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Royal enthusiasts camp across the road from Westminster Abbey ahead of Friday's royal wedding.

**The royal nuptials**

SFGate.com and The Chronicle will provide complete coverage of the wedding Friday of Prince William and Kate Middleton.  
 ► Follow Leah Garchik's tweets as she watches the 1 a.m. event: @leahgarchik.  
**Saturday in Datebook:**  
 ► The bride's dress: Bay Area designers weigh in.  
 ► Media madness: David Wiegand on TV coverage.  
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# San Francisco Chronicle

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Suhr, 'reformer from inside out,' sworn in as police chief



Mayor Ed Lee swears in Greg Suhr (right), who has 30 years on the force, as San Francisco's new police chief.

## Rising through ranks — and job isn't done

By John Coté

CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

Don't expect newly minted San Francisco Police Chief Greg Suhr to systematically undo reforms pushed by his predecessor, George Gascón. Gascón certainly doesn't. "I can't think of a better choice for this position today in San Francisco than Greg Suhr," Gascón said Wednesday before the new chief was

sworn in at City Hall. Gascón, who came from Mesa, Ariz., was the first outsider to lead the department since the 1970s. The incoming chief is a native San Franciscan who has spent 30 years rising through the department's ranks. But

city officials said the path of modernizing the department and increasing accountability will remain. Suhr "will be a reformer from the inside out," Mayor Ed Lee said. In an interview with The Chronicle after being sworn in at City Hall, Suhr said he has embraced many of Gascón's policies. Those include clearing the backlog of discipline cases to get more officers either back

sworn in at City Hall. Gascón, who came from Mesa, Ariz., was the first outsider to lead the department since the 1970s. The incoming chief is a native San Franciscan who has spent 30 years rising through the department's ranks. But city officials said the path of modernizing the department and increasing accountability will remain. Suhr "will be a reformer from the inside out," Mayor Ed Lee said. In an interview with The Chronicle after being sworn in at City Hall, Suhr said he has embraced many of Gascón's policies. Those include clearing the backlog of discipline cases to get more officers either back

*Subr continues on A8*

SAN BRUNO BLAST

## Regulator may push PG&E for water test

Pipeline 'assumptions' not adequate, PUC says

By Jaxon Van Derbeken  
 CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

A top California gas safety regulator has told Pacific Gas and Electric Co. officials that high-pressure water tests, not "assumptions," are the only acceptable way of vouching for the safety of hundreds of miles of gas pipelines for which the utility has incomplete records. PG&E is hoping to avoid such tests in as many cases as it can. It has warned the state that it would take five years to conduct the inspections on the more than 700 miles of transmission pipe in and around urban areas for which it has been unable to produce complete safety documentation. In a filing with the Public

*Pipeline continues on A7*



**Richard Clark of the state Public Utilities Commission.**

► **Community forum:** Residents of the devastated Crestmoor neighborhood are assured that rebuilding work will begin soon. **A7**

DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

## Panetta to take Pentagon helm at crucial time

By Carolyn Lochhead  
 CHRONICLE WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON — Heading into an era of tighter Pentagon budgets, President Obama has chosen former longtime Monterey Congressman Leon Panetta as secretary of defense in a move that puts a former White House budget chief in charge of the sprawling military bureaucracy, administration officials said Wednesday. Panetta, 72, was reluctant to leave his job as director of the Central Intelligence Agency, a senior administration official said. A budget expert who had little experience in intelligence before taking the job as spy chief, Panetta is credited with

*Panetta continues on A8*



**Leon Panetta is a known budget hawk.**



**Gen. David Petraeus will lead the CIA.**

**HEALTH**

## UCSF taking closer look at 'calorie restrictors'

By Erin Allday

CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

Trent Arsenault has eaten the same breakfast, lunch and dinner almost every day for the past four or five years: a fruit smoothie in the morning, a spinach salad at noon and another fruit smoothie after work. Every now and then he'll

add a snack to his day. Maybe a spoonful of almond butter or a few walnuts. All in all, Arsenault consumes about 1,800 calories a day — or several hundred calories fewer than what a typical man his size would expect to eat. But Arsenault is hardly typical. At 6 feet 1 inch tall, he

*Diet continues on A8*



Michael Macor / The Chronicle

**Trent Arsenault pours ground flaxseed into his smoothie blend, which also includes kiwi, kale, blueberries, pineapple, banana, honey, almond milk, cacao powder, lemon and whole raw milk.**



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**Weather**  
 Partly cloudy, becoming sunny. Highs 54-69. Lows 38-47. **D6**



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Image: Cristóbal Balenciaga, cocktail hat of ivory silk satin, 1953. Rawlings / Vogue / Condé Nast Archive, © Condé Nast

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## FROM THE COVER

## Eating less to live longer, healthier

Diet from page A1

weighs just 150 pounds, and he purposely restricts the calories he takes in because he believes a strict diet will allow him a much longer, healthier life than his peers.

"My blood pressure is equivalent to a 10-year-old's. My triglyceride level is very healthy for a 20-year-old," said Arsenault, a 35-year-old engineer who works out of his home in Fremont. "It took years for me to refine my diet to what works for me and keeps me healthy. But I think it's worth it. I haven't gotten sick once since being on this diet."

## Calorie restrictor

Arsenault is a calorie restrictor — someone who regularly consumes roughly a third fewer calories than an average person his or her size would eat, while still meeting all basic nutritional needs. Unlike anorexics or others with eating disorders, calorie restrictors don't usually care about weight loss or body image. They want to live longer.

And they may be on to something, based on several scientific studies of calorie restriction in animals and a handful in humans. In a major, decades-long study of rhesus monkeys that ended in 2009, scientists found that animals

kept on a diet with 30 percent fewer calories than a control group had fewer cases of diabetes, cancer and heart disease.

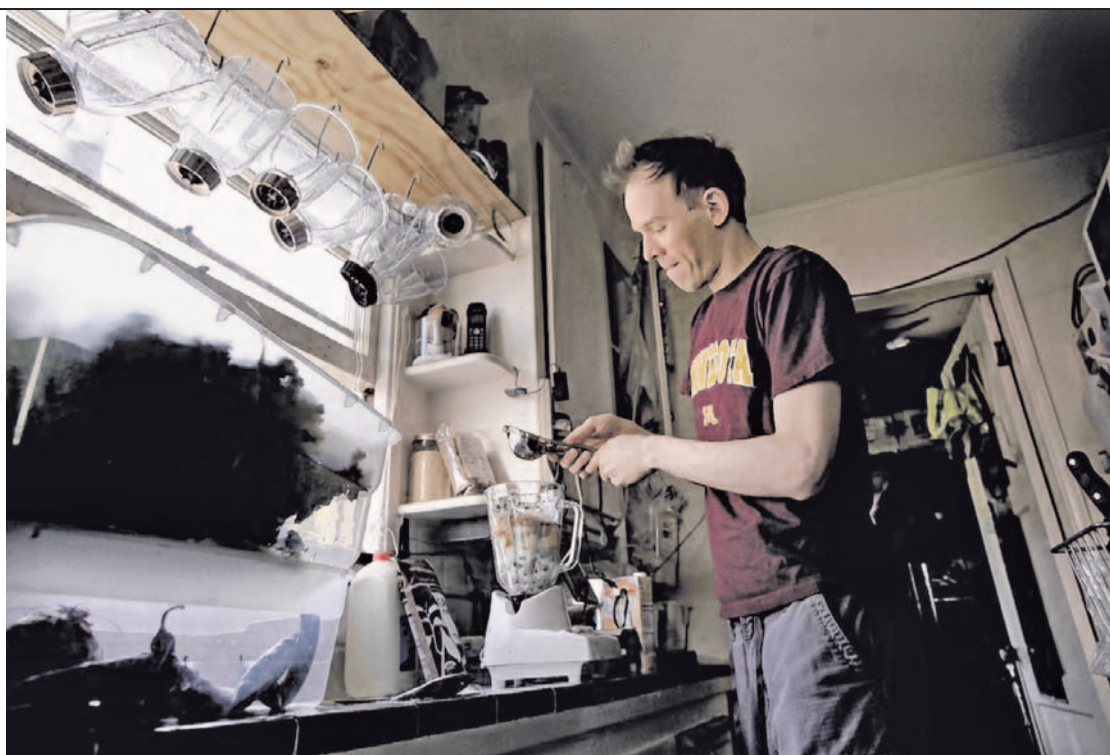
## The diet study

Now researchers at UCSF are looking at a group of 28 people — including Arsenault — who strictly control their calorie intake. Specifically, the scientists are studying what effect the diets may have on certain markers that suggest someone may live a long life, such as cholesterol and blood pressure levels and the length of an individual's telomeres, which are the caps on the ends of chromosomes that regulate cell aging.

They'll also be looking at several molecular-level signs of aging that have never been studied in humans before.

"This study will be our glimpse into their future, even though we won't be following them their whole lives," said Elissa Epel, an associate professor of psychiatry at UCSF who studies the relationship between stress, food and cell aging. "We're looking at the cellular markers that these people believe they are manipulating through their diet."

Scientists aren't sure why calorie restriction might help people live longer, but it's been studied for decades as a potential pathway to the always-elusive fountain of youth. One



Photos by Michael Macor / The Chronicle

At home in Fremont, Trent Arsenault squeezes a lemon into his smoothie blend.



Arsenault's lunch is spinach salad with onions, garlic, walnuts, cucumber, broccoli and organic olive oil.

theory is that starvation puts cells into some kind of preservation mode, focusing more energy on maintenance.

But dieting is stressful, and stress hormones like cortisol are well known to be damaging to the body. Epel wonders what

is happening in the bodies of calorie restrictors that lets them remain healthy even as their body is flooded with cortisol — or if, perhaps, they're not quite as healthy as the dieters and doctors assume.

## A healthy skeptic

Janet Tomiyama, the researcher who is leading the UCSF study, said she's long been a diet skeptic — she knows that while most calorie-restricting diets are successful in the short term, the results rarely last more than a year or two.

"But every time I would say dieting isn't necessarily healthy, people would then say calorie restriction is the only intervention we know of that increases life spans," Tomiyama said. *Diet continues on A9*

## Panetta, Petraeus to take key new roles

Panetta from page A1

restoring morale and order after a period of turmoil over the agency's role in the torture and detention of terrorism suspects.

Obama personally asked Panetta to take the job, and after thinking about it, Panetta agreed at a meeting with Obama on Monday. With Senate confirmation all but assured, Panetta is scheduled to start his new job July 1.

The president is expected to announce the appointment today as part of a shuffling of his national security team set in motion by the retirement of Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who also held the job under President George W. Bush.

In the shuffle, Gen. David

Petraeus, the top commander in Afghanistan, will become director of the spy agency, Gen. John Allen will assume military command in Afghanistan, and Bush veteran Ryan Crocker will become ambassador to Afghanistan.

## Fiscal hawk

Panetta, a fiscal hawk, former Army lieutenant in the Vietnam War and a committed moderate with deep roots in Northern California, brings a bird's-eye perspective on government finances that no previous defense chief has had.

In his nearly four decades in Washington, Panetta chaired the House Budget Committee and served as former President Bill Clinton's budget chief and White House chief of staff. With Washington under

intense deficit pressure, Panetta's budget experience was one reason for his appointment, the administration official said, adding that the belt-tightening that Gates began "will continue to intensify."

Larry Diamond, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution in Palo Alto, called Panetta a "superb choice."

"He may not be so instinctively reflexive as to defend every last Pentagon spending program as some previous defense secretaries have," Diamond said. "We are entering an era where everything has got to be on table in terms of U.S. government spending. You can't get there without putting the Pentagon budget on the table."

Panetta also will be Obama's top hand in managing a planned withdrawal from Afghanistan, where Obama's troop surge has produced mixed results and is scheduled to begin drawing down this summer.

Twice in his career, Panetta



Gen. John Allen to be Afghanistan commander.



Ryan Crocker will be Afghanistan ambassador.

has been tapped by Democratic presidents to straighten out critical but dysfunctional bureaucracies, by Clinton at the White House and Obama at the spy agency. As Clinton's top negotiator in a 1996 showdown with Republicans over the budget, Panetta managed an earlier drawdown in Pentagon spending and helped position Clinton as a prudent fiscal steward.

## Biggest bureaucracy

His new appointment as head of the nation's most sprawling bureaucracy — with a \$720 billion annual budget

that exceeds all domestic agency budgets combined and is nearly as much as Medicare and Medicaid combined — drew lavish praise from Republicans and Democrats.

But Christopher Preble, director of foreign policy studies at the libertarian Cato Institute and an advocate of scaling back the U.S. military posture, said Panetta more than Gates "is really going to be the one on the hook to execute what I think will be real cuts" in the defense budget.

"My question is whether Panetta will be willing to revisit the Pentagon's roles and missions in a way Bob Gates was not, and if he's not, will Barack Obama do that."

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, a California Democrat and chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee who was initially skeptical of Panetta's CIA appointment given his lack of experience in intelligence at the time, on Wednesday called Panetta "the most skilled person in

*Panetta continues on A9*

## 'Reformer from inside out' sworn in as police chief

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on the streets or off the force; using the CompStat computerized crime-tracking system to evaluate district captains' effectiveness; and moving police inspectors into district stations where they can work more closely with beat officers on serious crimes.

"The station investigative idea was long overdue," Suhr said. "I've been an advocate of that for many, many years."

## Making strides in Bayview

Suhr credited that move with helping dramatically increase the number of crimes considered solved at the Bayview Station, the city's largest police bureau in a district that is home to some of its toughest neighborhoods.

"We have an 80 percent clearance rate this year on homicides, which is pretty unprecedented," said Suhr, who has been the station's captain since 2009.

Suhr said he's committed to opening a long-awaited police substation on Sixth Street to help revitalize the Mid-Market area into an arts and theater district.

The new chief also praised the department's efforts to gradually implement the new, voter-approved ban on sitting or lying on public sidewalks.

Some proponents of the ban



Lance Iversen / The Chronicle

New Police Chief Greg Suhr, a native San Franciscan who last oversaw the Bayview Station, is sworn in at City Hall.

have complained the law has had little effect on deterring vagrants after police began handing out written warnings in the Haight last month. Police officers must issue a warning before handing out a citation. The maximum penalty is a \$500 fine and 30 days in jail.

Suhr said the judicious approach has helped officers know who they are dealing with without being overly punitive.

"I think it was really carefully rolled out," Suhr said. "I think the tracking system works."

Gascón praised Suhr, who works with the Bayview YMCA and the Boys and Girls Clubs of

San Francisco, as well as setting up soccer and basketball programs for youths with gang ties, as "the ultimate champion of community policing."

## Seen as force of stability

The 30-year veteran is widely viewed as a steady hand for an organization buffeted by turmoil in recent months.

In a surprise move, outgoing Mayor Gavin Newsom appointed Gascón as district attorney in January, leaving incomplete the structural reforms he had initiated after coming to town 18 months before. Jeff Godown, who Gascón recruited to San Francisco, took over as interim chief.

Then in March, the department suspended operations of a plainclothes unit accused of using illegal tactics against suspected drug dealers at residential hotels, allegations that prompted an FBI investigation and led to several cases being dropped.

Now the city faces a \$306 million budget deficit that Lee must close by June 1. Godown recently warned that could mean laying off 171 officers. There's also mounting political pressure for officers to defer \$14.5 million in raises due starting July 1.

Given the budget woes, Suhr said he'll have to be creative in addressing policing needs, including calls for an increase in foot patrols, which provide officers an unparalleled way to interact with people but limit the ground they can cover.

"We can get a lot more police work done with our manner and our mouth than we ever can with force," Suhr said. "You have to be smart about where you use the officers and where you put them. ... You talk to the community, and you're honest with them. Maybe you can't give somebody 16 hours a day (of coverage), but maybe you can do five."

Suhr said he's coupled that strategy with staggering some shifts in the Bayview district to maximize officers on the streets at the right times.

"Maybe you can take an officer out of a car to work Third and Palou for two hours at change of watch," Suhr said. "Officers at the Bayview have been fabulous about moving their shifts around an hour or two — without overtime — to make the Third Street corridor safer."

## No room for corruption

As for the allegations of illegal searches by narcotics officers, Suhr, a former narcotics sergeant, said corruption won't be tolerated.

"We have no room in the department for dishonest cops," he said. "If anybody is proved to be dishonest, they shouldn't be wearing a San Francisco police officer's uniform."

Suhr dismissed concerns that clearing the backlog of police discipline cases through training and education rather than drawn-out hearings would result in unfit officers remaining on the force.

"It's all about giving the appropriate discipline for the offense committed," Suhr said. "You have someone who re-offends and re-offends and re-offends — if it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, you have a duck that you have to take care of."

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## FROM THE COVER

Diet from page A8

ma said.

"I don't know that they're living longer, and I don't know that they're healthier," she said. "I'm a scientist, so I'll wait for the empirical evidence before I change my behavior."

Aside from looking for evidence that the calorie restrictors are healthier than their normal- or over-eating peers, Tomiyama is also investigating what makes extreme dieters tick — how they're able to severely limit their food intake while living in a society where more than half the population is overweight and where unhealthy foods are ubiquitous.

That's the science that fascinates some weight-loss experts. They can't imagine most Americans sticking with a severe calorie-restriction diet for years on end, but people who manage it might offer some secrets for long-term weight maintenance.

### Not for everyone

The UCSF study probably won't yield insights on dieting behavior that can be applied to everyone — for starters, almost all of the participants are highly educated men, and what works for them may not work for most other people. But it's a good start, said Dr. Wayne Smith, co-director of Kaiser San Jose's medical weight management program.

"A lot of people diet successfully for a limited time, but to maintain that for a long time, that's hard," Smith said. People are surrounded by "drivers" that compel them to eat, he added, and it's hard to

### Calorie study

UCSF researchers are recruiting normal eaters to participate in their study on aging and calorie restriction. Participants should be highly educated men who are average weight or overweight. To apply, send an e-mail to cronastudy@gmail.com.

fight those urges. "It will be interesting to see what the triggers for eating are in this population (of calorie restrictors), or maybe if they have a trigger not to eat."

No one — not even Arsenault — suggests that calorie restricting is for everyone. It's not a lot of fun, and it's downright impractical for most people. And certainly without more evidence of the long-life benefits in humans, few scientists are willing to guarantee that a very low-calorie diet will add years to a life span.

But Arsenault, for one, is happy to be the guinea pig in this case. He started calorie restricting 10 years ago, after realizing his "computer hacker" diet of Pringles and sodas and Pop-Tarts was setting him up for a lifetime of health problems. Now he feels great, and he enjoys his variety-free diet. Even if he does miss Girl Scout cookies sometimes.

"I'm a fan of the peanut butter ones," he said. "But we can give that up. There are other foods that are just as good. The smoothies I make are better than anything I could get in Alice Waters' kitchen."

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Panetta from page A8

government."

Feinstein credited Panetta with restoring order at the agency, saying he has "shown himself to be able to handle anything that comes at him. ... I can't think of a more capable person to take on the challenge of being secretary of defense at a time of war, unrest and conflict in the Middle East, an over-stretched military and the need to rein in Pentagon spending."

### Reaction on Petraeus

Feinstein was nearly dismissive, however, of the Petraeus appointment, saying the widely hailed general "has been a consumer of intelligence," a role that does not necessarily make him the best choice to lead the agency that produces it.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and a foreign policy hawk, called Panetta "an outstanding choice" who has a "good working relationship with Congress" and "will be prepared on

day one."

A native of Monterey and the son of Italian immigrants, Panetta graduated from Santa Clara University and its law school. He began his career as a Republican, serving in the Nixon administration as director of the Office for Civil Rights, where he allegedly resisted pressure by Richard Nixon to soft-pedal civil rights enforcement.

Panetta became a Democrat in 1971, and represented his Monterey-area district from 1977 to 1993, spearheading the creation of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

He returned to Monterey to found the Panetta Institute for Public Policy with his wife, Sylvia, in 1997. But he kept his hand in budget and national security issues in Washington, arguing for deficit reduction and serving on policy boards, including the Iraq Study Group, a bipartisan committee that assessed the war in Iraq.

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## NATION



Jeff Roberts / Birmingham (Ala.) News

Michael Dunn is hugged by his mother, Patricia Dunn, as they stand on the road that led to his house, which was demolished when a tornado touched down in Concord, Ala.

### SOUTHEAST

# At least 72 die in storms

By Holbrook Mohr and Jay Reeves

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TUSCALOOSA, ALA. — A wave of tornado-spawning storms strafed the South on Wednesday, splintering buildings across hard-hit Alabama and killing 72 people in four states.

At least 58 people died in Alabama alone, including 15 or more when a huge tornado devastated Tuscaloosa. The mayor said sections of the city that's home to the University of Alabama have been destroyed, and the city's infrastructure is devastated.

Eleven deaths were reported in Mississippi, two in Georgia and one in Tennessee.

News footage showed paramedics lifting a child out of a flattened Tuscaloosa home, with many neighboring buildings in the city of more than 83,000 also reduced to rubble. A hospital there said its emergency room had admitted at least 100 people.

"What we faced today was massive damage on a scale we have not seen in Tuscaloosa in quite some time," Mayor Walter Maddox told reporters, adding that he expects his city's death toll to rise.

The storm system spread destruction Tuesday night and Wednesday from Texas to Georgia, and it was forecast to hit the Carolinas next before moving farther northeast.

President Obama said he had spoken with Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley and ap-



Dusty Compton / Tuscaloosa (Ala.) News

A displaced family is assisted by emergency responders near Tuscaloosa, Ala., where 15 people were killed by a tornado.

proved his request for emergency federal assistance, including search and rescue help.

"Our hearts go out to all those who have been affected by this devastation, and we commend the heroic efforts of those who have been working tirelessly to respond to this disaster," Obama said in a statement.

Around Tuscaloosa, traffic was snarled Wednesday night by downed trees and power lines, and some drivers abandoned their cars in medians. University officials said there didn't appear to be significant damage on campus, and dozens of students and locals were staying at a 125-bed shelter in the campus recreation center.

Volunteers and staff were providing food and water to people like 29-year-old civil engineering graduate student Kenyona Pierce.

"I really don't know if I have a home to go to," she said.

Maddox said authorities were having trouble communicating, and 1,400 National Guard soldiers were being deployed around the state. The flashing lights of emergency vehicles could be seen on darkened streets all over town, and some were using winches to remove flipped vehicles from the roadside.

In Huntsville, meteorologists found themselves in the path of the tornado and had to evacuate the National Weather Service office.

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