



MARY SERRITELLA, 71, performs at the Bourbon Room in Hollywood last month. "You never lose it if you never let it go," Serritella told the audience. "And five years ago I had a hip replacement. I'm a bionic woman!"

GINA FERRAZZI Los Angeles Times

COLUMN ONE

Pole dancer, 71, strips away notions of aging, sexuality

Dressed in 7-inch neon heels and translucent yellow bell-bottoms, Mary Serritella was defying gravity and expectations on a recent Wednesday night at Hollywood's Bourbon Room.

Spinning gracefully around a silver pole to a disco medley, she contorted her body into a series of improbable positions with even more improbable names such as "The Chopstick," "The Jade Split" and "The Black Sun Split" — a showstopper in which she gripped the pole between her belly and thigh and hung upside down holding a foot with each hand.

Fourteen years after taking up the sport, Mary Serritella is inspiring others decades younger

By Deborah Netburn

It was a dazzling display of flexibility and sensual athleticism, and the crowd loved it. But when Serritella, who performs under the name Mary Caryl, revealed after the September performance that she had just celebrated her 71st birthday, the room exploded. A young woman in the front row pumped her fist in the air. Another made a bow, reminiscent of the "we're not worthy" bit from "Wayne's World."

"You never lose it if you never let it go," Serritella told the audience. "And five years ago I had a hip replacement. I'm a bionic woman!"

[See Pole dancer, A5]

How church's cover-ups led to \$1.5 billion in settlements

The archdiocese's size and a 2019 state law fuel a record payout over abuse by priests.

By RICHARD WINTON AND HANNAH FRY

Clergy sex abuse scandals have rocked Catholic churches across the world, but few places have seen the financial toll of the Los Angeles Archdiocese.

With a record \$880-million settlement with victims announced this week, the Los Angeles Archdiocese has now paid out more than \$1.5 billion.

The bill reflects its rank as the largest archdiocese in the nation, with more than 4 million members, and a California law that gave accusers more time to file suit.

But attorneys and others

who have been involved in more than two decades of litigation say it also is an indication of the failures of church leaders to identify molesting priests and prevent them from committing more crimes.

Some of those priests, after undergoing treatment at residential centers, were shuffled to new parishes, frequently in immigrant neighborhoods where the abuse would continue.

With the latest settlements, the number of people alleging abuse now stands at nearly 2,500. But the true number could be much higher, lawyers say.

One reason for the size of L.A.'s payout is that the California Legislature in 2019 opted to give adults more time to file lawsuits over childhood sexual abuse, which prompted more survivors to come forward. This [See Archdiocese, A10]



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

CARDINAL Roger Mahony, pictured in 2021, was roundly criticized for his handling of clergy sex abuse.



GUSTAVO ARELLANO Los Angeles Times

ADRIANA JASSO explains the work being done on the walls at the U.S.-Mexico border at Tijuana River Valley Regional Park in San Diego.

CAMINOS DEL SOUTHWEST

What better than a road trip to dispel some tired tropes

Columnist has known forever what many won't consider: Latinos are as American as anyone else, if not more so.

GUSTAVO ARELLANO

ON THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER, SAN DIEGO — I've done the drive from Orange County to the United States-Mexico border so many times that it's as easy to describe as my backyard.

Start in Anaheim if I'm taking my dad, Santa Ana if it's my wife. Slow down at the Border Patrol station in San Clemente, even though all the agents are on the northbound side and



I'm an American citizen — because you just never know.

Try to sneak a peek at Camp Pendleton's natural beauty and military installations. Take the 805 South to avoid downtown San Diego. Zip through suburbs, working-class communities, rolling hills and all sorts of Spanish-named streets until reuniting with the 5 in San Ysidro.

Cross into Tijuana. *Fin.*

It's such a familiar journey that I rarely think of it as what it is — a trip to another country. It doesn't take more than two hours, but it might as well be an eternity.

The border was drawn 175 years ago by a joint U.S.-Mexico commission after the U.S. won the war between the two countries and conquered what is now the American Southwest. Both sides of *la frontera* have been picking at this open [See Arellano, A6]

ANALYSIS

Weighing Sinwar's killing in a Middle East quagmire

U.S. hopes death of Hamas leader will end the Gaza war. Israel may have other ideas.

By TRACY WILKINSON

WASHINGTON — President Biden and his senior leadership hailed Israel's killing of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar as an "opportunity" to end the yearlong war that has devastated the Gaza Strip and killed thousands of Palestinians.

Speaking Friday in Germany, Biden said he telephoned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and told him the elimination of the radical "terror mastermind" Sinwar meant it was time to find peace.

But is this milestone moment really an opportunity to finally enact a ceasefire? Or will Netanyahu intensify military operations and fight ahead, vindicated — in his view — that his hard-line and uncompromising offensive has proved to be the correct strategy?

"The war is not over," Ne-

tanyahu declared triumphantly in a televised address when he confirmed Sinwar's killing by an Israeli army unit in a building in the city of Rafah in southern Gaza.

And 24 hours later, Hamas was equally defiant. Sinwar's "banner will not fall," the militant organization said in a statement Friday that praised the exploits of its dead leader.

And to those who hoped Sinwar's death might lead to the release of Israeli hostages who remain in Hamas [See Analysis, A6]

Sectarian fears rise in Lebanon

As Israel expands its strikes far from Hezbollah's bastions into areas with Shiites, tensions worsen. **WORLD, A3**

Mother accused in infant's death

Monterey County woman is arrested in the 1994 cold case of "Baby Garin" of rural Las Lomas. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Weather
Mostly sunny.
L.A. Basin: 81/58. **B8**

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WALLY SKALIJ Los Angeles Times

IT WILL BE DECIDED IN L.A.

Mets' Game 5 win sends NLCS back to Dodger Stadium. Read all about it at latimes.com/sports and latimes.com/newspaper.



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