all columns.

Direct column submissions and questions to Al Franco, engagement editor/opinion, at al.franco@desertsun.com



Jenna LeComte-Hinely



KRISTEN HWANG/THE DESERT SUN

The United Student Body at Desert Hot Springs High School advocated to bring a week of suicide prevention activities to campus in March 2017. As part of the prevention movement, the students painted positive messages on rocks to be placed around campus.

» American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Inland Empire and Desert Cities chapter: <https://afsp.org/chapter/afsp-inland-empire-and-desert-cities/>

» It's Up to Us (a program of Riverside County Behavioral Health): <http://up2riverside.org/> or 951-686-HELP (4357)

» American Association of Suicidology: <http://www.suicidology.org/about-aas/national-suicide-prevention-week>

If you are in crisis or know anyone who is, immediately call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-TALK (8255) or text TALK to 741-741. You can also visit the Suicide Prevention Lifeline at: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>.

It only takes a minute to help save someone's life. Please take the time to ask questions and listen to the answers.

Email Jenna LeComte-Hinely, Ph.D., chief executive officer of HARC, Inc., at jlecomte-hinely@HARCdata.org.