

Public’s help sought in Kirk’s slaying



Police officers and FBI agents collect evidence Thursday behind Utah Valley University in Orem as they investigate the shooting death the previous day of political activist Charlie Kirk, a close ally of President Donald Trump.

Killing unlikely to make GOP soften incendiary partisan rhetoric

The reaction of Second Amendment absolutists and their enablers to the slaying of conservative activist Charlie Kirk during a rally at Utah Valley University was as predictable as it was dangerous. In a moment that begged for calm and unity, Democrats — even those who loathed Kirk politically — offered condolences and railed against political violence. Meanwhile, Republicans, who control Congress and the White House (and, let’s face it, the Supreme Court) were much less likely to condemn political violence, and none suggested they should pursue gun safety measures. Some conservative activists and politicians con-

Garofoli continues on A11

JOE GAROFOLI IT’S ALL POLITICAL



Charlie Kirk, founder of Turning Point USA, appeared in Orem, Utah, as part of his “American Comeback Tour.”

California’s top Dems condemn escalation of political violence

By Sara Libby and Sara DiNatale STAFF WRITERS

California’s top Democratic leaders forcefully condemned the fatal shooting of conservative activist Charlie Kirk at an event in Utah, saying the shocking attack should drive home the importance of quelling

all forms of political violence. The fatal shooting of Kirk during an appearance Wednesday at Utah Valley University in Orem came less than three months after a Democratic Minnesota lawmaker was assassinated and another was wounded. The shooting of Kirk — Democrats continues on A11

Shooter at large — two photos of possible suspect are released

By Eric Tucker, Alanna Durkin Richer and Jesse Bedayn ASSOCIATED PRESS

OREM, Utah — The shooter who assassinated conservative activist Charlie Kirk and then vanished off a roof and into the woods remained at large more than 24 hours later Thursday as federal investigators appealed for the public’s help by releasing a pair of photos of the person believed responsible. Investigators obtained clues including a palm print, a shoe impression and a high-powered hunting rifle found in a wooded area along the path on which the shooter is believed to have fled. But they had yet to name a suspect or cite a motive in the killing they were treating as the latest act of political violence to convulse the United States across the ideological spectrum. Kirk continues on A12

Oakland delays decision on camps

Leaders skeptical crackdown would bring tangible change

By Maggie Angst STAFF WRITER

Should cities wait until they can offer someone a shelter bed and affordable housing before clearing homeless encampments and towing RVs? Oakland leaders grappled with that question Wednesday. But despite hours of public comment from residents and a robust discussion in the City Council chambers, members of the city’s public safety commission could not reach a consensus. A year after the U.S. Supreme Court gave local governments broad authority to punish homeless people for sleeping on public property, cities across the Bay Area have adopted new laws escalating enforcement tactics — regardless of whether they have alternative shelter to offer them. Since the decision, Oakland has not made any major policy changes for addressing its homelessness crisis, but earlier this month Council Member Ken Houston released a proposal to reshape the city’s current encampment policies. Under Houston’s plan, officials could clear encampments regardless of whether the city has available shelter beds for those forced to leave an area. Additionally, law enforcement could arrest unhoused people for camping on public property and ticket and tow unregistered or illegally parked RVs serving as homes. While Oakland has historically required an offer of shelter before sweeping encampments, there were some exemptions made under former Mayor Sheng Thao for encampments that posed imminent safety risks. Houston described the policy as a measured approach that balanced enforcement and accountability. He said the policy shift was necessary to improve public health and safety and reclaim public spaces. “This is a difficult situation,” Houston said during the meeting. “But someone has to take a bold stand. We cannot continue to live in this condition, and we cannot continue to let individuals live in this condition.” While other council members agreed that the current street conditions in Oakland are Oakland continues on A10

Scientists work to save vivid, rare snake

By Kurtis Alexander STAFF WRITER

The San Francisco garter snake, with its brilliant hues of deep red and turquoise, is widely considered one of the most beautiful snakes in North America. It’s also one of the rarest, with maybe 2,000 living in the wild today, all in San Mateo County. In a bid to ensure a future for the endangered snake, Bay Area scientists are teaming up on a first-ever effort to rear a captive colony of the colorful crawlers, with plans to start releasing the newborns and rebuilding their populations at local ponds and hillsides. “If we don’t have more snakes out there, they could disappear in our lifetime,” said Rochelle Stiles, director of field conservation for the San Francisco Zoo and Gardens, where the captive



A group of Bay Area researchers is raising a population of endangered San Francisco garter snakes in captivity.

group is being raised. “The snakes serve a very important role in the ecosystem.” The effort to keep the San Francisco garter snake from sliding into extinction involves an array of federal, state and local entities, including the U.S. Geological Survey, National Park Service, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and Midpeninsula Regional Open

Space District. On a recent morning, Stiles and her colleague Jamie McNellis, a conservation specialist, entered a locked room on the quarantined animal-rearing grounds of the San Francisco Zoo, where the two are playing their part in the repopulation project by overseeing snake reproduction. Ten mother snakes, which had been trapped in the wild while pregnant and then driven to the zoo, rested in small, heated enclosures, having recently given birth to a total of 117 baby snakes. A single female can produce up to 30 young in a litter. According to Stiles, just 1% of snakes in the wild survive to adulthood while those raised at the zoo will see a 98% survival rate. The pregnant females also come to term more quickly in captivity. “All of the moms are eating, Snake continues on A10