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To support locals.

3 Who is to blame?
For slow fire recovery.



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Current vaccination guidelines.

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Digital billboard district.

Volume 25 Issue 38

THE WEEKENDER 1/9-1/11

smdp.com

Volunteers wanted for annual homeless count

MATTHEW HALL
Daily Press Editor

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) is recruiting thousands of volunteers for the 2026 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, scheduled for Jan. 20-22, as the annual census faces ongoing questions about its accuracy and reliability.

Volunteers of all ages are welcome to participate in the three-night event, though those 17 and younger must be accompanied by an adult. Registration is open now, and all past volunteer accounts have expired, requiring returning participants to create new accounts. The count typically requires three to four hours of volunteer time, including training, and takes place at night in most areas.

LAHSA coordinates approximately 150 deployment sites across LA County's 4,000 square miles. Teams of three to four canvass assigned census tracts after 8 p.m., using a mobile app to visually tally every person sleeping outdoors or in vehicles, tents and makeshift shelters. Paper forms serve as backup if technology fails.

The count is divided by geographic region. Tuesday, Jan. 20, covers the San Fernando and Santa Clarita valleys and Metro Los Angeles. Wednesday, Jan. 21, includes the San Gabriel Valley and East Los Angeles. Thursday, Jan. 22, encompasses the

Palisades Village marks fire anniversary



Michelle Edgar

PALISADES: Rick Caruso marked the day with a ceremony.

MICHELLE EDGAR

Special to the Daily Press

On the evening of January 7, one year to the day after wildfires ignited across Malibu, Pacific Palisades, and Altadena, Los Angeles looked skyward not in fear, but in remembrance.

From the center of Palisades Village, three beams of light rose into the night. Distinct at first, they gradually merged into one - an intentional act of symbolism honoring three communities forever changed by fire, and three forces required to rebuild: reflection, gratitude, and hope.



SEE HOMELESS PAGE 7

SEE CARUSO PAGE 6

SEE CITY HALL PAGE 8

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Los Angeles launches “We Show Up” campaign to mark one-year anniversary of devastating fires

MAAZ ALIN
SMDP Staff Writer

Los Angeles will mark the one-year anniversary of the devastating Eaton and Palisades fires with a week-long campaign urging residents to support ongoing recovery efforts in fire-impacted communities, organizers announced.

The “We Show Up” campaign, coordinated by LA Rises, launched on Jan. 7, 2026, on the Day of Remembrance and continues through Jan. 15 with a Week of Action featuring volunteer opportunities, community events and efforts to support local businesses across Altadena, Pasadena, Malibu and the Pacific Palisades.

“In-person presence is one of the few antidotes to the loneliness of recovery,” an LA Rises spokesperson said. “We co-designed We Show Up with our Community Voices Committee around that truth — ensuring families across Altadena, Pasadena, Malibu, and the Pacific Palisades know Los Angeles hasn’t forgotten them.”

The campaign aims to remind residents that recovery remains ongoing one year after the fires, despite significant progress. Hundreds of homes are under construction across Altadena and the Palisades, with some families already moving back into rebuilt homes. California has completed what organizers call the fastest disaster cleanup in American history through coordination



Courtesy of LA Rises

WE SHOW UP!: The “We Show Up” campaign, coordinated by LA Rises, launched on Jan. 7, 2026, on the Day of Remembrance and continues through Jan. 15.

between state, federal and local governments.

However, survivors continue to face substantial challenges, particularly regarding federal aid. Gov. Gavin Newsom has requested \$33.9 billion in disaster recovery funding

from President Donald Trump and Congress to rebuild homes, schools and community spaces; support small businesses; and restore critical infrastructure.

“Every survivor has needs that cannot

be fully addressed without federal support, but neither Congress nor the President have delivered on their promise to support fire survivors,” an LA Rises spokesperson said.

Campaign organizers conducted more than 20 interviews with community members, including small business owners, nonprofit leaders and school principals, to shape the initiative. The consistent message: fire-impacted communities need sustained, visible support.

The campaign outlines seven ways Angelenos can participate:

Shopping at local businesses, many of which operate in temporary locations while determining long-term viability. Organizers emphasize that purchases represent investments in community members’ livelihoods and ability to remain in their neighborhoods.

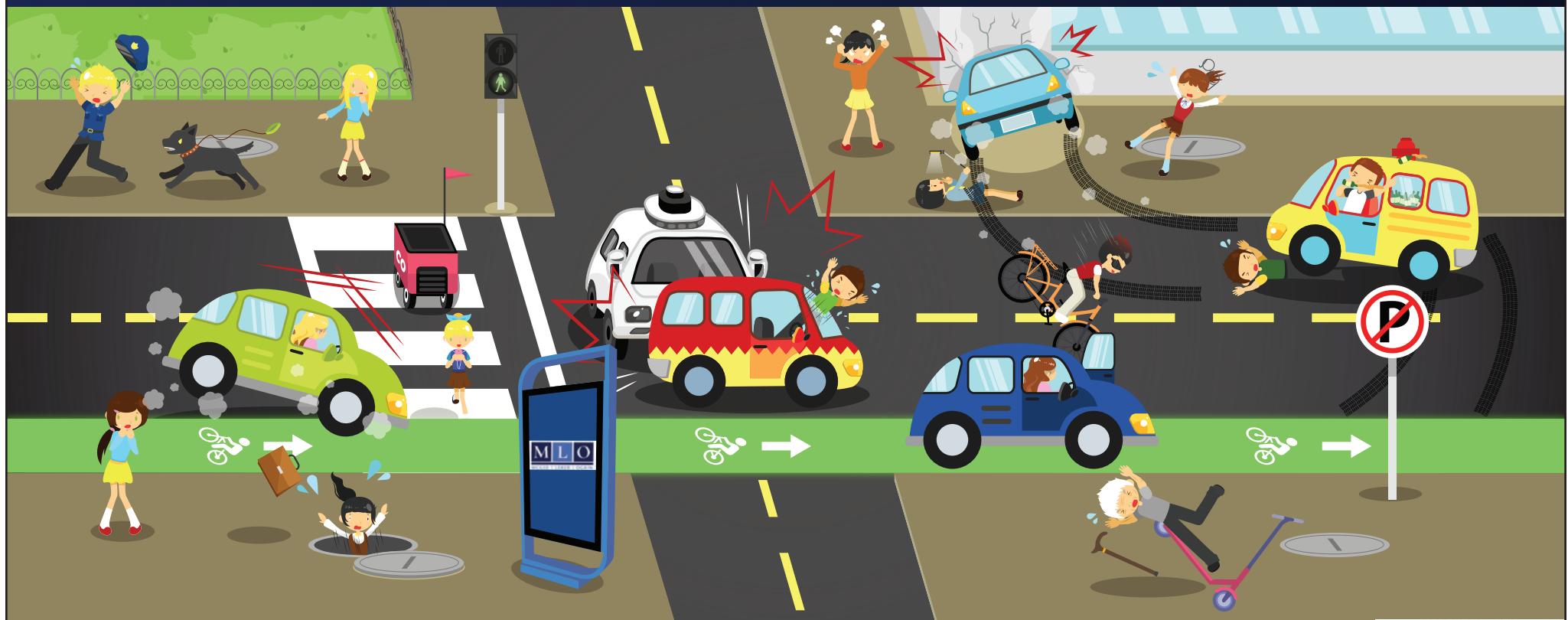
Volunteering with local nonprofits that have worked in affected areas since the fires began. Opportunities range from home construction to organizing resource fairs and free stores.

Visiting cultural institutions such as museums, libraries and community centers that organizers say hold community history and identity.

Attending local events during the Week of Action and beyond, including community gatherings and cultural celebrations.

SEE CAMPAIGN PAGE 6

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GUEST COMMENTARY

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Political leaders aren't to blame for LA fires, but what about the recovery?

As Los Angeles marks the one-year anniversary of fires that destroyed large chunks of the Pacific Palisades and Altadena, it's an opportune moment to ask about the state of the recovery and to consider the political implications of that work.

In short, is Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass doing enough to rebuild from the blazes?

To answer the question, it's worth starting with one obvious but unusual fact: The Palisades and Eaton fires were, in one sense, identical, in that they erupted at the same moment, under the same weather conditions and just a few miles apart.

But they are, in another important sense, opposite, in that the Palisades lie within the mayor's jurisdiction and the Eaton fire outside it. That should help dispense with one critique of Bass, the argument that these fires could have been throttled in their earliest moments if only for swift action by city leaders, or that Los Angeles was singularly unprepared.

If that were true, Altadena would still be standing, since it lies outside the orbit of LA's leadership. The devastating damage to two areas with different political structures proves that political leadership was not to blame.

The same is true for the specious argument that a reservoir that was offline for repairs near the Palisades would have saved the area from disaster. The real problem with fighting the fires a year ago was high winds, which grounded planes and helicopters, not a lack of water supply — which was confirmed by a state analysis of the response and by firefighters on the ground.

If the reservoir's status at the time of the fire did not contribute to the actual damage, it did offer the mayor's critics a political line of attack, which they grabbed even as the fires still smoldered.

Rick Caruso, the developer whom Bass beat in 2022, latched onto the issue, but it was just a grasp for advantage and was — or should have been — beneath his intelligence. He continues his quest to be mentioned in stories about the campaigns for mayor and governor, considering each even as the political tide moves away from him.

FORCES OF NATURE

LA Times owner Patrick Soon-Shiong also tried to make hay of it, only to be contradicted by his own newspaper's reporting on the issue. Soon-Shiong has since retreated from public commentary on the fires and their aftermath; his public pledge to create a Leadership Council disappeared without a trace.

Wind and brush are forces of nature, not politics, and absolve Bass of responsibility

for the fires. Karen Bass is no more responsible for the Palisades fire than former mayors Richard Riordan was for the Northridge Earthquake or Eugene Schmitz for the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906. They prove nothing more than that disasters are a fact of California history.

That said, mayors and other political leaders can and should be held accountable for how those under their direction respond in the aftermath of catastrophe.

Again, comparing Altadena and the Palisades is illustrative:

A recent UCLA study concluded that 70% of homes badly damaged in the Eaton fire show no signs of moving toward reconstruction, and while about half of rebuilding permits filed so far had been approved, more than 25% were on hold.

From the Palisades, meanwhile, the city has received more than 3,000 permit applications, has approved plans for more than 1,700 and issued permits for about 1,400. As with Altadena, that leaves many still under review, some 1,200 in the case of the city.

Broadly speaking, the city of Los Angeles is issuing permits in the Palisades somewhat faster than county officials are for Altadena, according to an analysis by the Los Angeles Times, which pegged the city's average turnaround at 79 days and the county's at 131 days.

In other areas, the city's response has failed to inspire much confidence. The city's fire chief was quick to distance herself from the fire's devastation, laying blame on others before being fired by Bass last year.

And efforts to produce an after-action analysis of the event have been undermined by reports pointing to editing that softened some of the document's language and conclusions. Some of the changes appear cosmetic, others more substantive.

Despite the ultimate report being "watered down," it presented a menu of reforms to better prepare the city for the next flareup. Some have already been implemented.

For Bass, then, the political challenge ahead is twofold: to persuade voters that her early stumbles did not materially affect the city's response and to demonstrate that the city has command of the process now.

In that vein, her administration is attempting to present itself as transparent: The city has made public copies of the after-action report and the drafts that led up to it, and a city website charts progress toward rebuilding with regular, sometime hourly, updates.

SEE GUEST COMMENTARY PAGE 5



Surf report

WATER TEMP: 61.5

FRIDAY
POOR

SURF: 1-2ft
Knee to thigh

A rideable, clean day to close out the workweek. Offshore wind expected and the tide swings mellow. Longer period NW swell holds as NW windswell energy backs off. Open beachbreaks and winter points have the best size off the mix of swells and wind is offshore for the morning (maybe too much of a good thing west of Dume). Surf runs waist high on average, focal points a little larger at times. Smaller but clean at the points so a good option for the small wave gear.

SATURDAY
POOR TO FAIR

SURF: 1-2ft
Knee to thigh

Fun zone surf off modest scale swell combo. Mainly favorable winds due. Mix of WNW swell and SSW swell rolls in with thigh to stomach high waves. Winds looking NE offshore through the day at this point, lightest in the afternoon.

Weather

Friday: Sunny, with a high near 61. Northeast wind around 10 mph becoming south southwest in the afternoon.

Friday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 46. North northeast wind around 10 mph.

Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 65. North wind 10 to 15 mph.

Saturday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 49.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2026/01/09	Fri	01:58 AM	4.44	H
2026/01/09	Fri	08:13 AM	2.04	L
2026/01/09	Fri	1:26 PM	3.31	H
2026/01/09	Fri	7:32 PM	1.27	L
2026/01/10	Sat	02:49 AM	4.54	H
2026/01/10	Sat	10:02 AM	1.71	L
2026/01/10	Sat	3:14 PM	2.70	H
2026/01/10	Sat	8:12 PM	1.87	L
2026/01/11	Sun	03:41 AM	4.67	H
2026/01/11	Sun	11:27 AM	1.17	L
2026/01/11	Sun	5:38 PM	2.59	H
2026/01/11	Sun	9:10 PM	2.35	L
2026/01/12	Mon	04:31 AM	4.83	H
2026/01/12	Mon	12:25 PM	0.61	L
2026/01/12	Mon	7:23 PM	2.84	H
2026/01/12	Mon	10:23 PM	2.63	L
2026/01/13	Tue	05:18 AM	5.03	H

Daily Lottery

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Draw Date: 1/7
15 28 57 58 63
Power#: 23
Jackpot: 124 M



Draw Date: 1/7
2 3 9 11 31



Draw Date: 1/6
9 39 47 58 68
Mega#: 24
Jackpot: 199 M



Draw Date: 1/7
EVENING: 7 3 8
Draw Date: 1/7
MIDDAY: 3 0 0



Draw Date: 1/7
6 16 17 27 42
Mega#: 13
Jackpot: 18 M



Draw Date: 1/7
1st: 11 - Money Bags
2nd: 07 - Eureka
3rd: 06 - Whirl Win
Race Time: 1:40:73

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Santa Monica Daily Press

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Los Angeles

Public Health Maintains Current Vaccination Guidelines

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health announced it will continue following existing California Department of Public Health vaccination guidelines for children, with no modifications to immunization schedules or vaccine availability.

The statement follows the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's announcement of changes to childhood vaccine recommendations.

Public Health officials said no new scientific evidence indicates the existing childhood vaccination schedule is ineffective or unsafe. Current CDPH guidelines are based on decades of research, ongoing safety monitoring and scientific review designed to protect children from serious and preventable diseases.

"This is another example of federal health officials sowing confusion and doubt about trusted measures that have protected children from disease for decades," officials stated.

The department said federal officials' comparisons to vaccination schedules in smaller countries are misleading. International immunization schedules differ because countries face distinct disease burdens, healthcare infrastructure challenges and population health needs, not because the U.S. schedule is excessive or unnecessary.

Officials said the federal decision to change the vaccine schedule without transparency or input from vaccine-preventable disease experts will lead to confusion and increased administrative burdens on parents and pediatric providers. They warned the ongoing revisions to established health policies may affect children's health and increase the risk of vaccine-preventable diseases.

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health will continue monitoring guidance from CDPH and remains committed to evidence-based practices prioritizing the health and safety of children and families. Individuals with questions about vaccine recommendations should contact their healthcare provider.

For more information on vaccine recommendations and vaccines, visit ph.lacounty.gov/vaccines.

EDITED BY SMDP STAFF



SMDP photo

SYRINGE: Public Health officials said no new scientific evidence indicates the existing childhood vaccination schedule is ineffective or unsafe.

Pacific Palisades

After losing home in wildfire, reality TV personality Spencer Pratt says he will run for LA mayor

Spencer Pratt, a reality television personality who lost his home in the deadly Palisades wildfire last year, announced Wednesday that he intends to run for mayor of Los Angeles.

Pratt, a Republican who rose to reality-TV fame alongside his wife, Heidi Montag, on "The Hills," said at a fire anniversary event that "this just isn't a campaign, this is a mission. And we are going to expose the system."

The event, called "They Let Us Burn!," was a rally critical of state and local government's handling of the Jan. 7 wildfire that killed 12 people and destroyed thousands of homes. In the aftermath of the fire, Pratt emerged as an outspoken critic of Gov. Gavin Newsom and Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, both Democrats, and said they failed to prevent the blaze. He sued the city and used social media to push back against denser housing.

Pratt posted a photo on the social media platform X that appeared to show him filling out paperwork required to run in the 2026 contest with the caption "It's official," but the filing could not be immediately confirmed with the city Ethics Commission. The California Republican Party has not had any contact with Pratt regarding his candidacy but was attempting to reach him, spokesman Matt Shupe said. Municipal races in California are nonpartisan.

Pratt did not respond to a text message seeking comment.

As a Republican, he would enter the race as a long shot in heavily Democratic Los Angeles.

His candidacy was endorsed online by Steve Hilton, a Republican candidate for governor, and Richard Grenell, an ally of President Donald Trump who wrote on X that "Spencer has the passion and the drive to make positive change for Los Angeles."

If Pratt moves ahead with his plans, he would join a field that includes Bass, who is seeking a second, four-year term; Austin Beutner, a former superintendent of the Los Angeles Unified School District; and community organizer Rae Huang. Candidates can continue to enter the race through early next month.

The primary is in June.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

City Hall

Santa Monica Council to Finalize Digital Billboard District Tuesday

The Santa Monica City Council will take final action Tuesday on establishing a digital display district along the Third Street Promenade, a move that could generate up to \$7 million annually while transforming the visual landscape of the city's downtown corridor.

The council is scheduled to adopt five ordinances at its Jan. 13 meeting, including the Digital Display District Ordinance and four development agreements for digital displays at specific locations. The items require only a second reading after being approved 6-0 on Dec. 16, 2025.

If adopted, the ordinances will take effect 30 days later, allowing installation of up to 16 large-format digital displays at corner buildings on the Promenade and at Santa Monica Place. The initial development agreements cover seven displays at four locations: Santa Monica Place, 1310 Third Street Promenade, 1202 Third Street Promenade, and 301 Arizona Avenue.

Supporters view it as essential for economic revitalization and critics warn of potential negative impacts on the area's character and historic resources.

According to an economic study prepared for the city, the digital displays could generate between \$3.5 million and \$7 million annually if all 16 allowed displays are eventually installed. Each display operator must pay the city a one-time contribution of \$500,000 plus ongoing annual payments of either 20% of gross revenues or a minimum annual guarantee of \$500,000, whichever is greater. The minimum guarantee escalates 3% annually.

The first \$5 million in revenue will go to the city's realignment plan. Above that threshold, approximately 10% would go toward repaying borrowing against the city's Housing Trust Fund, 85% toward downtown revitalization efforts including tenant improvements and public infrastructure, and up to 5% for a new moving image media art program.

The ordinance establishes strict operational standards for the displays, each limited to 1,000 square feet. Operating hours are restricted to 6 a.m. or 7 a.m. until 2 a.m., depending on the season. Brightness levels are capped at 6,000 candelas per meter squared during daytime, decreasing to 200 candelas after 10 p.m. Audio is prohibited except for city programming events. Each display must allocate 20% of its operating time to city content and public art programming.

The Santa Monica City Council meets Tuesday, Jan. 13 at 5:30 p.m. in City Hall.

EDITED BY SMDP STAFF



Courtesy photo

BILLBOARD: The program could generate up to \$7 million annually while transforming the visual landscape of the city's downtown corridor.

GUEST COMMENTARY

FROM PAGE 3

But reassurance is likely to be measured by optics as much as data. By fall, will the Palisades feel like a community regaining its strength, or will it remain hollowed out and empty? That, more than anything, may deliver the political verdict on this grave civic tragedy.

As for the judgments of history, they are mixed.

Mayor Riordan was widely praised for his response to the Northridge quake, and his steady resolve in those months helped

fashion his image as a practical and, at least occasionally, effective problem solver.

For Mayor Schmitz, the San Francisco quake left a different lasting impression. He ordered police to shoot looters on sight and reached outside the government for leadership in rebuilding the city. He was indicted the following year for corruption, and though ultimately acquitted, he never regained his former standing in the life of his city.

Jim Newton, CalMatters Contributor

Santa Monica Daily Press

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NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

SANTA MONICA ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD SPECIAL MEETING SANTA MONICA CITY HALL

SUBJECT: Monday, January 12, 2026, 7:00 PM

LOCATION: Council Chambers, (wheelchair accessible)
Santa Monica City Hall, 1685 Main Street, Room 250

PUBLIC HEARING:

2929 Pico Boulevard (25ARB-0226): Multi-Family Residential/Mixed-Use

Architectural Review Board review of the design, colors, materials, and landscape plans for the construction of a 6-story, 65' tall, approximately 45,753 square feet mixed-use housing development consisting of 59 residential units and approximately 8,685 square feet of commercial tenant space above one subterranean level of parking in the NC (Neighborhood Commercial) Zoning District, in association with 24ENT-0043 (AA).

More information is available online at <https://www.smgov.net/Departments/PCD/Boards-Commissions/Architectural-Review-Board/> (en Espanol tambien at (310) 458-2201 ext. 2431#).

The City of Santa Monica encourages public comment. Those wishing to give written public comment shall email comments to planningcomment@santamonica.gov. Comments received prior to 12 p.m. on the day of the meeting will be distributed to the Architectural Review Board prior to the meeting and posted online. Please note the agenda item in your comments.

For disability-related accommodations, please contact (866) 311-7266 at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Every attempt will be made to provide the requested accommodation.

All written materials are available in alternate languages provided the request is received 72 hours prior to the meeting.

Santa Monica Big Blue Bus Lines serve City Hall and the Civic Center area. The Expo Line terminus is located at Colorado Avenue and Fourth Street and is a short walk to City Hall. Public parking is available in front of City Hall, on Olympic Drive, and in the Civic Center Parking Structure (validation free).

Pursuant to California Government Code Section 65009(b), if this matter is subsequently challenged in Court, the challenge may be limited to only those issues raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Santa Monica at, or prior to, the public hearing.

TRANSLATION SERVICE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST. Please contact planning@santamonica.gov at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.

SERVICIO DE TRADUCCIÓN DISPONIBLE A PEDIDO. Comuníquese al planning@santamonica.gov al menos 72 horas antes de la reunión programada.

ESPAÑOL: Esto es una noticia pública para revisar aplicaciones proponiendo desarrollo en Santa Monica. Si desea más información, favor de llamar a Ana Fernandez en la División de Planificación al número (310) 458-2201 ext. 2431 o envíe un correo electrónico a ana.fernandez@santamonica.gov

CARUSO

FROM PAGE 1

The beams were visible across the city, cutting cleanly through darkness that once carried smoke. They marked not just an anniversary, but a turning point—an invitation to pause, to honor loss honestly, and to imagine what could still rise.

For Rick Caruso, the evening was both communal and deeply personal.

"I believe you need to have all your bases covered," Caruso said, referencing the two spiritual leaders who stood beside him—Monsignor Torgerson of Santa Monica and Rabbi Zushi. "They've given me great strength and inspiration. But ultimately, it's the people who bring back the community."

Caruso spoke candidly about why the lights would not shine for just a few nights.

Originally planned for three days, the tribute was extended after a conversation with his son, Alex.

"He reminded me the fires didn't end on January 7," Caruso said. "They weren't extinguished until January 31. So we decided the lights should stay on every night until then."

From January 7 through January 31, the beams will rise nightly—mirroring the full duration of the fires themselves. Not a symbolic shortcut, but a truthful one.

"This is a moment for reflection," Caruso said. "A moment for celebration. And a moment for hope. Because despite everything, this remains a great community."

Monsignor Torgerson opened the ceremony with a prayer rooted in rebuilding—not just structures, but spirit.

"God of new beginnings, lift us," he said. "From ashes, bring wisdom. From loss, bring resolve. From what's broken, shape something deeper and more humane."

His words echoed through a crowd still navigating displacement, insurance battles, and the long emotional tail of disaster.

"Remind us," he continued, "that hope still finds a way upward. And as we rebuild, may we not only restore what was lost, but rediscover who we are. May we move forward together, with unity, courage, and hope."

The prayer landed softly, yet firmly less a conclusion than a charge.

Rabbi Zushi followed with reflections that bridged faith, realism, and optimism.

"We are all one family fully connected," he said. "This has been such a challenging year for all of us."

Drawing from wisdom traditions, he noted

that after fire, communities often emerge changed, but not diminished.

"When we go through dark and challenging moments," he said, "we are blessed with new wisdom, new insight, and new perspective."

He spoke candidly about recovery—acknowledging both spiritual and practical realities, even referencing insurance as part of the long road back—before returning to what he called the unmistakable energy of unity that had emerged.

"There is no question," Rabbi Zushi said, "this community is going to shine in the most spectacular way - an example not just for Los Angeles, but for the universe."

Then came a moment of surprise.

Rabbi Zushi paused, smiled, and reminded the crowd that the ceremony was taking place on Caruso's birthday.

"Every day in life is a gift," he said. "But your birthday is the day God says: your life matters."

Turning toward Caruso, he offered a blessing—for joy, peace, and new possibilities—and for continued blessings for Caruso, his wife Tina, and their family.

The crowd responded not with formality, but warmth—an acknowledgment that leadership, when rooted in service, is deeply human.

As the ceremony concluded, Caruso stepped forward and ignited the beams.

"These lights are about pushing away darkness and sadness," he said. "They're about finding reasons to celebrate—even in the face of challenge—and seeing possibilities that didn't exist before."

He spoke of the future, too. "We look forward to many more celebrations in this center," he said. "Many more chances to help each other and make a difference."

Then he made a promise—one he has repeated often over the past year.

"We are going to be here until the bitter end," Caruso said. "We will stand by you."

As the beams converged into a single column of light, people stood quietly. Some held hands. Others wiped away tears. No music played. No countdown followed, just light steady, intentional, and rising.

For the next several weeks, the beams will continue to climb into the Los Angeles sky each night, offering a place to remember, to grieve honestly, and to hope without apology.

In a city shaped by reinvention, the message was clear:

After fire, light still leads the way.

michelle@smdp.com

CAMPAIGN

FROM PAGE 2

Donating to grassroots organizations operating on limited budgets while providing essential resources to keep businesses operating and communities connected.

Advocating for federal support by sharing updates, contacting elected officials and raising awareness about funding gaps.

Staying connected through LA Rises' website and social media channels to amplify survivors' stories and combat narratives suggesting they have been forgotten.

LA Rises is a public-private partnership created in collaboration with the State of California Office of Community Partnerships & Strategic Communications. The initiative connects resources to those in need and shares recovery experiences through social storytelling.

The organization's philanthropic arm has contributed to the LA County small business

relief grants program, the Foothill Catalog Foundation and Habitat for Humanity of the San Gabriel Valley. LA Rises also partnered with Archistar to develop an AI tool designed to expedite building permit approvals.

Relief funds have been distributed to families, renters and small businesses, though organizers stress that recovery is far from complete.

"This is the one-year mark, not the finish line," organizers said. "Recovery takes time, but real progress is happening—family by family, block by block."

The campaign emphasizes that every family deserves what organizers call "a stable, dignified path forward," whether through rebuilding, relocating or starting fresh.

More information about recovery progress and ways to participate is available at laris.es.org.

maaz@smdp.com

HOMELESS

FROM PAGE 1

Antelope Valley, West Los Angeles (including Santa Monica) South Los Angeles and South Bay/Harbor areas. The Antelope Valley and some West LA areas are counted in the morning due to visibility or safety concerns.

The annual count has both local, regional and national implications. Officials say the year to year comparison serves as a critical tool for understanding the scope of the homelessness crisis in individual cities, authorities use the information to inform policy and federal funding is dependent in part on the count.

LAHSA conducts four separate components to produce the complete count: the Street Count of unsheltered individuals, a Youth Count surveying unaccompanied youth under 25, a Demographic Survey conducted with USC, and a Housing Inventory Count tracking those in shelters and transitional housing. Results are typically released in late spring or early summer.

In the post-COVID era, Los Angeles County's homeless population generally grew, though the rate of increase fluctuated and eventually tapered off before recording a small decline in the most recent count.

While homelessness decreased throughout Los Angeles County, Santa Monica reported an increase. The local count showed homelessness rose 5% in 2024, from 774 to 812 people. The population growth was driven largely by car campers, with 21 more people living in vehicles for a total of 84. The city also saw 29 more people in local shelters for a total of 202, while four fewer people were found living outside, dropping that total to 475.

Santa Monica's increase contrasts sharply with county and regional trends. The 2025 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count showed homelessness down 4% countywide to 72,308 and down 3.4% in Los Angeles to 43,699. In Service Planning Area 5, which includes Santa Monica, homelessness declined 6.4%. Other SPA 5 communities also saw decreases: Culver City dropped nearly 9%, Venice declined 22% and Malibu reported a record low of 33 homeless people.

However, the count's accuracy has faced

increasing scrutiny, with officials, experts and community members raising concerns about its reliability.

Critics argue the count undercounts the true homeless population, especially unsheltered people. A 2024 RAND study found LA's official count in areas like Hollywood, Skid Row and Venice was 26% lower than a simultaneous professional count, a gap that widened to 32% in 2025. RAND warned such undercounts could misdirect resources.

Methodology changes have also caused confusion. LAHSA uses statistical multipliers to estimate how many people occupy tents or vehicles, and these formulas have evolved over time. After the 2019 count, LAHSA revised results at the city council district level due to a new estimation method, highlighting that the count relies on statistical tools rather than simple headcounts.

Technical errors have undermined confidence. In 2022, an entire Venice census tract was initially reported as having zero unsheltered people — an obvious error that drew incredulity. LAHSA acknowledged user and technological problems due to spotty training and poor internet connectivity. The 2024 count saw similar troubles with the mobile app crashing and login problems.

An LAist investigation found LAHSA excluded more volunteer observations in 2024 than prior years — only 81% of recorded sightings were ultimately counted versus 87% the year before. Almost all dropped data came from within LA city limits. LAHSA explained they remove erroneous entries but had no formal written protocol for these decisions, fueling skepticism about transparency.

LAHSA itself has become a controversial subject with both the city and County of Los Angeles terminating contracts with the organization over concerns about its effectiveness. LAHSA denies any manipulation or wrongdoing in any of its services, maintaining recent decreases in the count were evidence that its programs work.

To volunteer for the 2026 count, visit the LAHSA website or email homelesscount@lahsa.org.

editor@smdp.com

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CITY HALL

FROM PAGE 1

commissions would remain intact with current membership until July 2026, when the new consolidated commission would begin operations. Priority would be given to existing members who wish to continue serving.

Staff also recommends converting the Urban Forest Task Force, originally established in 2009 and repeatedly reconstituted, into a permanent commission. The change would remove the current requirement that at least three members be certified arborists, broadening recruitment opportunities.

Several commissions would see membership changes. The Arts Commission would shrink from nine to seven members to help meet quorum requirements and reduce vacancies. The Public Safety Reform and Oversight Commission would drop from 12 to eight members, with the age limit for youth seats raised from 22 to 25 years old.

The Landmarks Commission would see its residency requirements relaxed for five of seven seats, while maintaining the requirement for the local historian and realtor positions.

In an effort to improve efficiency without full consolidation, staff recommends joint meetings for certain bodies. The Transient Occupancy Tax Advisory Committee would hold its annual meeting jointly with the Council Audit Subcommittee. Similarly, the Clean Beaches & Ocean Parcel Tax Citizens Oversight Committee would hold quarterly meetings with the Commission on Sustainability, Environmental Justice and the Environment.

Administrative policy changes include removing Council liaisons from boards and



SMDP Photo

CITY HALL: The proposals represent the most significant changes to the city's governance structure since a 2021 restructuring.

commissions "due to concerns of having the undue influence of certain Councilmembers over boards and commissions, limiting their ability to form independent recommendation and rulings," according to the report.

Other procedural changes would limit unexcused absences to two per fiscal year, resulting in automatic vacation of a seat. The waiting period for serving again on the same body would be shortened from multiple years to one year to aid recruitment.

The appointment process may change to invite applicants to speak at Council meetings about their qualifications, with letters of recommendation from community members encouraged.

The comprehensive review was mandated under Resolution No. 11510, which requires the City Clerk's Office to conduct a five-year assessment of boards and commissions. At a July 8, 2025 meeting, the Council directed staff to explore reorganization and consolidation

opportunities.

Staff conducted meetings with chairs, vice chairs, staff liaisons, department heads and councilmembers to assess each board's functions and alignment with city goals.

Since the 2021 restructuring, Santa Monica has experienced an increase in regulatory and oversight bodies, some created by voter-approved measures, ordinances and state law. Some entities have overlapping missions, persistent vacancies and lack consistent oversight, according to the report.

The city currently supports 20 boards and commissions, one task force, three nonprofit boards and two district boards. The review focused on the 19 boards, commissions and one task force primarily supported by city staff.

The proposed changes are considered administrative actions and are not subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act, according to the report.

Staff anticipates minimal immediate cost savings but expects improved efficiency and better use of existing resources. The city invests in recruitment, onboarding, training, software licensing, meeting preparation and staff support for these bodies, with multiple departments providing collaboration and resources.

The City Council will hold a study session Tuesday to review staff recommendations and provide direction. If approved, staff would return with amended ordinances and resolutions to implement the changes.

The meeting is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. at Santa Monica City Hall.

maaz@smdp.com

City of Santa Monica

Holiday Tree Collection

December 26th - January 31st

Here's how you can prepare your natural tree for a second life as mulch and compost:

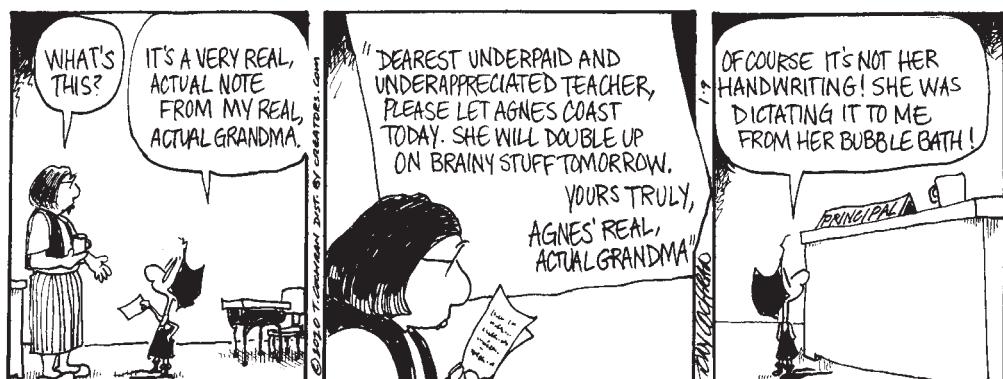
- Remove all decorations such as tinsel, lights, and stands.
- Place your tree curbside or in the alley next to your waste containers for automatic pick-up between Dec. 26th and Jan. 31st. Do not leave trees in parking lots or parks. No 311 request required.

Please note that flocked trees (trees with synthetic snow) cannot be turned into compost and mulch due to the synthetic materials used in the artificial snow and will be collected as trash. If you purchase a natural tree, we encourage you to not apply flocking.

Questions? Email zerowaste@santamonica.gov

Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN

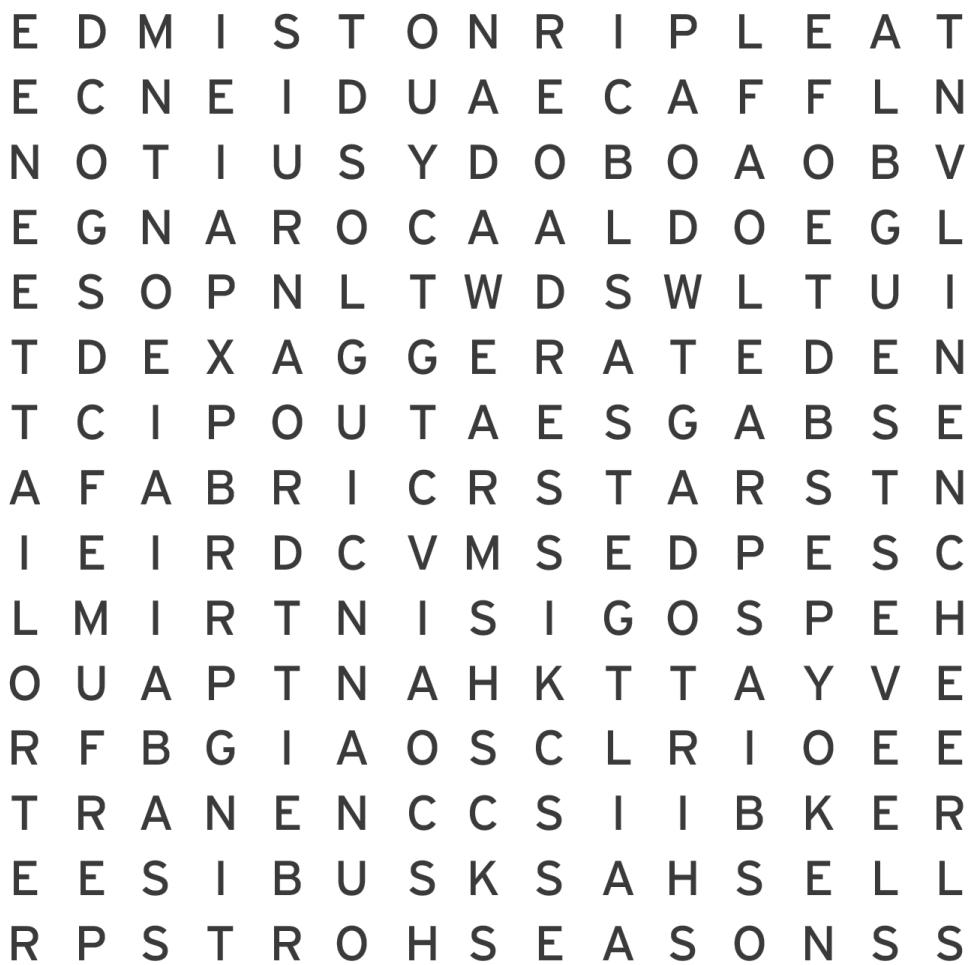


FIND THE WORDS

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 19 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle.

© australianwordgames.com.au 6815

Fashion week



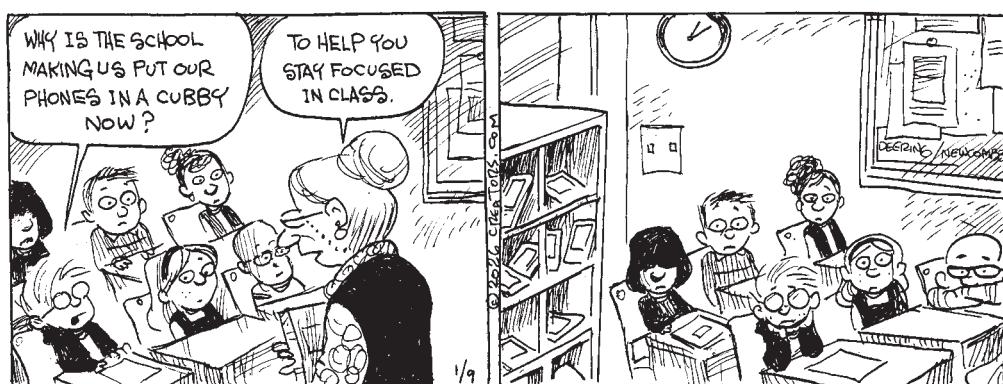
Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE

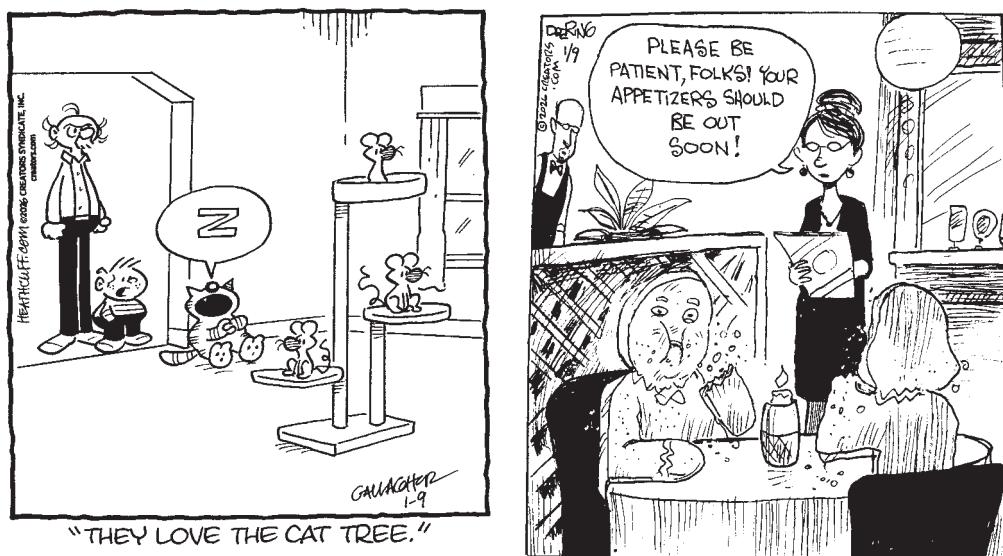


Heathcliff

By PETER GALLAGHER

Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING



Audience	Edmiston	Paris	Shirt
Bags	Exaggerated	Perfume	Shorts
Belt	Fabric	Pins	Silk
Bias	Face	Pleat	Sleeves
Bodysuit	Fads	Pose	Stars
Cheer	Fold	Pout	Tack
Chic	Guest	Rayon	Tailor
Clap	Image	Saba	Tops
Coat	Ksubi	Sass and	Trim
Contract	Linen	Bide	Wear
Draft	Mini	Season	Wool
Dress	Orange	Sell	Yoke

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Santa Monica Daily Press



TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 9)

Welcome to your Year of Bright Opportunities. Invitations find you - to travel, to collaborate and to be a part of something epic and possibly romantic. You'll get access to places or people you once thought out of reach. Your optimism returns in full color. More highlights: A family milestone brings joy, wins in games, and you'll balance ambition and affection like a pro. Aquarius and Cancer adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 8, 1, 3, 22 and 37.



HOROSCOPES

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Family dynamics are in play. This could feel complicated, political, inconvenient or even dramatic. But it also feels expected. There are no surprises here, so make your move in full awareness of the familiar pattern.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Choose stability. Work with what you know and can control. Unpredictable elements are exciting but could derail you from making real progress. You just can't risk it today. In predictable conditions, you'll build brilliant systems and quickly move ahead.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Fences can keep people apart or bring people together. When people feel like their boundaries are being respected and protected, they let down their guard and are more inclined to connect in their preferred ways.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Every decision offers a lesson, no matter how it turns out. When things go your way, you learn. When they don't, you learn something different, and often more valuable. So as long as you stay engaged and aware, you're winning.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You may finish a mountain of work only to notice an entire mountain range still ahead. That's why the cycle can't be just "work, work, work." Try: work, pause, celebrate. The pause restores you; the celebration fuels you. All steps are essential.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Each relationship is distinct. Let each connection serve its natural purpose. Some are only built for a shared laugh or a passing hug. Don't try to get deep with someone who can only meet you on the surface of life.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Your environment seeps into your imagination, your imagination fuels your behavior and your behavior shapes the environment right back. It's a loop you can use to your advantage now by putting yourself somewhere beautiful, and the rest will follow.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Real allies help you succeed, whether by boosting you up or giving you honest critique. Today they'll give you what you need - a confidence boost if you're wavering, or a clear-eyed critique when something just needs a bit of tightening.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You have a gift for prioritizing the right things today. You'll figure out what's actionable, handle what's relevant and ask for what's necessary. You'll create order, and it will be so attractive to people who need that anchor in their lives and work.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You have great timing today, mainly because you're early. Giving yourself wide margins for not only error but for creativity, peace and preparation simply gets you into the groovy vibe from which the day's loveliness unfolds.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Today the "good guys" have quirks, and the "bad guys" have charm, and the same person can fall into either category as the days and deals progress. Stay tuned to nuance. Most truths will live in a gray area.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Don't demand brilliance from yourself on command. Lower the bar to "something, anything." A scribble becomes a sketch becomes a draft... you just have to start and trust that the work will develop from there.

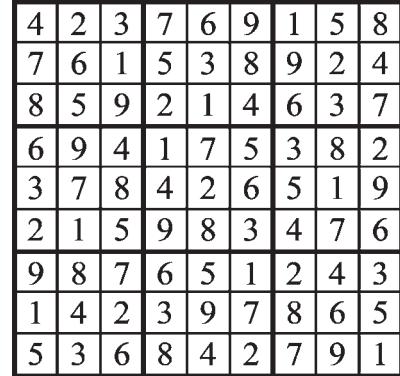
SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD



Sudoku

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S 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.



Newsday Crossword

MULTIPLE MEANINGS by Prasanna Keshava
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS

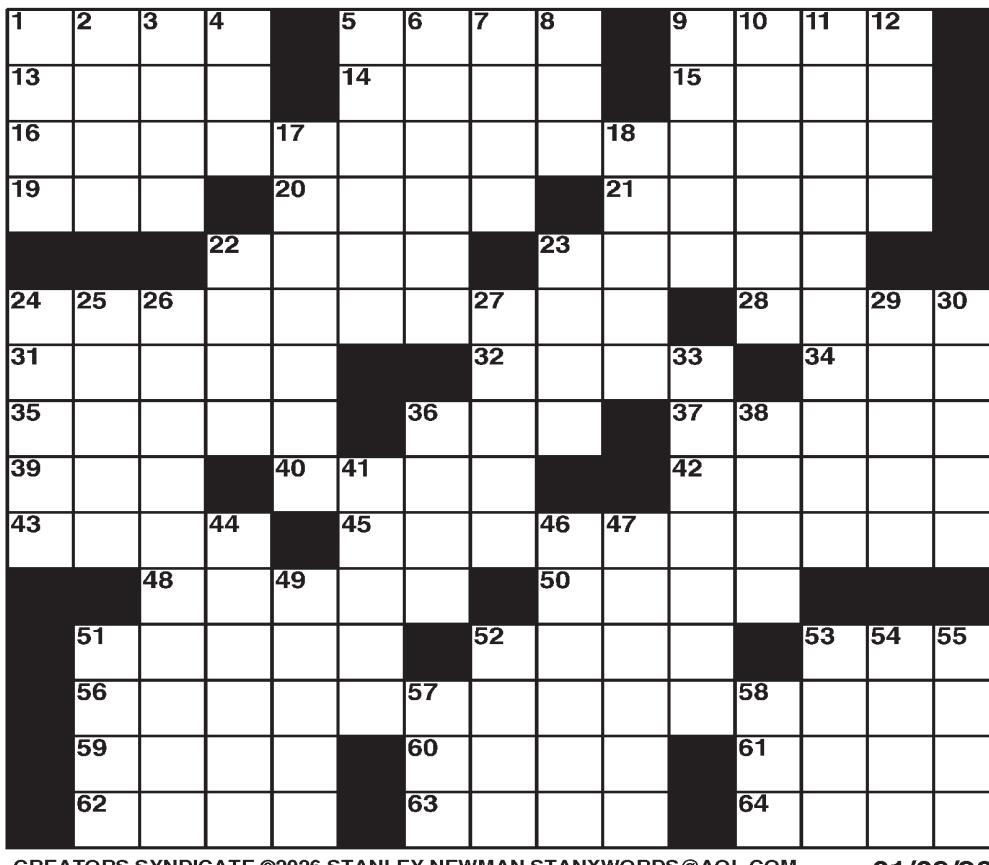
- 1 Map app
- 5 Breaks ground
- 9 "Later!"
- 13 Young Y wearers
- 14 Mark's successor
- 15 Short story of a sort
- 16 Oscar category
- 19 Corporate IDs
- 20 Spa wear
- 21 Hunks
- 22 Nickname that sounds like its first two letters
- 23 Invites home
- 24 Event's exclusive area
- 28 Deal with it
- 31 Name related to Hannah
- 32 Piehole
- 34 What may move you
- 35 Place for a pin
- 36 Fielding feats, for short
- 37 Straight up
- 39 Attribute (to)
- 40 Glide high
- 42 Grade school tool
- 43 Wine variety
- 45 Majority
- 48 Lots and lots
- 50 ___ before
- 51 Leave alone
- 52 Not yet resolved
- 53 Percolator feature
- 56 Big spender's maxim
- 59 Ms. Swift's two dozen+ trophies

60 Film with Aykroyd

- voicing a wasp
- 61 Eiffel Tower, essentially
- 62 Adherents, at last
- 63 Ascendancy
- 64 Synonym of the last word of the four longest answers

DOWN

- 8 Prince, for instance
- 9 Wears down
- 10 Extremely small
- 11 Soap south of the border
- 12 Solemn endorsement
- 17 Tough times
- 18 Sub-Saharan nation
- 22 *Punto cardinale*
- 23 ___ d'oeuvres
- 24 Dauntless nature
- 25 Knocked out
- 26 Unattainable
- 4 Uncommon sense
- 5 Dauntless
- 6 Bump, as a bluffer
- 7 Detroit River's
- 27 Tech helper
- 29 Car in the lead
- 30 ___ nous



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01/09/26

MORE OF STAN'S CROSSWORD! Play FREE from Stan's archives of Easy, Hard and Sunday puzzles at: tinyurl.com/stan-newman-crosswords



FRIDAY | JANUARY 9

DRUNK THEATRE: THE WILDEST IMPROV COMEDY SHOW!

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Santa Monica Playhouse 1211 4th St, Santa Monica. A comedian takes five shots of whiskey in a row and tries to perform an improvised play with five sober comedians. What could go wrong?! Drunk Theatre is the entirely improvised, unpredictable, and crazy comedy show that'll kick your weekend into overdrive. Reserve your spot now as limited seating and space is available. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/drunk-theatre-the-wildest-improv-comedy-show-15793351/2026-01-09T08>

BRUNCH FRIDAYS WITH LIVE MUSIC IN OUR GARDEN PATIO!

11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Tiamo Kitchen & Venue 2700 Colorado Ave Santa Monica Our newly launched Brunch Fridays just got vibey-er! Every week enjoy great eats, summer libations, and a featured music artist on our beautiful garden patio! So come toast to summer with our uniquely crafted brunch menu including our Turmeric Spiced Cloud Egg dish, Smoked Gouda Scramble with Smashed Ube, Vietnamese French Toast, along with Mama's classics such as Famous Garlic Noodles, Shaken Beef, and Seafood Egg Fried Rice! And of course, it wouldn't be brunch without bottomless mimosas & summer punch bowls, so grab your brunch crew and enjoy the fair along the beautiful backdrop of Al fresco dining. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/brunch-fridays-with-live-music-in-our-garden-patio-14639006/2026-01-09T11>

APRÈS CHALET

4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Regent Santa Monica Beach 1700 Ocean Ave Santa Monica. Après Chalet is a pop-up that transforms seaside cabanas into LA's chicest winter retreat. Each private cabana holds its own holiday ritual: a curated s'mores kit, a warm welcome cocktail, and the crackle of fire from a glowing firepit reserved exclusively for your group. Winter-white decor and twinkling lights frame the scene, as live music drifts through the salt air and a dedicated fireside mixologist creates enchanting, seasonal cocktails. \$55.00 to \$125.00. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/apr-s-chalet-17758170/2026-01-09T16>

SATURDAY | JANUARY 10

VIRGINIA AVENUE PARK/PICO BOULEVARD FARMERS MARKET

8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Virginia Avenue Park 2200 Virginia Ave Santa Monica Virginia Avenue Park Santa Monica. The family market in the heart of the Pico neighborhood's Virginia Avenue Park! Enjoy one of Santa Monica's farmers markets, widely considered to be among the best on the west coast and featuring field-fresh produce, hundreds

of kinds of vegetables, brilliant cut flowers, breads, cheeses, delicious foods, live music and more. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/virginia-avenue-park-pico-boulevard-farmers-market-16090226/2026-01-10T08>

FRANCIS KLEIN TRUNK SHOW AT MONTANA EYES

10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Montana Eyes 718 Montana Avenue Santa Monica. Jennifer Butler will choose the perfect eyewear frames for you. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/francis-klein-trunk-show-at-montana-eyes-17764702/2026-01-10T10>

SUNDAY | JANUARY 11

SANTA MONICA FARMERS MARKET - SUNDAY MAIN STREET

8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Main Street Farmers Market 2640 Main Street Santa Monica. The Sunday Main Street Farmers Market features some of California's freshest produce plus prepared foods from local Main Street restaurants as well as artisanal foods prepared with ingredients sourced from California farmers. Enjoy musical entertainment, prepared and pre-packaged foods, kids activities as well as local artisan crafts. Market is open Sundays from 8:30-1:30, year-round, rain or shine. Some closures due to holidays. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/santa-monica-farmers-market-sunday-main-street-12382445/2026-01-11T08>

CARB LOADERS -1-YEAR ANNIVERSARY RUN

9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. HomeState 720 Wilshire Boulevard #Suite 101 Santa Monica. Join our monthly 3-4 miles fun run. Expect great vibes, discover a new fun venue and meet the LA running community. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/carb-loaders-1-year-anniversary-run-17764744/2026-01-11T09>

BEACH CLUB BRUNCH

11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Regent Santa Monica Beach 1700 Ocean Ave Santa Monica. Step into the vibrant charm of the Mediterranean every weekend at Orla in Santa Monica. Our Beach Club Brunch is a sun-soaked celebration of coastal flavor, complete with DJ-Spun beats and an atmosphere that invites you to linger. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/beach-club-brunch-17758171/2026-01-11T11>

WALK-IN TUTORING WITH DHRUVI

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. West Los Angeles Regional Library 11360 Santa Monica Boulevard Los Angeles. Walk-In Tutoring With Dhruvi Walk-in tutoring is available for any adult who needs help with internet searches, filling out forms, English conversation, reading, writing, resumes, and applications, studying for. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/walk-in-tutoring-with-dhruvi-17717783/2026-01-11T13>

STAND UP 101: FIND YOUR VOICE (SUNDAYS)

6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. 1424 4th Street Santa Monica. Jump into Stand Up! Discover your own comedic sensibility and shape it into a clear and unique point of view! 6 weeks + a Showcase! Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/stand-up-101-find-your-voice-sundays-17764767/2026-01-11T18>

VENICE ELECTRIC LIGHT PARADE - SUNDAYS AT SUNSET

Windward Plaza 1501 Ocean Front Walk Venice. Join the Magic of the Venice Electric Light Parade Every Sunday Night! Looking for a unique and vibrant way to end your weekend? The Venice Electric Light Parade (VELP) is here to light up your Sunday evenings! Founded by Marcus Gladney, this family-friendly weekly event celebrates community, creativity, and safe cycling. Bring your LED-lit bicycle and join us for an unforgettable ride along the iconic Venice Beach. Details: When: Every Sunday evening. Meet 45 minutes before sunset. Where: Windward Plaza, Venice Beach. Who: Open to everyone! Bring your bike, lights, and good vibes. Cost: FREE to join! Experience the magic of glowing bikes, amazing sound bikes playing great music, and the welcoming energy of the Venice community. The parade follows a strict no-smoking or drinking policy, ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for all. Why Join? Connect with old and new friends. Celebrate the artistic and cultural spirit of Venice. Enjoy a safe and fun environment for all ages. So, light up your ride, bring your friends, and join us this Sunday at Windward Plaza. Don't forget to turn on your lights and practice safe cycling at night! Let's ride into the sunset together! Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/venice-electric-light-parade-sundays-at-sunset-14970341/2026-01-11T00>

MONDAY | JANUARY 12

PIZZA PARTY AT BODEGA WINE BAR

6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. 814 Broadway Santa Monica. Every Monday Night at Bodega, every bottle of wine you purchase gets you a pizza half off! 6pm-Close. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/pizza-party-at-bodega-wine-bar-11526040/2026-01-12T18>

KARAOKE MONDAYS AT THE WHALER

101 Broadway CA 90401 Contact Info (424) 330-0166 info@venicewhaler.com Does not apply on holidays Santa Monica. Monday night karaoke at Whaler! Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/karaoke-mondays-at-the-whaler-17408730/2026-01-12T00>

TUESDAY | JANUARY 13

WALKING MEDITATION

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Beach lot 5 South 2600

Bernard Way Los Angeles. Walking meditation is and has always been a significant alternative to sitting meditation, especially for those starting a new practice. The goal of meditation is to be able to practice in all positions, conditions and activities whether sitting, standing, walking, lying down, or whenever awake. We'll meet Tuesday's and Thursdays at 8 am at lifeguard tower 28 (paid parking available in the Santa Monica Beach lot 5 South) After some basic instructions we'll walk silently together for approximately 50 minutes on the shoreline at a natural leisurely pace from tower 28 towards the Santa Monica Pier and back. Everyone is always welcomed to join whether new to meditation or with many years of experience. Looking forward to meeting and meditating with you all. Please feel free to reach out with any concerns or questions and please arrive 5 minutes early. Don't forget to check schedule for any changes or cancellations. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/walking-meditation-16206460/2026-01-13T08>

COFFEE CONNECTION

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. The Shore Hotel 1515 Ocean Ave. Santa Monica. Coffee Connection networking event Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/coffee-connection-17476327/2026-01-13T09>

MEMORIES & MOVEMENT SENIOR CLUB

10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Virginia Avenue Park 2200 Virginia Ave. Santa Monica. Come, learn, and have fun every 2nd and 4th Tuesday from 10:30 AM to 1:00 PM in The Patio room at Virginia Avenue Park. Each week there will be something new: Exercise, Talking with Friends, Learning, Guest Presenters, Health & Wellness! For more information call (310) 458-8688. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/memories-movement-senior-club-14853634/2026-01-13T10>

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

5:30 p.m. Santa Monica City Hall 1685 Main St. Santa Monica. The City Council is made up of seven members elected at-large for staggered four-year terms. Every two years, after each election, the City Council selects one of its members to serve as Mayor and another to serve as Mayor Pro Tempore. The City Council also sits as the following bodies for the City of Santa Monica. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/city-council-meeting-13799967/2026-01-13T17>

TUESDAY OPEN MIC

10:00 p.m. Westside Comedy Theater 1323-A 3rd St Santa Monica. The best open mic in Los Angeles! The Tuesday Open Mic is a weekly open mic. Hop onstage and perform your best 3 minutes! Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/tuesday-open-mic-16004734/2026-01-13T22>

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