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COVID-19 Vaccines
The Santa Monica Fire Department is now getting vaccinated.
Page 7

Puzzles and Games
The crossword isn't too hard yet.
Pages 8 & 9.





Todd James

CARS: A group of classic car owners gathered at Mel's Drive-In over the weekend. While the restaurant didn't organize the event, it often attracts nostalgia driven visitors due to its decor, theme and proximity to the end of Route 66.

Essential: Fire Captain Jon Sly

CLARA HARTER
SMDP Staff Writer

The Daily Press has launched a series of interviews with essential workers who are working bravely and diligently to keep the Santa Monica community functioning.

Our second featured worker is Jon Sly, a fire captain and paramedic working for the Santa Monica Fire Department. He is originally from the UK where he was in the fire service for 14 years, and has been working with the City of Santa Monica for the past nine years. For Jon, risking 'life and limb' is just part of the job, but the pandemic has added a whole new slew of challenges including pay cuts, COVID-19 exposure, more frequent shifts, and intense sanitation protocols—including showering up to six times a day.

Jon said he and his entire team are proud of the work they do, honored to be part of the SMFD, and are taking their additional duties in stride.

SEE **INTERVIEW** PAGE 7



Courtesy photo

CAPTAIN: Firefighters now have to wear additional protective gear.

COVID conditions likely to worsen this month

BRENNON DIXSON
SMDP Staff Writer

Hospitals in Los Angeles County continue to struggle with the rising number of COVID-19 cases, but local health department leaders said Monday that the region is likely to experience the worst conditions of the pandemic this month.

Public health director Barbara Ferrer issued the warning Monday alongside Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis and county stakeholders when local leaders each took an opportunity to discuss case counts as well as the "counterproductive" push to reopen local businesses.

"We're likely to experience the worst conditions in January that we faced the entire pandemic and that's hard to imagine," Ferrer said. "In slightly more than one month, we doubled the number of people who tested positive for COVID-19, going from 400,000 cases on November 30 to 800,000 cases on January 2. It took us nine-and-a-half months to get to the first 400,000 cases," but only one to get another 400,000.

"The anticipated surge from the

SEE **COVID** PAGE 11

Council to discuss forming Public Safety Reform and Oversight Commission

BRENNON DIXSON
SMDP Staff Writer

Four months after residents presented a number of reforms related to policing in Santa Monica, City Council is set to discuss the prospective formation of a Public Safety Reform and Oversight Commission.

In September, City Council approved a recommendation from the Public Safety Reform Advisory Commission (PSRAC) to develop an ordinance that would create a civilian oversight commission.

"Consistent with Council direction, staff now recommends that the City Council introduce for first reading an ordinance adopting Santa Monica Municipal Code Chapter 2.50 to create and establish an 11-member Public Safety Reform & Oversight Commission," a staff report for the upcoming meeting on January 12 states.

"As directed by Council on September 8, 2020, the Commission would comprise 11 members, to be appointed by Council... Consistent with the PSRAC Recommendations, members of the Commission should have a significant commitment to the public safety and wellbeing of the city, as well as knowledge of or experience with law enforcement, public safety policies and issues, or social services policies and issues," the staff report adds.

Sworn officers and nonsworn employees of the Santa Monica Police Department are not eligible to serve as commissioners but the commission is expected to collaborate with the department to sponsor and promote ongoing interaction and trust-building between the SMPD and community members.

The 11-member commission could also be tasked with reviewing SMPD policies and practices and making recommendations regarding those policies and practices to the Police Chief, City Manager, and City Council; and is expected to work through the Inspector General, receive information relating to any violations of procedures or policies in connection with disciplinary investigations, proceedings,

SEE **PUBLIC SAFETY** PAGE 5

DAILY POLICE LOG

SMDP STAFF CHOSE THE FOLLOWING FROM 193 CALLS ON JANUARY 3

Animal Related Incident 2000blk Colorado Ave 12:27 a.m.
Loud Music 1300blk 2nd St 12:57 a.m.
Traffic/Vehicle Stop 00blk Bay St 1:44 a.m.
Traffic/Vehicle Stop 21st St / Santa Monica Blvd 2:04 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 800blk Pico Blvd 5:08 a.m.
Threats Report/Investigations 1100blk Pico Blvd 5:30 a.m.
Animal Related Incident 600blk Marguerita Ave 6:30 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 800blk Pico Blvd 6:42 a.m.
Vehicle Parked In Alley 2200blk 27th St 6:54 a.m.
Encampment 1700blk Ocean Front Walk 7:02 a.m.
Abandoned Vehicle 1600blk Michigan Ave 7:26 a.m.
72 Hour Psychiatric Hold 100blk Fraser Ave 7:47 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 2800blk Donald Douglas Loop N 7:51 a.m.
Encampment 1400blk Ocean Front Walk 7:56 a.m.
Encampment 1200blk The Beach 8:05 a.m.
Exhibition Of Speed 800blk Pacific Coast Hwy 8:13 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 400blk 12th St 9:04 a.m.
Transport Prisoner 300blk Olympic Dr 9:13 a.m.
Red Zone Violation 1900blk 11th St 9:38 a.m.
Exhibition Of Speed 1500blk 2nd St 9:43 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 1700blk Broadway 9:57 a.m.
Encampment 1800blk The Beach 10:07 a.m.
Fraud 1700blk Lincoln Blvd 10:26 a.m.
Check Temporary No Parking Signs 200blk 21st Pl 10:40 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 1300blk 4th St 10:49 a.m.
Exhibition Of Speed 1500blk 2nd St 11:09 a.m.
Burglary 1400blk Lincoln Blvd 11:23 a.m.
Traffic Collision With Injuries 17th St / Wilshire Blvd 11:32 a.m.
Violation Of Preferential Parking Zone 3300blk Barnard Way 11:52 a.m.
Encampment 1200blk The Beach 12:05 p.m.
Animal Related Incident 700blk 25th St 12:18 p.m.
Loud Music 2400blk Oak St 12:33 p.m.
Petty Theft 2500blk Santa Monica Blvd 12:38 p.m.
Burglary 1100blk 11th St 12:41 p.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation Ocean Ave / Broadway 12:48 p.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation Ocean Ave / Broadway 12:49 p.m.
72 Hour Psychiatric Hold 3rd Street Prom / Santa Monica Blvd 1:05 p.m.
Indecent Exposure Ocean Ave / Wilshire Blvd 1:16 p.m.
Assault 1400blk Broadway 1:17 p.m.
Grand Theft Auto 900blk 11th St 1:24 p.m.
Loud Music 2400blk Ocean Front Walk 1:31 p.m.
Found Property 1300blk 17th St 2:08 p.m.
Encampment 14th St / Montana Ave 2:16 p.m.
Trash Dumping 1300blk Stanford St 2:23 p.m.
Loud Music 2500blk Ocean Front Walk 3:01 p.m.
Exhibition Of Speed 15th St / Olympic Blvd 3:07 p.m.
Found Property 1600blk Ocean Ave 3:30 p.m.
Grand Theft Auto 16th St / Michigan Ave 3:52 p.m.
Burglary 400blk Broadway 4:18 p.m.
Loud Music 2700blk Barnard Way 4:46 p.m.
Battery 800blk 3rd St 4:59 p.m.
Traffic Control Request - Level 1 Ocean Ave / Colorado Ave 5:05 p.m.
Check Temporary No Parking Signs 1200blk 19th St 5:22 p.m.
Burglary 2000blk 4th St 5:42 p.m.
Violation Of Restraining Order 1800blk 16th St 5:45 p.m.
Auto Burglary 1300blk 9th St 5:54 p.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 2700blk Airport Ave 6:19 p.m.
Found Property 1600blk The Beach 6:20 p.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 700blk Santa Monica Blvd 6:59 p.m.
Overdose 900blk 11th St 7:19 p.m.
Found Property 2500blk Beverley Ave 7:27 p.m.
Petty Theft Now 700blk Broadway 7:29 p.m.
Battery Now 1700blk Appian Way 7:30 p.m.
Grand Theft Auto 2600blk 6th St 8:00 p.m.
Lost Property 1800blk 19th St 8:03 p.m.
Traffic/Vehicle Stop 2200blk Ocean Ave 8:10 p.m.
Battery 800blk Montana Ave 8:17 p.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation 2900blk Wilshire Blvd 8:21 p.m.
Check Temporary No Parking Signs 400blk Palisades Ave 8:32 p.m.
Traffic/Vehicle Stop Euclid St / Pico Blvd 8:35 p.m.
Traffic/Vehicle Stop 1200blk Ocean Ave 9:04 p.m.
Burglary Investigation/Walk Through 2600blk 6th St 9:18 p.m.
Traffic/Vehicle Stop 400blk Broadway 10:00 p.m.
Loud Music 1200blk Washington Ave 10:56 p.m.



Fauci: Vaccinations are increasing in a 'glimmer of hope'

GARY D. ROBERTSON
Associated Press

The U.S. ramped up COVID-19 vaccinations in the past few days after a slower-than-expected start, bringing the number of shots dispensed to about 4 million, government health officials said Sunday.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious-disease expert, also said on ABC's "This Week" that President-elect Joe Biden's pledge to administer 100 million shots of the vaccine within his first 100 days in office is achievable.

And he rejected President Donald Trump's false claim on Twitter that coronavirus deaths and cases in the U.S. have been greatly exaggerated.

"All you need to do ... is go into the trenches, go into the hospitals, go into the intensive care units and see what is happening. Those are real numbers, real people and real deaths," Fauci said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

The U.S. death toll has climbed past 350,000, the most of any country, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University, while more than 20 million people nationwide have been infected. States have reported record numbers of cases over the past few days, and funeral homes in Southern California are being inundated with bodies.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said the pandemic is getting worse in his city as the virus spreads rapidly within households and people let their guard down with news of a vaccine's arrival. "This is a virus that preys off of our weakness, preys off of our exhaustion," he said on CBS' "Face the Nation."

Experts believe that the real numbers of U.S. deaths and infections are much higher and that many cases were overlooked, in part because of insufficient testing.

Fauci said he has seen "some little glimmer of hope" after 1.5 million doses were administered in the previous 72 hours, or an average of about 500,000 per day, a marked increase in vaccinations. He said that brings the total to about 4 million.

He acknowledged the U.S. fell short of its goal of having 20 million doses shipped and distributed by the end of December.

"There have been a couple of glitches. That's understandable," Fauci said. "We are not where we want to be, there's no doubt about that."

But he expressed optimism that the momentum will pick up by mid-January and that ultimately the U.S. will be vaccinating 1 million people a day. Biden's "goal of vaccinating 100 million people in the first 100 days is a realistic goal," Fauci said.

Dr. Moncef Slaoui, the chief science adviser to Operation Warp Speed, the government's vaccine development and distribution effort, told CBS that 17.5 million doses have been shipped. About 13 million of those have been distributed to clinics, hospitals and other places where they will be administered, according to Fauci.

The 20 million-dose goal hasn't been reached in part because local health departments and medical facilities had to stay focused on testing to handle a surge in cases, U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams said. And the holiday season meant health workers were taking time off, he said.

"I don't want anyone to think I'm being Pollyannish here. There's what we delivered, and we hope that those will be translated into vaccinations. That has not occurred to the way that we would like," Adams said on CNN's "State of the Union."

On Sunday morning, Trump falsely tweeted that the outbreak has been "far exaggerated" because of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's "ridiculous" methodology. He complained, too, that Fauci has been credited by the news media with doing "an incredible job" when Fauci "works for me and the Trump Administration, and I am in no way given any credit for my work."

Fauci and others are warning that an additional surge is likely because of holiday gatherings and the cold weather keeping people indoors.

"It could and likely will get worse in the next couple of weeks, or at least maintain this very terribly high level of infections and deaths that we're seeing," Fauci said.

Arizona on Sunday reported a one-day record of more than 17,200 new cases, eclipsing the previous mark of about 12,000 set in early December. Health officials said the jump appears to reflect infections from Christmas gatherings but was also probably inflated by a reporting lag over New Year's weekend.

North Carolina and Texas reported record numbers of people in the hospital with COVID-19 — nearly 3,600 and over 12,500, respectively..

Overseas, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said more onerous lockdown restrictions in England are likely as a variant of the coronavirus has pushed infection rates to their highest levels on record. More than 50,000 new infections have been reported daily over the past six days.

Scientists have said the variant is up to 70% more contagious. While Fauci said the U.S. needs to do its own study, he noted that British researchers believe that the mutated version is no deadlier or more likely to make people sicker and that vaccines are effective against it.

But Scott Gottlieb, a former U.S. Food and Drug Administration commissioner who serves on the board of vaccine maker Pfizer, said on "Face the Nation" that the variant "really creates more urgency around trying to get this vaccine out more quickly and get more people vaccinated."

Associated Press writers worldwide contributed to this report.

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DAILY FIRE LOG

SMDP STAFF CHOSE THE FOLLOWING FROM 30 CALLS ON JANUARY 3

EMS 400blk San Vicente Blvd 1:31 a.m.
EMS 2100blk Ocean Ave 1:38 a.m.
EMS 800blk Ocean Ave 2:22 a.m.
EMS 400blk Pier Ave 5:33 a.m.
EMS 2500blk 21st St 6:01 a.m.
EMS 1300blk 26th St 8:25 a.m.
EMS 400blk 19th St 8:27 a.m.
EMS 2900blk 11th St 10:19 a.m.
Flooded Condition 2300blk Wilshire Blvd 10:55 a.m.
EMS 800blk California Ave 11:13 a.m.
EMS 1800blk 20th St 11:26 a.m.
Traffic Collision With Injury 17th St / Wilshire Blvd 11:32 a.m.
EMS 1400blk 6th St 12:36 p.m.
EMS 2400blk Washington Ave 12:53 p.m.
EMS 900blk 18th St 1:13 p.m.
EMS 25th St / Washington Ave 1:13 p.m.
EMS 900blk 3rd St 2:21 p.m.
Trash/Dumpster Fire 1300blk Stanford St 2:24 p.m.
EMS 900blk 3rd St 2:39 p.m.
EMS 1700blk Cloverfield Blvd 3:16 p.m.
EMS 900blk 3rd St 3:50 p.m.
Automatic Alarm 1300blk Yale St 3:53 p.m.
EMS 2300blk Pier Ave 3:57 p.m.
EMS 2000blk Main St 4:02 p.m.
EMS 2900blk Washington Ave 4:43 p.m.
EMS 1300blk 15th St 5:08 p.m.
Odor Of Natural Gas 900blk California Ave 6:45 p.m.
Vehicle Fire In A Structure 3300blk Ocean Park Blvd 7:02 p.m.
EMS 900blk 11th St 7:19 p.m.
Trash/Dumpster Fire Lincoln Blvd / Pico Blvd 11:46 p.m.

Statehouses could prove to be hothouses for virus infection

AMY BETH HANSON
Associated Press

As lawmakers around the U.S. convene this winter to deal with the crisis created by the pandemic, statehouses themselves could prove to be hothouses for infection.

Many legislatures will start the year meeting remotely, but some Republican-controlled statehouses, from Montana to Pennsylvania, plan to hold at least part of their sessions in person, without requiring masks. Public health officials say that move endangers the safety of other lawmakers, staffers, lobbyists, the public and the journalists responsible for holding politicians accountable.

The risk is more than mere speculation: An ongoing tally by The Associated Press finds that more than 250 state lawmakers across the country have contracted COVID-19, and at least seven have died.

The Montana Legislature convened Monday without masking rules. The Republican majority shot down recent Democratic requests to hold the session remotely or delay it until vaccines are more widely available. Failing that, Democrats asked for requirements on masks and virus testing, which were also rejected.

Democratic lawmakers wore masks as they were sworn in. Few Republicans did the same.

"If the session is held without public health precautions, it is highly likely that the virus will spread in that environment, and it's highly likely that we'll see serious illness and, God forbid, deaths come from that," said Drenda Niemann, the health officer in Lewis and Clark County, which includes the state capital of Helena.

Rather than address COVID-19 guidelines ahead of the session, Republicans decided to address them after lawmakers convene by creating a panel that will meet regularly to consider updating policies. The Senate president pro tem, Republican Jason Ellsworth, said the panel "allows us to be more fluid with the situation" and "allows for our personal freedoms and our responsibilities."

The divergent approaches to the virus — with Republican lawmakers mostly rejecting mask mandates and lockdown measures, and Democrats urging a more cautious approach — mirrors that of Americans generally. That contrast was reflected over the holidays, when millions of people hit the roads and airports despite pleas from health officials to avoid travel and family gatherings to help contain the virus, which has claimed more than 350,000 American lives.

Some legislatures are trying to strike a balance between conducting business in person and protecting against the disease.

The 400-member New Hampshire House plans to hold its first session day Wednesday with a drive-in event at the University of New Hampshire in what acting Speaker Sherm Packard called the body's "most risk-mitigated session" yet during the pandemic.

The House clerk and speaker will conduct business from a heated platform, and members can watch and listen via a screen or through their car radios. Microphones will be brought to their windows for questions and debate, and voting will be conducted via electronic devices.

New Hampshire House Speaker Dick Hinch, a Republican, died from COVID-19 on Dec. 9, a week after being sworn in during an outdoor gathering at UNH. Democrats have pushed for remote gatherings.

Legislatures in Alaska, North Dakota, Pennsylvania and Washington are requiring masks, but the requirement is not being enforced in Pennsylvania. Lack of enforcement is a concern for news outlets that have to balance their ability to cover events with the safety of their reporters.

"If we start getting into a high-profile issue and there's a scrum of reporters shouting questions to a legislator who's unmasked, it couldn't be a worse situation," said Paula Knudsen Burke, with the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press in Pennsylvania.

In Idaho, where lawmakers are not required to wear masks, Melissa Davlin of Idaho Public Television said media outlets are trying to keep reporters safe while also ensuring adequate access to lawmakers, many of whom are not adhering to the same public

SEE **STATEHOUSES** PAGE 11

WEAR A MASK OR CLOTH FACE COVERING:

- To slow the spread of COVID-19
- When out in public
- Made of tight-knit cloth, like cotton



covid19.ca.gov

City of Santa Monica

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City of Santa Monica

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Many more in GOP rejecting Trump's bid to undo his defeat

LISA MASCARO AND MARY CLARE JALONICK
Associated Press

With mounting desperation, President Donald Trump called on Republican lawmakers Monday to reverse his election loss to Joe Biden when Congress convenes for a joint session this week to confirm the Electoral College vote.

Trump's unprecedented attempt to overturn the presidential election i s splitting the Republican Party. Some GOP lawmakers backing Trump are rushing ahead, despite an outpouring of condemnation from current and former party officials warning the effort is undermining Americans' faith in democracy. All 10 living former defense secretaries wrote in an op-ed article that "the time for questioning the results has passed."

It's unclear the extent to which GOP leaders in Congress will be able to control Wednesday's joint session, which could drag into the night though the challenges to the election are all but certain to fail. Trump himself is whipping up crowds for a Wednesday rally near the White House.

Trump's allies are taking up his unfounded claims of voter fraud. But according to a consensus of election officials in the states he's disputing — as well his former Attorney General William Barr — there is no evidence of fraud that could change the election outcome. Officials who have control over elections in their states, including battlegrounds Biden won, have certified those results as valid.

Of the more than 50 lawsuits the president and his allies have filed challenging results, nearly all have been dismissed or dropped. He's also lost twice at the U.S. Supreme Court.

The effort to keep Trump in office is being led by Sens. Josh Hawley of Missouri and Ted Cruz of Texas, along with rank-and-file House members, some on the party's fringe.

"Just got off the phone with @realDonaldTrump," tweeted newly elected Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, who is aligned with a conspiracy group backing Trump.

"He wants you to call your Rep & Senators TODAY, ALL DAY!" she tweeted Monday. "Don't let Republicans be the Surrender Caucus!"

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell was conferring privately with other Republicans to assess the days ahead, a defining period that will help shape the post-Trump era.

Both Hawley and Cruz are potential 2024 presidential contenders, vying for Trump's base of supporters. Vice President Mike Pence, who is under pressure to tip the results for Trump, will be closely watched as he presides in a ceremonial role over Wednesday's joint session.

"I promise you this: On Wednesday, we'll have our day in Congress," Pence said while campaigning in Georgia for Republicans ahead of Tuesday's runoff elections that will determine control of the Senate.

One of those Georgia Republicans, Sen. Kelly Loeffler who faces Democrat Raphael Warnock, announced she will object to Biden's win. The other Republican seeking re-election, David Perdue, who is running against Democrat Jon Ossoff, will not be eligible to vote Wednesday in the Senate.

Biden, speaking at a drive-in rally in Atlanta, said Trump "spends more time whining and complaining" than he does working on solving the coronavirus pandemic. He added dismissively: "I don't know why he still wants the job — he doesn't want to do the work."

During the day Monday, more current and former GOP officials rebuked the effort to upend the election.

Former Sen. John Danforth of Missouri offered sharp criticism of the attempt by Hawley and the others, an especially stinging statement since Danforth has long been a supporter of Hawley.

"Lending credence to Trump's false claim that the election was stolen is a highly destructive attack," Danforth, the 84-year-old three-term senator from St. Louis, said in a written statement. "It is the opposite of conservative; it is radical."

Two current Republican senators, Rob Portman of Ohio and Mike Lee of Utah, joined the growing number who now oppose the legislators' challenge.

Portman said in a statement, "I cannot support allowing Congress to thwart the will of the voters."

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the giant lobbying organization and virtual embodiment of the business establishment, said that the electoral vote challenge "undermines our democracy and the rule of law and will only result in further division across our nation."

Massachusetts GOP Gov. Charlie Baker said at a press conference that Biden "won the election fair and square."

McConnell has tried to prevent his party from engaging in this battle. House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, a Trump ally, has declined to say much publicly on it.

So far, Trump has enlisted support from a dozen Republican senators and up to 100 House Republicans to challenge Biden's 306-232 Electoral College win.

With Biden set to be inaugurated Jan. 20, Trump is intensifying efforts to prevent the traditional transfer of power. On a call disclosed Sunday, he can be heard pressuring Georgia officials to "find" him more votes from the Nov. 3 election he lost in that state.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who convened a private call of House Democrats on Monday, said in a letter to colleagues their job now "is to convince more of the American people to trust in our democratic system."

The challenge to the presidential election is on a scale unseen since the aftermath of the Civil War, though the typically routine process of confirming Electoral College votes has been hit with brief objections before. In 2017, several House Democrats

SEE **TRUMP** PAGE 6

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Letter to the Editor

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

The Downsides of Upzoning

By Richard Hilton

Upzoning our R1/Single Family residential neighborhoods to include market-rate/multifamily development would maximize the number of residences per parcel. Supporters say it will help in our state's "housing crisis," diversify the City, and expand housing opportunities for minorities and low-income households.

Many of Santa Monica's commercial/industrial corridors are underused and/or vacant and could be incentivized for housing. Our Affordable Housing Trust Fund has financed project-based development in these and other areas, with lowered costs and a greater yield of affordable residences.

Upzoning Santa Monica's R1/Single Family potentiates the higher-income households in existing higher-income neighborhoods – currently 60 percent or more of Santa Monica's residents earn in excess of 120 percent of area median income – and it increases the production of above moderate-income housing, which we significantly over-produce.

R1/Single Family in Santa Monica is less suitable for affordable housing production because the parcels are smaller and more expensive in proportion to our commercial/industrial, and R1 is not adjacent to Major Transit Zones, which our low-income seniors, disabled, and families depend on.

Upzoning may, in fact, contribute to Fair Housing challenges. Discrimination occurs when one community if preferenced over another, and the "other" is denied the same/similar opportunity. Based on our R1/Single Family parcel sizes/costs, upzoning would significantly favor the higher-income/higher-cost housing, and provides only a token amount of housing for our low-income households.

The state's Housing Element establishes the number of newly-constructed housing units and the Regional Housing Needs Assessment committee determines the allocation. The state, however, doesn't have a financial plan or provide (except for Tax Credit financing) any local financial support.

Before upzoning Santa Monica's R1/Single Family is considered, its supporters, our state and local officials need to identify a funding source, while also acknowledging that in our R1 the production of affordable residents and benefit to our low-income households will be negligible.

About the author: Richard Hilton is Vice Chair of the Housing Commission, and specializes in affordable housing, minority/underserved communities, and Fair Housing. He has served on four Boards/Commissions, including the Relocation Appeals Board.

PUBLIC SAFETY

FROM PAGE 1

and actions, and make recommendations regarding any such violations to the Police Chief, City Manager, and City Council, according to the available staff report.

In summation, staff said, "the Commission will have the ability to conduct conversations and forums focused on restorative justice in keeping with its broader community engagement role as a convenor. This can include engaging with community partners to provide training and educational opportunities regarding cultural competency, strategies for repairing community trust, and other issues as identified by the Commission."

Consistent with other local boards and commissions, the public safety commission is expected to have a role in the annual budget process for SMPD in alignment with the City's budget calendar, and can provide recommendations to the SMPD, City Manager, or City Council throughout that process, according to the staff report.

Staff also recommends that an Inspector General be retained to facilitate the work of the Commission because previous PSRAC recommendations placed high importance on promotion of transparency and access to data.

"Staff estimates a full-time Inspector General position to cost approximately $200,000-$225,000, including benefits," which is an estimate based on a review of relevant positions on Transparent California and other research methods, staff said. "Before returning with a proposal to create this as a full-time position, however, staff would consider the cost effectiveness of additional options, including retaining these services on a contract basis through a group like the OIR Group, which is leading the independent review of the events of May 31st, or as a part-time or limited term position."

Councilmember Kevin McKeown said Monday he strongly supports the creation of the Public Safety Reform and Oversight Commission and wants to make sure it has the tools and the power to effect real change.

"We have one of the best departments in the country, but even our police can benefit from community input and concentrated efforts to create a productive partnership with the people we all serve," McKeown said, which is why he brought the Obama Pledge and the Eight Can't Wait concepts on police reform to Council back in June while serving as mayor.

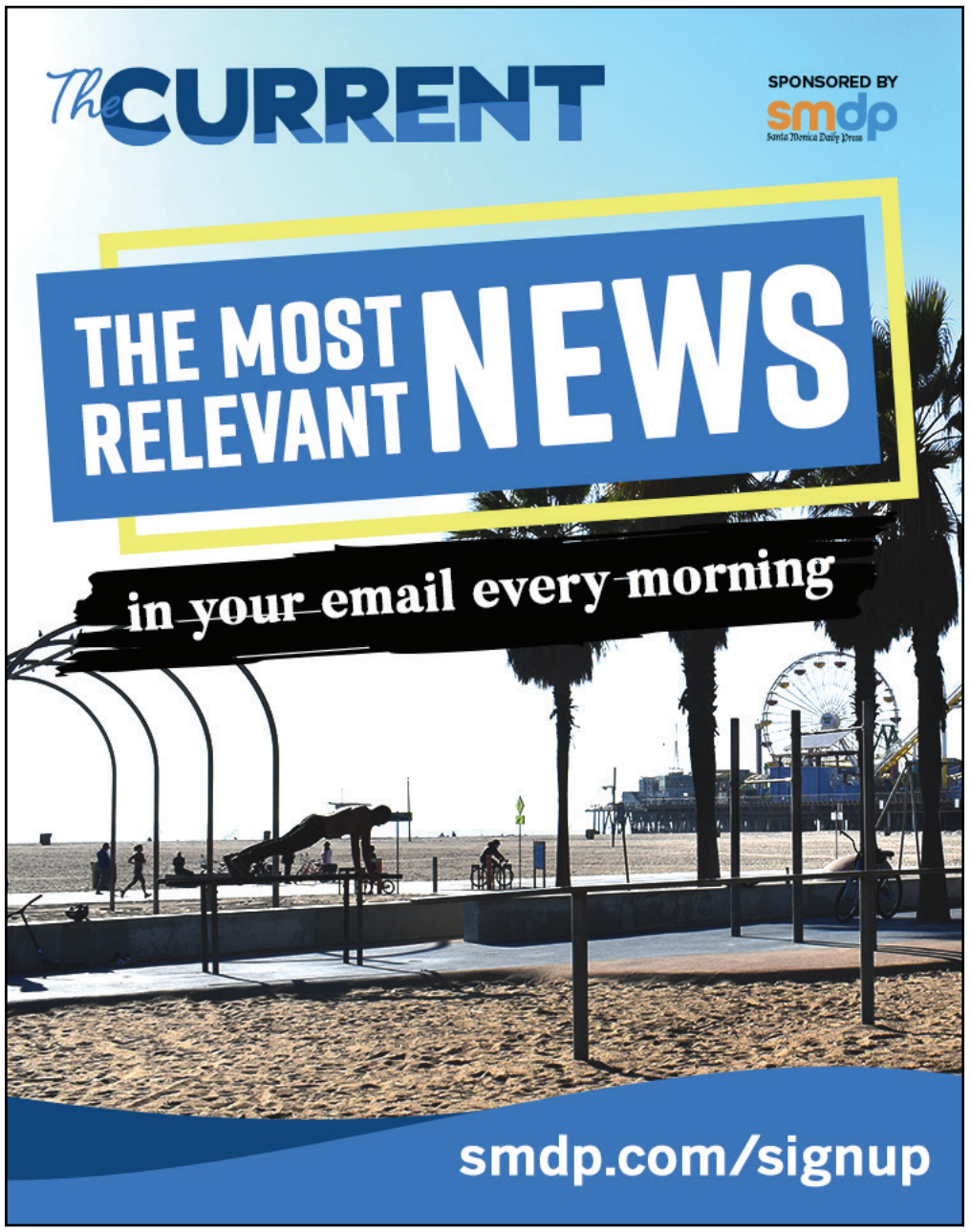
Council will meet virtually on Jan. 12 to discuss the issue.

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Chargers fire head coach Anthony Lynn after 4 seasons

JOE REEDY
AP Sports Writer

The Los Angeles Chargers have fired coach Anthony Lynn less than two seasons after he led the franchise to the playoffs.

Lynn is the sixth NFL coach fired this season, joining Houston's Bill O'Brien, Atlanta's Dan Quinn, Detroit's Matt Patricia, Adam Gase of the New York Jets and Jacksonville's Doug Marrone.

Los Angeles won its final four games to finish 7-9, but it wasn't enough to save Lynn's job.

"I'm not sure there is another person in this league more respected as a human being than Anthony," owner Dean Spanos said in a statement. "This is a results-driven business, and simply put, the results of the past two years have fallen short of expectations."

Hired by the Chargers in January 2017, Lynn was the first Black head coach in franchise history. He went 34-32 with Los Angeles, but just 12-20 over the last two seasons. He had one year remaining on his contract.

Los Angeles started 0-4 during Lynn's first season in 2017, but finished 9-7 after winning six of the last seven games. That served as a springboard to 2018 as the Chargers went 12-4, which tied for the best record in the AFC. They defeated Baltimore in the wild card round before losing to New England in the divisional playoffs.

Trying to repeat that success has been elusive. They are 7-16 since the start of last season in games decided by eight points or fewer.

The Los Angeles opening could be one of the more intriguing ones of the offseason. The franchise moved into SoFi Stadium this season, but also has a talented nucleus with Justin Herbert, running back Austin Ekeler, wide receivers Keenan Allen and Mike Williams, defensive end Joey Bosa and safety Derwin James.

Herbert is favored for Offensive Rookie of the Year after setting a rookie record with 31 touchdown passes. He said he got a text that Lynn was dismissed.

"I have learned so much from him and enjoyed my time with him," Herbert said. "There's a lot of uncertainty. You have to rely on the guys and the locker room and depend on them if we want to get better."

General manager Tom Telesco has one year remaining on his contract and he will be hiring his third head coach. He is 61-69 during his tenure with only two playoff appearances in eight seasons.

Telesco has done well drafting skill position players, but his free agent signings have not panned out. The team needs upgrades on the offensive line along with linebacker and cornerback.

TRUMP

FROM PAGE 4

challenged Trump's win, but Biden, who presided at the time as the vice president, swiftly dismissed them to assert Trump's victory.

States run their own elections, and Congress has been loath to interfere. Despite Trump's objections, many states adapted to the coronavirus pandemic by allowing more mail voting to ease health risks of voting in person.

"The 2020 election is over," said a statement Sunday from a bipartisan group of 10 senators, including Republicans Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Bill Cassidy of Louisiana and Mitt Romney of Utah.

Republican Sen. Tom Cotton of Arkansas, another potential 2024 presidential hopeful, announced he, too, would not oppose the counting of certified electoral votes.

A range of Republican officials, including Gov. Larry Hogan of Maryland; Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, the third-ranking House GOP leader; and former House Speaker Paul Ryan, have criticized the GOP efforts to overturn the election.

Hawley defended his actions in a lengthy email over the weekend to colleagues, saying his Missouri constituents have been "loud and clear" in insisting Biden's defeat of Trump was unfair.

Hawley plans to object to the state tally from Pennsylvania, although that state's Republican senator, Pat Toomey, has said the results naming Biden the winner are valid.

Cruz's coalition of 11 Republican senators vows to reject the Electoral College tallies unless Congress launches a commission to immediately conduct an audit of the election results. Congress is unlikely to agree to that.

The group, which presented no new evidence of election problems, includes Sens. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, James Lankford of Oklahoma, Steve Daines of Montana, John Kennedy of Louisiana, Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee, Mike Braun of Indiana, Cynthia Lummis of Wyoming, Roger Marshall of Kansas, Bill Hagerty of Tennessee and Tommy Tuberville of Alabama.

Associated Press writers Bill Barrow in Atlanta, Steve LeBlanc in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Jim Salter in O'Fallon, Missouri, Alan Fram in Washington and Tali Arbel of the Technology Team. contributed.



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INTERVIEW

FROM PAGE 1

HOW HAS YOUR JOB CHANGED DUE TO THE PANDEMIC?

We cover a good portion of the convalescent homes in this district, so now when we arrive on scene we have to put gowns on top of our uniforms. On these calls we also utilize a piece of equipment called a PAPR which is, for want of the better word, like a space helmet that attaches to an air purifier that we wear around our waist.

After transporting the patients to the hospital each company has to go out of service just to decontaminate, which takes us 30 minutes. Then we have to come back and the entire crew has to shower. If you are running 10 calls a day several of those have suspected COVID, so we have to shower sometimes five or six times a day.

We also have to clean the entire station twice a day by mopping all the floors and wiping all the hard surfaces. We used to have members of the public come by and we'd always invite them in the station, which we can no longer do. This year is particularly hard because there's always a crew working on Thanksgiving or Christmas and when that happens we traditionally have family members come in. Sadly, we can't do that anymore.



CAPTAIN JON SLY

HOW WAS SMFD AFFECTED BY THE CITY'S COVID-19 BUDGET RESTRUCTURING?

As a union we've taken a pay cut for one year and then we receive another pay cut next financial year. The way we look at it we're fortunate to be in the career that we've fought very hard to get into. Some people take five or six years to get hired. At the end of the day we are still receiving a paycheck and doing the job that we love.

HOW HAS YOUR WORK BEEN IMPACTED BY THIS YEAR'S EXTREME WILDFIRE SEASON?

We've sent engines out striking wildfires five times this season. It added a bit of staffing because if a member calls in sick or we send people out on a strike team, people can be called from home to cover those positions. With a lot of people being recalled from home, you can find yourself working 20 shifts a month instead of the standard ten. We understand that it's important to support other departments that have those fires in their backyard. It's something we keep a positive spin on and just get the job done.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE RISK OF COVID-19 AT WORK?

It's something we've adapted to, so we're used to it. We sign up to potentially risk life and limb just by doing this job. We have got a very good backup through our nurse educator and the captain that is in the paramedic coordinators division and we work very closely with a doctor in a Santa Monica hospital. At the station we work out of we deal with multiple COVID patients daily. Because we are so strict with the guidance that we have on the calls no one has become sick from an exposure.

The fire department is also doing a good job pushing mental health awareness for the toll it's taking on individuals not just at work. A lot of us have spouses who have lost their job, as well as our children not being in school, so we're also feeling the same additional stresses that the general public is feeling. At the end of the day we feel very fortunate to be working as firefighters. If we need to do it, we just pick up the challenges and take it in our stride, but we couldn't do that without the backing of the City, the administration, the fire chief and everybody else.

Clara@smdp.com

BRIEFS

Citywide

Santa Monica Fire Department Rolls Out Vaccinations

Beginning last week, Santa Monica Fire Department firefighters and paramedics were among the first fire departments in Southern California to be offered the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine. This is a critical milestone in keeping all frontline medical personnel safe as they prepare for an increase in the number of cases across the county, which is occurring as local hospitals are overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients.

In addition to SMFD frontline personnel receiving the vaccine, SMFD leadership were integral to the roll out of the vaccine to 20 fire departments across Los Angeles County. The effort was coordinated by an Incident Management Team (IMT) comprised of experienced fire chiefs and supported by the Los Angeles County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency.

"The Santa Monica Fire Department is working hard every day to protect the safety, health, and wellbeing of our community," said Fire Chief Bill Walker. "It is critical that we ensure our Firefighters are available to respond to all emergencies and by getting vaccinated, we hope to keep them ready and available throughout this pandemic."

The planning effort is led by Tom Clemo, serving as the IMT Planning Section Chief, who also serves as Deputy Chief with the Santa Monica Fire Department. Chief Silvio Lanzas, who serves as the Fire Chief of the Glendale Fire Department, is the Operations Chief, coordinating the movement of the vaccinations to firefighters across the region, which is organized into Central, Foothill and Beach Divisions.

The Santa Monica Fire Department is the first City of Santa Monica department to receive the vaccine. Distribution to other frontline workers will occur in the coming weeks and months aligned with State of California guidance on vaccine prioritization.

CONSTANCE FARRELL, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

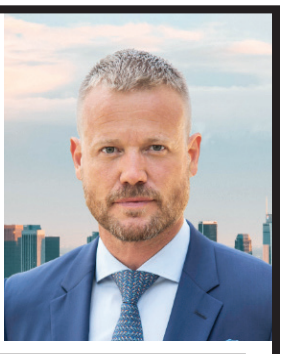
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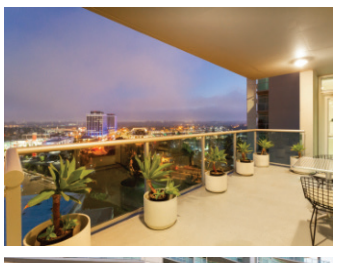
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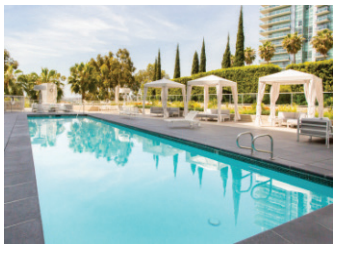
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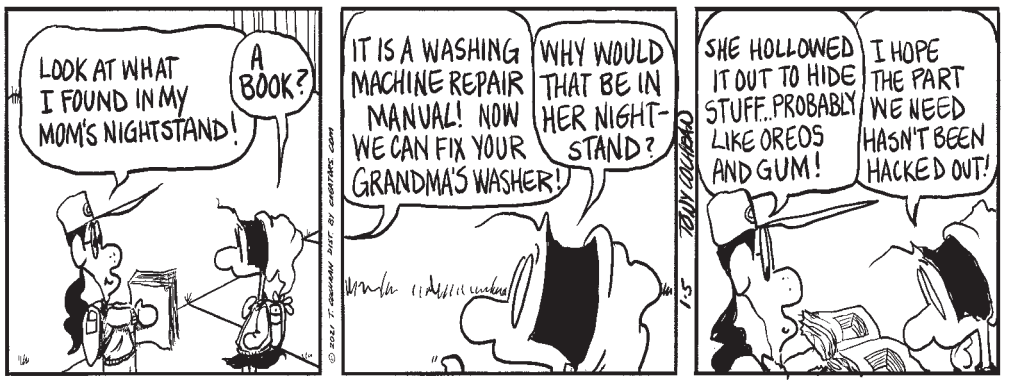




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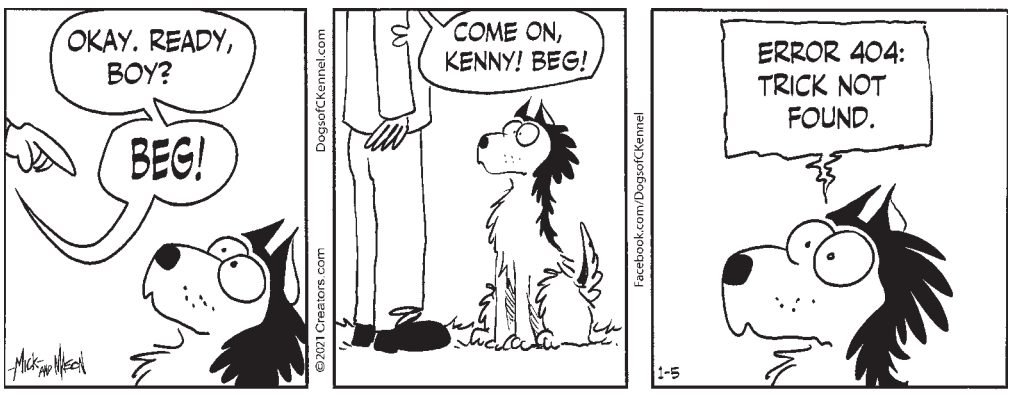
Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



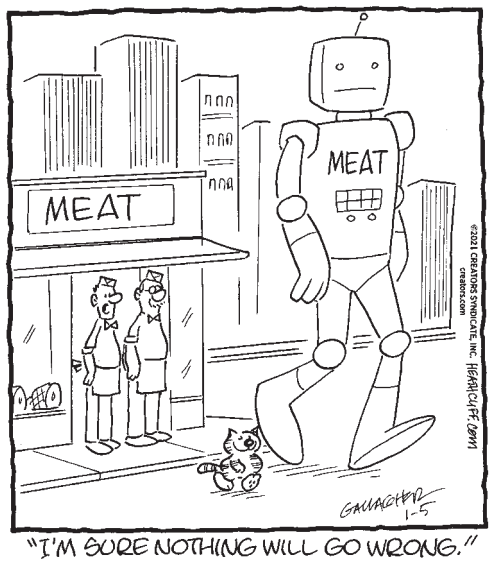
Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



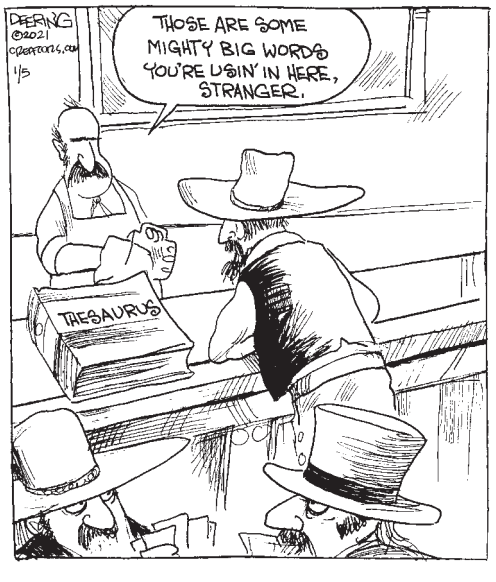
Heathcliff

By PETER GALLAGHER



Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING





SURF FORECASTS

WATER TEMP: 57.7°

TUESDAY - **FAIR** - SURF: 3-4ft+ Waist to shoulder high
WNW swell eases AM. New NW swell builds PM.

WEDNESDAY - **FAIR** - SURF: 3-4ft+ Waist to shoulder high occ. 5 ft
Steep NW swell strongest in the morning.

WEATHER

Tuesday: Mostly cloudy, then gradually becoming sunny, with a high near 64.
Tuesday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 50.
Wednesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 67.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2021/01/05	Tue	02:25 AM	4.23	H
2021/01/05	Tue	08:04 AM	2.34	L
2021/01/05	Tue	1:26 PM	3.90	H
2021/01/05	Tue	8:09 PM	0.68	L
2021/01/06	Wed	03:17 AM	4.64	H
2021/01/06	Wed	09:49 AM	1.78	L
2021/01/06	Wed	3:07 PM	3.35	H
2021/01/06	Wed	9:05 PM	1.15	L
2021/01/07	Thu	04:06 AM	5.12	H
2021/01/07	Thu	11:10 AM	0.95	L
2021/01/07	Thu	4:52 PM	3.15	H
2021/01/07	Thu	10:04 PM	1.53	L
2021/01/08	Fri	04:54 AM	5.62	H
2021/01/08	Fri	12:12 PM	0.08	L
2021/01/08	Fri	6:21 PM	3.25	H
2021/01/08	Fri	11:02 PM	1.81	L
2021/01/09	Sat	05:42 AM	6.08	H
2021/01/09	Sat	1:05 PM	-0.68	L
2021/01/09	Sat	7:28 PM	3.48	H
2021/01/09	Sat	11:58 PM	1.97	L
2021/01/10	Sun	06:29 AM	6.46	H

DAILY LOTTERY

POWERBALL
Draw Date: 1/2
3 4 11 41 67
Power#: 5
Jackpot: 410 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 1/1
8 24 53 68 69
Mega#: 7
Jackpot: 432 M

SuperLotto PLUS
Draw Date: 1/2
11 19 35 40 46
Mega#: 18
Jackpot: 9 M

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 1/3
6 16 25 26 32

Daily 3
Draw Date: 1/3
EVENING: 4 2 6

Draw Date: 1/3
MIDDAY: 7 4 8

Daily Derby
Draw Date: 1/3
1st: 07 - Eureka
2nd: 01 - Gold Rush
3rd: 10 - Solid Gold
Race Time: 1:48.64

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TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (JANUARY 05)

T Relationships are your treasure, and you'll put in effort to make them special. Everything you put into socializing will pay you back. Family celebrates and invests in you. The spring scene you fall into is a natural fit for your talent. As a result, you'll accomplish heaps of work and sock away an impressive amount of money. Aries and Libra adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 1, 15, 23 and 27.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Like a traveler in the fog, you may only be able to see a few inches in front of you at a time, but that can be enough to get where you're going, especially if you have guidance from a better vantage point on the outside.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). To perform at your highest capacity, it helps to feel good inside and out. Sleep, water and nutrition in the proper amounts are the cornerstone of your most excellent work.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You become what you focus on, so focus on what you love. It's not that your adoration in and of itself will bring a circumstance into being, but the concentration of energy will tip off a string of actions that eventually land you there.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). The brain isn't technically a muscle. Nonetheless, you can train this complex cellular structure in much the same way as you would your arms, legs or core. Design a plan for strength, flexibility, agility and endurance.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Reading isn't everyone's favorite way to get information, and for some people it doesn't even make the short list. But today, it's going to be your amazingly convenient route to a successful outcome.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Wishing and waiting has its purpose in a life, but you've already been there and you're too busy now to return. It's no mystery why opportunity keeps coming your way. It's because you make things happen.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). What you bring to the table is a very unique offering, born of your place in the world — a place no one else occupies. It follows that your point of view offers angles no one else could know. Bank on it today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). As for your messes — you can hide them, clean them up or work with them. Just don't curse them. Evolutionary history has proven the enormous potential in even the grossest blob of slime.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). It's not so hard to have the socially correct response to a situation once you get out of yourself, step back and view it objectively. What is the primary emotion being shared? Respond in kind.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Today's snag will present itself like a one-off, but be careful how you handle it. Do it in a way that you'd be happy to repeat a few times, because you just might have to.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). For what you're working on today, the practice is not a means to a result. The practice is the result. It's all you can control, and therefore it is all that matters and is worthy of the best of your attention.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Everywhere you go today you create comfort. You don't have to be talking to do this. Either consciously or subconsciously, you'll mirror back the emotions of others and help them feel like they are not in it alone.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

	T	U	B			P	R	O	P		T	A	G	S
L	U	N	A	R		L	A	V	A		E	R	I	C
O	N	I	C	E		O	R	A	L		N	O	V	A
B	A	T	H	T	O	W	E	L	S		O	M	E	N
			E	R	A	S				G	R	A	S	S
	V	A	L	O	R		L	A	L	A				
R	E	D	O			S	A	X	E	S		P	T	A
B	E	D	R	O	O	M	S	L	I	P	P	E	R	S
I	R	S		W	R	O	T	E			O	N	E	S
				L	E	G	S		O	Z	O	N	E	
S	T	A	B	S				S	A	I	L			
C	O	D	E		S	N	O	W	F	L	A	K	E	S
U	P	O	N		P	A	V	E		C	R	E	D	O
B	I	R	D		U	S	E	D		H	E	E	D	S
A	C	E	S		D	A	R	E			A	N	Y	

Sudoku

Fill in the blank cells using numbers 1 to 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column, and 3x3 block. Use logic and process of elimination to solve the puzzle.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S SUDOKU

8	9	2	3	7	4	6	5	1
6	5	7	1	2	8	9	4	3
1	3	4	9	5	6	7	2	8
3	1	9	6	8	2	5	7	4
7	6	5	4	9	3	1	8	2
4	2	8	7	1	5	3	9	6
9	7	6	8	4	1	2	3	5
5	8	1	2	3	9	4	6	7
2	4	3	5	6	7	8	1	9

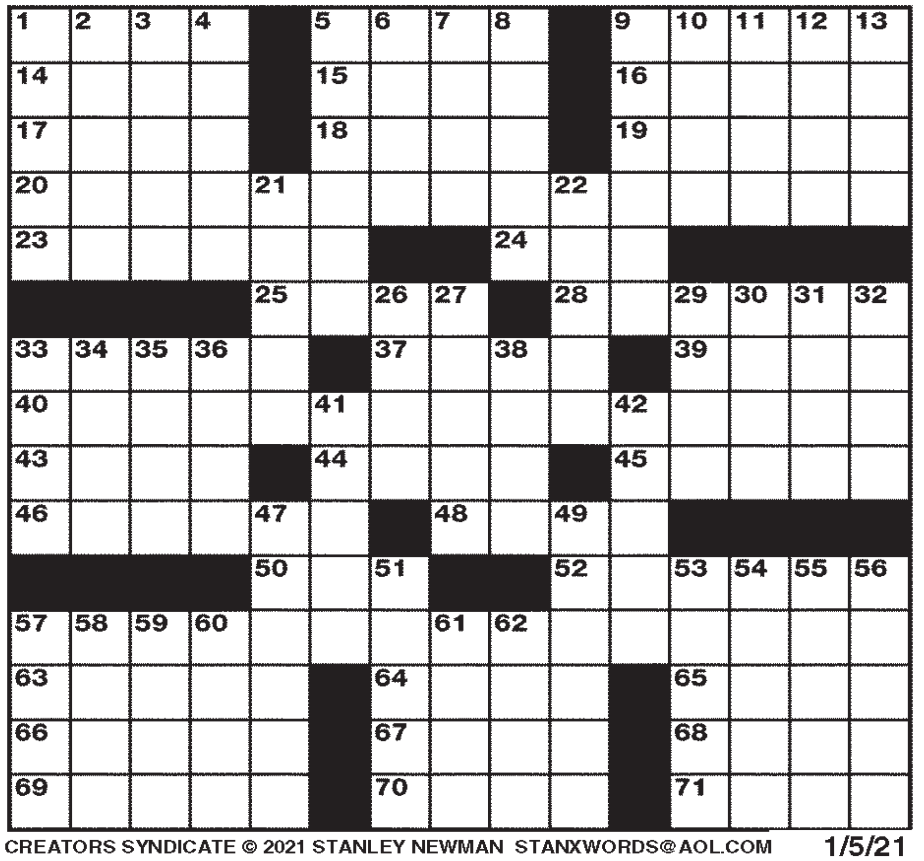
8	4						9	
3				2		8		
	9		7			2		1
	6			7	2			3
			3		4			
9			5	1			4	
7		9			3		1	
		8		6				5
	5						2	9

Newsday Crossword

HAPPY 21 by Billie Truitt
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS
1 Do not possess
5 Arithmetic or algebra, for short
9 Headquartered
14 Actor Alda
15 Having sore muscles
16 Surpass in competition
17 What a king may be called
18 Part of a stairway
19 Male deers
20 21, by multiplying
23 Infant's bodysuit
24 __-Cone (icy treat)
25 Any harvested product
28 Playful pranks
33 Embarrass
37 Handle clumsily, informally
39 Salt Lake City's state
40 21, by adding
43 Not doing anything
44 Piece of plumbing
45 On an ocean cruise
46 Appear that way
48 January through December
50 Firefighter's chopper
52 Person counting calories
57 21, by subtracting
63 Metal fastener for a girder
64 Beloved celebrity
65 Brewery tanks
66 To no __ (ineffective)
67 School exam
68 Sandwich cookie
69 Tubular pasta
70 Speaks
71 Golf course measure

DOWN
1 Cowpoke's rope
2 Martian, for example
3 Do whittling
4 Joints above ankles
5 Become proficient in
6 Start of a play
7 Those other people
8 Publicizes heavily
9 Big city in Massachusetts
10 Book writer: Abbr.
11 Hollywood headliner
12 Border of a tabletop
13 Measure of medicine
21 Specialty market segment
22 Major malfunction
26 Prefix meaning "all"
27 Young dog
29 Clump of hair
30 ". . . but you know how __"
31 Underground home for bats
32 __ butter (moisturizer ingredient)
33 Without a warranty
34 __ one's time (be patient)
35 Auto's wheel bar
36 Flower stalk
38 Leave in a hurry
41 Strong glue
42 Dresses of India
47 Tell a secret
49 Grownups
51 Gives off, as steam
53 Ambassador's assistant
54 Small crown
55 Walk inside
56 Patch up, as a lawn
57 Sandy golf hazard
58 Home for honeybees
59 Czar called "the Terrible"
60 Jockey's strap
61 Notion
62 Fond of snooping



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Binary Puzzle

Each cell should contain a zero or a one. No more than two similar numbers below or next to each other are allowed. Each row and each column is unique and contains as many zeros as ones.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S PUZZLE

I	I	O	I	I	O	I	O	O	I	O	O
I	O	I	O	O	I	O	O	I	O	I	I
O	I	O	I	I	O	O	I	I	O	O	I
I	O	I	O	O	I	I	O	O	I	I	O
O	I	O	O	I	I	O	I	I	O	O	I
I	O	O	I	O	O	I	O	I	O	I	I
O	I	I	O	I	I	O	I	O	I	O	O
O	I	O	I	O	O	I	I	O	I	I	O
I	O	I	O	I	O	I	O	I	O	O	I
I	I	O	O	I	I	O	O	I	O	I	O
O	O	I	I	O	I	O	I	O	I	O	I
O	O	I	I	O	O	I	I	O	I	I	O

I				O				I			
		I		I							
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I					O		I				I
		O					I			I	
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				O		I	I				O



"The City of Bell spectacle is what happens to communities without their own old-fashioned, diligent news coverage." - Terry Francke, Journalist

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FIND THE WORDS

This is a theme puzzle with the subject stated below. Find the listed words in the grid. (They may run in any direction but always in a straight line. Some letters are used more than once.) Ring each word as you find it and when you have completed the puzzle, there will be 21 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle.

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O I G G A V A R A C Y A N C J
V B O Y D Z E R N S T S L A H
I Y S B S I U S C I M A R E C
S E K U M B E R T I S S H O P
O L N R M O O D E S N D O N E
R E I H T Y G R E Y T G B I S
I T A O N T E S E H T G R U U
M I E R I S D N A H O O O G C
R H L A R E A O M R C Y W U O
T W I N P D U S K O S A N A F
G A M G A I N S B O R O U G H
W L S E N A M E L D S L H O S
A I D E M D A L I P S D U E G
R D U F Y L L E S A R G E N T
M O I S T E E R E S O R S R Y

Azure
Boyd
Brown
Caravaggio
Ceramics
Classes
Cyan
Dali
Done
Draw
Dufy
Dusk
Enamel
Ernst
Eyes
Focus
Gainsborough
Gauguin
Gouache
Goya
Grey
Hair
Hals
Hands
Hues
Inks
Jars
Lessons
Lips
Media
Miro
Moist
Mood
Oils
Orange
Print
Reds
Rees
Romney
Rose
Ruby
Sargent
Scott
Sell
Shop
Smile
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Whiteley

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COVID

FROM PAGE 1

winter holiday gatherings has begun and tens upon tens of thousands of people are paying the price with new COVID-19 infections," Ferrer added, stating the increases in cases are likely to continue for weeks to come as a result of holiday parties and returning travelers.

Solis and other speakers said during the briefing that residents should keep in mind that community transmission rates are so high that one runs the risk of an exposure whenever they leave home. And with hospitals and mortuaries so overwhelmed that the California National Guard arrived Monday to assist the L.A. County Medical Examiner-Coroner, officials called on the public to take precautions, especially since local health care workers have not received as many vaccines as promised by the federal government.

Ferrer added the high number of COVID-19 patients who are hospitalized is distressing not only for those who have COVID-19 but for all others in the county who need acute care.

"People who have a stroke or a heart attack or experienced a traumatic injury from a car crash are finding it more difficult to access care compared to months ago," Ferrer said after she reported 77 additional deaths and 9,142, new cases Monday.

The total number of deaths in LA County now stands at 10,850. "And today's relatively lower number of new cases reflects the closure of many testing sites and delays in reporting over the holiday," Ferrer said. "This number is very likely to increase in the days ahead," and the region may very well be on its way to a weekly death toll of 1,000 people or more.

"When the current surge began, the average number of people dying of COVID on a daily basis was about 13. Now, we consistently average significantly more than 100 deaths a day," Ferrer said. "On December 30, the seven day average of daily deaths was 110," which is an increase of 700% from when the surge began.

"Another way to look at this is that we're losing — on average — a person every 15 minutes here in L.A. County," Ferrer said. But this heartache does not need to continue if everybody does their part to stop the surge.

Ferrer asked the public to take personal responsibility and follow the rules and ask others around to do the same. Simple measures that we have in place like wearing face coverings, maintaining your distance, avoiding gatherings and using sanitizer go a long way to reversing the deadly trends of recent, she said.

As of Monday, Santa Monica had reported 2,901 cases.

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STATEHOUSES

FROM PAGE 3

safety guidelines as newsrooms.

Casual hallway conversations "are so valuable for coverage and insight and even just background," Davlin said. "Missing out on that is a real loss for our ability to cover the session. But at the same time, we are not going to do our viewers and readers any good if we get sick."

Republicans in the Ohio House have blocked efforts to enforce a mask mandate, despite the fact that more than a dozen lawmakers there have tested positive for COVID-19.

Incoming Ohio Senate President Matt Huffman was to be sworn into office from his home Monday after testing positive for COVID-19. Huffman experienced mild symptoms and will return to the statehouse after a quarantine period, spokesperson John Fortney said.

In conservative Wyoming, where Republican Gov. Mark Gordon did not issue a mask mandate until early December, lawmakers plan to convene virtually Jan. 12 to hear the governor's State of the State address. Legislative leaders will decide later whether to begin a virtual session in February or hold an in-person session starting in March, the Wyoming Tribune Eagle reported.

Wyoming Republican Rep. Roy Edwards died a day before Election Day of what his family later confirmed was COVID-19. Edwards spoke in opposition to public health restrictions to prevent the spread of the coronavirus during his campaign.

In Montana, all floor sessions and committee meetings will be available to view or hear online, and lawmakers will be allowed to attend many hearings virtually, but voting on final bills by proxy is discouraged. Members of the public and lobbyists will be able to testify on bills using video conferencing, if they have access to the technology.

"I feel like that's going to preferentially kind of censor the people who are either vulnerable or who actually value the advice that experts are putting out," said M. Kumi Smith, assistant professor of epidemiology and community health at the University of Minnesota.

Ellsworth, the Republican Senate leader, acknowledged that the Legislature's COVID-19 panel will not solve everything.

"At the end of the day, this is an animal that we can't control," he said of the pandemic during a rules hearing on Dec. 16. "I would imagine we are going to have members that are going to get sick. It's possible that we have members that die. But that possibility is there irregardless, even if we're here or not."

Associated Press writers Holly Ramer in Concord, New Hampshire, and Farnoush Amiri in Columbus, Ohio, contributed to this report.

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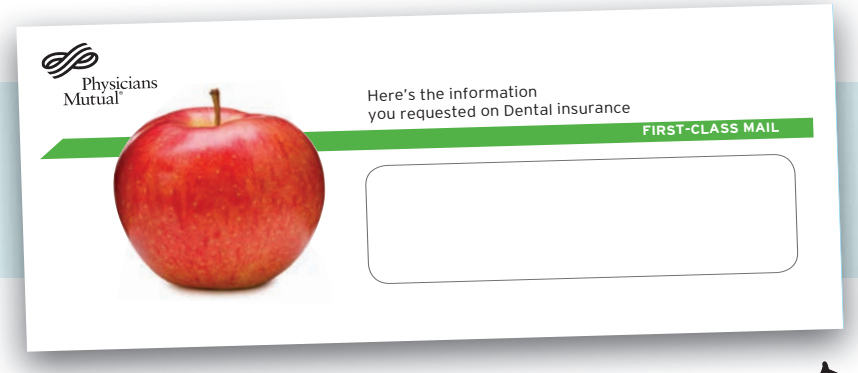
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