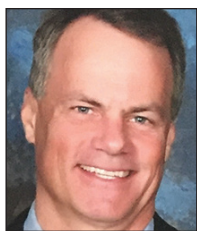


# COMMENTARY

Editorials, letters, columns and other opinions

## Lifesaving Solution for S.D. Coronado Bridge



### COMMENTARY

George Mullen

More than 400 people have given up their lives jumping from the San Diego-Coronado Bridge since 1969 — with 98 in the past six years. San Diego and Coronado have become hosts to a suicide magnet that is now averaging 16 deaths per year. This is a humanitarian disaster and a growing public relations nightmare that is causing a significant loss in business and tourism productivity to our region. We must end this — and we can successfully do so within a month's time and for less than \$25,000.

Let me explain how:

The Golden Gate Bridge — the most frequently used location for suicide — is installing nets to dissuade jumpers at a cost of \$204 million. Studies for a San Diego-Coronado Bridge solution range from \$5 million (thistle barrier of spikes) to \$137 million (transparent glass barrier). Where will this money come from? Is the cost-benefit analysis worth it? Will it ever happen? I'm doubtful.

So what's the appropriate response? Do we continue allowing 16 people to needlessly die each year? Continue the endless bridge shutdowns, traffic meltdowns, and resultant loss to regional productivity? (The bridge was closed 35 times for suicide attempts in 2016.)

I say "no." And I propose the perfect "temporary emergency solution" until a permanent one is ready for implementation.

As an artist who works with barbwire, I know firsthand barbwire to be vicious, violent, intimidating, and unforgiving. And yet, it is highly effective. No one wants to tangle with barbwire.

Our bridge, on the other hand, is the

ultimate suicide convenience stop for desperate souls — hit brakes, open door, step over a 34-inch mini-wall, jump. Should an impromptu life-exit for troubled persons be so easy?

The problem can be easily rectified by making the jump far more difficult. (Suicidal thoughts are often impulsive and fleeting — without an impromptu life-exit readily available, many of these troubled people will regain control and live out productive and fruitful lives.) Specifically, I propose a taut barrier of five strands of barbwire running horizontally above the current barrier and fastened to the existing light-poles. Bridges with added barriers have seen suicides decline by 79 – 91 percent.

### Low-Cost Proposal

The San Diego-Coronado Bridge spans nearly two miles, but only about one mile warrants suicide prevention. Two sides means two miles, times five strands, equals 10 miles of barbwire. With barbwire, ties, stabilizing rods, bird prevention reflectors, and miscellaneous items, material costs will be under \$5,000. Running and tying barbwire is quick — labor would be under \$20,000. The total job cost would be under \$25,000.

There is no need for expensive and time-consuming studies before implementation. Barbwire is light and thin, won't encroach upon vehicles in the roadway, and won't be visible in the panoramic photos of the bridge and bay. There's no walking pedestrian risk, no structural changes to bridge, no weight or wind resistance factors, and no heavy materials at risk of falling.

### Necessary Resistance

Humans prefer paths of least resistance — even in suicide — and this is why our bridge has become a suicide magnet. Adding a barbwire "life screen" barrier will bring major-league

resistance that will radically alter the dynamic. Those who attempt to climb it will find it painful, difficult and slow, allowing stopping cars ample time to intervene. Likewise, threatening to jump a barbwire barrier is a very different risk factor than threatening to jump a mini-wall. Law enforcement will now have the upper hand.

Word will quickly spread that the San Diego-Coronado Bridge is no longer open for business.

In a cost-benefit analysis, \$25,000 for the opportunity to save lives, increase productivity, and end the public relations nightmare is a huge win.

I have two questions for any nay-sayers: Do you prefer the possibility of saving 16 people every year while ending the persistent bridge shutdowns and traffic meltdowns? Or is it more important for you not to see a smidgen of barbwire in your bay view for 60 seconds of your bridge drive?

### Trial Approach

Let's give this temporary emergency "life screen" a one-year test — it can easily be removed if unsuccessful.

In a civil society our No. 1 priority must be to protect, preserve, and save the lives of our citizens — bridge and highway aesthetics are secondary.

If San Diego and Coronado think the expense of a barbwire barrier test is too burdensome, I will personally pledge \$5,000 if four like-minded citizens will match me. (Indicative of our caring community, seven selfless San Diegans have already matched my pledge. Who else will join us?)

Either way, let's get it done — the lives of at least 400 persons will depend on it over the next quarter century.

*George Mullen is an artist, business owner and native San Diegan. His barbwire art can be viewed at [StudioRevolution.com](http://StudioRevolution.com).*

## BUSINESS CALENDAR

### Upcoming events

#### Big Accounting Day 2018

**Organization:** IMA  
**When:** 8:30 am - 4:30 pm, May 14  
**Where:** Town and Country Hotel and Conference Center  
550 Hotel Circle N., San Diego

#### May Breakfast Program: Top 10 Mistakes in Investigation: In Real time and At Litigation

**Organization:** San Diego SHRM  
**When:** 8 - 9:30 am, May 16  
**Where:** Sharp Health Plan  
8520 Tech Way Meeting Room MPR  
124/125, San Diego

#### Wine Social

**Organization:** San Diego MIT Enterprise Forum  
**When:** 6 - 9 pm, May 16  
**Where:** Knobbe Martens,  
12790 El Camino Real, San Diego

#### HR Café May Mingle

**Organization:** HR Cafe  
**When:** 5:30- 7:30 pm, May 16

**Where:** Coastal Payroll  
9350 Waxie Way, Suite 110

#### Health Care Update and Professional Development Session

**Organization:** FEI  
**When:** 4:45 - 8 pm, May 17  
**Where:** Fairbanks Ranch Country Club, 15150 San Dieguito Road,  
Rancho Santa Fe

#### Building a High Performance Teams

**Organization:** UC San Diego Extension, Downtown Works  
**When:** Noon - 1: 30, May 23  
**Where:** DowntownWorks  
550 W. B St., 4<sup>th</sup> floor, San Diego

#### "The Eagle and the Trident: The Past and Future of U.S.-Ukraine Relations" featuring Ambassador Steven Pifer

**Organization:** San Diego World Affairs Council  
**When:** Noon - 1: 30, May 23  
**Where:** National University, Sanford Auditorium, 11355N. TorreyPines Road, La Jolla

#### Human-Centered Design Thinking Workshop

**Organization:** The Design Academy  
**When:** 8:30 - 5:30, May 23, May 24  
**Where:** 2851 Camino del Rio S.

#### SDMAC May Breakfast

**Organization:** MilitarAdvisory Council  
**When:** 7:30 - 9 am, May 30  
**Where:** Admiral Kidd Catering & Conference Center,  
33050 McDonough Road

#### Annual Dinner

**Organization:** San Diego Regional Economic Development Council  
**When:** 4:30 - 8:30 pm, May 31  
**Where:** SeaWorld San Diego,  
2595 Ingraham Street, San Diego,  
9350 Waxie Way, Suite 110

To submit an event for possible inclusion, email the following information to Steve Adamek at [sadamek@sdbj.com](mailto:sadamek@sdbj.com): **name, time and location of event; event host, event speaker(s) and/or description of event.**

## SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

4909 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 200  
San Diego, CA 92123  
858-277-6359 • Fax 858-277-6398  
Email: [sdbj@sdbj.com](mailto:sdbj@sdbj.com) • [www.sdbj.com](http://www.sdbj.com)

### PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER

Huntley Paton [hpaton@sdbj.com](mailto:hpaton@sdbj.com) • 858-277-2914

### PUBLISHER EMERITUS

Armon Mills [amills@sdbj.com](mailto:amills@sdbj.com) • 858-277-6795

### EDITORIAL

#### EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Nels Jensen [njensen@sdbj.com](mailto:njensen@sdbj.com) • 858-277-6897

#### Managing Editor

Vik Jolly [vjolly@sdbj.com](mailto:vjolly@sdbj.com) • 858-634-4623

#### Copy Editor

Steve J. Adamek [sadamek@sdbj.com](mailto:sadamek@sdbj.com) • 858-277-6591

#### Reporters

Tony Cagala [tcagala@sdbj.com](mailto:tcagala@sdbj.com) • 858-277-6586

Sarah de Crescenzo [sarahd@sdbj.com](mailto:sarahd@sdbj.com) • 858-277-6971

Ray Huard [rhuard@sdbj.com](mailto:rhuard@sdbj.com) • 858-277-8904

Jared Whitlock [jwhitlock@sdbj.com](mailto:jwhitlock@sdbj.com) • 858-634-4636

#### Contributing Writers

Stephanie R. Glidden [sglidden@sdbj.com](mailto:sglidden@sdbj.com)

#### Photographers

Melissa Jacobs • [mj@sandiegophoto.com](mailto:mj@sandiegophoto.com)

Jamie Scott Lytle • [jamiesscottlytlephotography@gmail.com](mailto:jamiesscottlytlephotography@gmail.com)

Stephen Whalen • [peak15@roadrunner.com](mailto:peak15@roadrunner.com)

### RESEARCH

#### Researcher

Gina Bertuzzi [gbertuzzi@sdbj.com](mailto:gbertuzzi@sdbj.com) • 858-634-4635

### ADVERTISING

#### Sales Manager

Dale Ganzow [dganow@sdbj.com](mailto:dganow@sdbj.com) • 858-277-4832

#### Account Executives

Norma Biasas [nbiasas@sdbj.com](mailto:nbiasas@sdbj.com) • 858-634-4234

Rick Bushree [rbushree@sdbj.com](mailto:rbushree@sdbj.com) • 858-277-6692

Julie Sargent-Helm [jsheilm@sdbj.com](mailto:jsheilm@sdbj.com) • 858-277-6397

Melissa Scofield [mscofield@sdbj.com](mailto:mscofield@sdbj.com) • 858-277-1516

#### Director, National Accounts & Local Brand Partnerships

Jim Barker [jbarker@sdbj.com](mailto:jbarker@sdbj.com) • 858-277-6499

#### Classified/Legal Advertising Executive

Lucinda Lauridsen [llauridsen@sdbj.com](mailto:llauridsen@sdbj.com) • 858-277-6359

### ART & PRODUCTION

#### Director

Sandra Powers [spowers@sdbj.com](mailto:spowers@sdbj.com) • 858-634-4628

#### Production Artists

Angela Castillo [acastillo@sdbj.com](mailto:acastillo@sdbj.com) • 858-277-6359 x 3117

Suzan Peterson [suzanp@sdbj.com](mailto:suzanp@sdbj.com) • 858-277-6359 x 3116

### CIRCULATION & EVENTS

#### Audience Development Director

Shelley Barry [sbarry@sdbj.com](mailto:sbarry@sdbj.com) • 858-277-6391

#### Events & Marketing Manager

Audrey Marlow [amarlow@sdbj.com](mailto:amarlow@sdbj.com) • 858-277-6359 x 3145

#### Events Specialists

Jen Malan [jmalan@sdbj.com](mailto:jmalan@sdbj.com) • 858-277-6359 x 3109

### Administration

#### Controller

Mark J. Misiano [mmisiano@sdbj.com](mailto:mmisiano@sdbj.com) • 858-277-6778

#### Accounting Assistant

Kayla Polgar [accounting@sdbj.com](mailto:accounting@sdbj.com) • 858-277-6696

#### Receptionist

Vanessa Quartuccio [vquartuccio@sdbj.com](mailto:vquartuccio@sdbj.com) • 858-277-6359

