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2 **Fire cleanup**
Potentially dangerous gig.

3 **Private firefighters**
Are they a risk?

4 **Local recovery**
Determined by wealth.

5 **Housing crisis**
About to worsen.

smdp
Santa Monica Daily Press

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State leaders rally to provide relief to fire victims



Courtesy Graphic

AID: There are several programs available to provide help to the residents who lost everything in the fires.

THOMAS LEFFLER
SMDP Staff Writer

California leaders are working overtime to address the many impacts from devastating fires and some gathered in a virtual town hall last week to talk about what locals can do to recover after the Palisades Fire, as well as the government's response to the blaze.

On a Tuesday Zoom call co-hosted by the Santa Monica and Pacific Palisades/Malibu Chamber of Commerce, State Senator Ben Allen opened by pointing affected workers in the direction of federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance applications. The assistance is for impacted workers typically not eligible for regular unemployment benefits that lost jobs or hours from the fires. He also stressed the executive order signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom, waiving the one-week waiting period for affected workers who qualify for regular unemployment benefits.

Allen, who has been meeting with state and national leaders since the fires began, told impacted

SEE **GOVERNMENT** PAGE 4

Lawsuit puts new spin on 'pickleball court'

SCOTT SNOWDEN
SMDP Staff Writer

A pickleball startup is suing a local competitor over alleged interference with a city development project, according to a lawsuit filed in Los Angeles County.

Santa Monica Pickleball and Padel, LLC claims that Pickletown, LLC and its owners attempted to disrupt a contract with Downtown Santa Monica, Inc. (DTSM) for a new racquet sports facility on 4th Street. The lawsuit seeks damages for increased operational costs, project delays, and reputational harm.

The lawsuit stems from the ongoing efforts to program the now vacant lot that used to house a City parking structure. That structure was deemed unsafe and torn down to make way for housing but officials have tried to find an interim use for the location as the housing project is not ready to break ground.

In November of last year, the group calling itself Pickle Padel Paw beat out New York City-based CityPickle to take over the space left vacant at 1318 4th Street when Haibu was forced to pull out of its deal to build a 360-degree

SEE **PICKLEGATE** PAGE 7

Fire related fraudsters will get burned by new State focus on criminal claims

MATTHEW HALL
Daily Press Editor

California officials announced an aggressive effort to combat insurance fraud targeting wildfire survivors in Los Angeles County on Friday, including extended service hours and fraud prevention workshops.

Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara and Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan Hochman unveiled a partnership focusing on consumer protection and swift prosecution of scammers who attempt to exploit disaster victims.

"Scammers exploit vulnerable times, preying on survivors with false promises and fraudulent schemes," Lara said at a joint news conference. "We've seen this in past wildfires."

The Department of Insurance has deployed its Disaster Assistance

SEE **INSURANCE** PAGE 7



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LA will need workers to clean up after fires. It can be a dangerous job



Photo Courtesy of CalMatters

CLEANUP: The recovery from this month's wildfires could potentially be a dangerous gig.

ALEJANDRA REYES-VELARDE AND JEANNE KUANG
Special to the Daily Press

Anabel Garcia's eyes burned and her breathing was labored and dry as she cleared debris from burned down properties in Sonoma County.

In late 2017, the Tubbs Fire had just scythed its way through towns and crops and Garcia, a vineyard worker, was out of a job. So she joined on with a contractor providing post-fire cleanup services. But that proved painful and dangerous.

"We were sick with throat and skin problems," she said, of herself and the scores of other immigrant workers who took cleanup gigs in the aftermath of the fire. "There were many consequences we had later, in order to keep working."

Garcia was cleaning up after what was, at the time, the most destructive fire in California history, which killed 22 people and torched 5,600 structures. The Palisades and Eaton fires that started last week have already caused nearly double that damage and as Los Angeles turns its eye toward recovery, worker advocates and state regulators are concerned about the potential hazards to cleanup workers like Garcia.

The cleanup is essential: The debris must be cleared and the ash-covered houses cleaned before any reconstruction is possible. Much of that work will fall to a cadre of immigrant laborers.

Some are already employed as housekeepers and may be asked by homeowners to clear ash from a damaged house, workers' advocates said. Others will likely be the gardeners, handymen and other domestic service workers reeling from lost income during the fires, available for work.

"As those big areas of the city that have been impacted get opened up and handed back to property owners, those workers are going to be, no question, in massive demand," said Kevin Riley, director of the Labor and Occupational Safety and Health program at UCLA. "They're a critical backbone to reconstruction efforts."

Fire recovery workers can face numerous hazards, including structurally unsound buildings, toxic gases, exposed electrical wiring, cancer-causing chemicals and ash, soot and dust which can damage the lungs when inhaled, according to the state Division of Occupational Safety and Health.

State environmental agencies usually remove toxic substances that have seeped into the ground, and certified contractors are required to mitigate asbestos and lead risks, Riley said. Those workers tend to be trained for the hazards.

But he's concerned about anyone hired for a less formal cleanup job, whether directly by a homeowner or by one of a growing number of loosely regulated cleanup-and-recovery contractors that chase climate-driven disasters across the country.

Mike Wilson, senior safety engineer at Cal/OSHA, told the Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board in a public meeting on Thursday that the agency is planning to do outreach about the risks of those jobs.

"We're also paying attention to the need for getting in front of the next phase of this incident, which is going to be contractors moving into these areas, and what we've seen historically, hiring day laborers to do cleanup and salvage work, and often with little to no

SEE **CLEANUP** PAGE 6



Private firefighters are increasingly popular with insurers. But do they pose a risk?

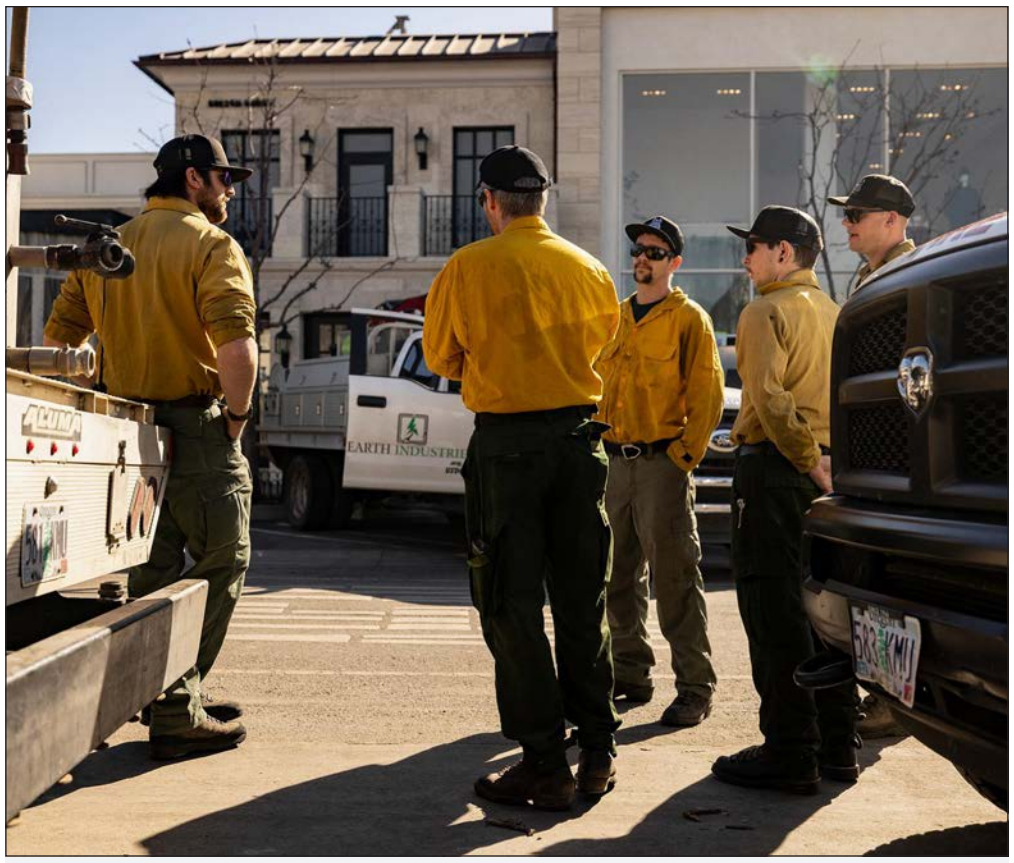


Photo by Etienne Laurent, AFP via Getty Images

FIREFIGHTER: Private firefighting company employees, hired to protect Rick Caruso's Palisades Village mall from the Palisades Fire, gather near their vehicles at the mall in the Pacific Palisades neighborhood of Los Angeles on Jan. 15, 2025.

Robert MacKenzie is an assistant fire chief — but not the kind who works for your local fire department. As the Palisades Fire bore down on Southern California last week, the private fire crew he oversees headed out to help defend homes for their customers: insurance companies that offer wildfire protection to wealthy homeowners and others with the coverage built into their policies.

Working with lists of high-risk properties provided by insurers, the team from Capstone Fire and Safety Management aims to arrive at houses before a fire does, then make changes to the structure that will give it the best chance of survival. If a fire is getting close, they'll smear a fire-protective gel on the side of the home, then get out.

"If the windows are open, maybe we can close them. If there's a woodpile that's too close to the home, we can move it," said MacKenzie, who ran an in-house fire department for Southern California Edison before coming to work for Capstone. "Ninety percent of what we do is prevention."

Capstone is part of a growing and controversial ecosystem of private firefighting companies that have seen themselves thrust into the spotlight as some of the wealthiest neighborhoods in Los Angeles have gone up in flames. It includes firefighters directly contracted with government agencies as well as those who work for insurance companies and directly for rich families and developers.

As California faces a future of more frequent and severe firestorms, the current fires have made clear that private companies are one way insurers and homeowners will respond to that threat. They've also posed the question of how the state should regulate private firefighters and how they should communicate with the public firefighting agencies leading disaster response.

One of Capstone's clients is Pure Insurance, a boutique firm that advertises its services to high-net-worth individuals with luxury homes and art collections. But mainstream insurers are also offering wildfire defense services to their customers, typically included in the cost of their premium. Insurers that have contracted with fire defense companies include State Farm, which holds the most residential policies in the area covered by the Palisades, Eaton and Hurst fires, according to a San Francisco Chronicle analysis.

Insurers' use of private firefighters "started years ago with some of the high-net-worth insurance carriers, but it's moved into the standard market as well," said Janet Ruiz, a spokesperson for the Insurance Information Institute, an industry association. "It is really part of the landscape now. And even average homeowners are really taking a look at their risk way more than they used to."

"It's not just the Kardashians," agreed Matthew Wara, director of Stanford University's Climate and Energy Policy Program, referring to the time Kim and Kanye infamously used a private squad to protect their mansion from the Woolsey Fire.

Fire experts note that private firefighting is nothing new, dating back to the 1700s, before Benjamin Franklin co-founded the Union Fire Company, the first volunteer fire service organized to defend the whole community and not just its members.

But critics have skewered the private

SEE **FIREFIGHTER** PAGE 11



Surf report

WATER TEMP: **56.5**

MONDAY
FAIR
SURF: Knee to thigh 1-2FT

Small NW swell. Off-season S and SW swells linger.

TUESDAY
POOR TO FAIR
SURF: Knee to thigh 1-2FT

NW swell from Sunday/Monday gets a refresh. Watching the wind outlook closely - potential for more Santa Ana winds.

Weather

Monday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 61.
Monday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 46.
Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 62.
Tuesday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 46.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2025/01/20	Mon	01:36 AM	4.17	H
2025/01/20	Mon	08:04 AM	2.09	L
2025/01/20	Mon	1:05 PM	2.92	H
2025/01/20	Mon	6:50 PM	1.60	L
2025/01/21	Tue	02:21 AM	4.25	H
2025/01/21	Tue	10:03 AM	1.77	L
2025/01/21	Tue	3:13 PM	2.40	H
2025/01/21	Tue	7:05 PM	2.09	L
2025/01/22	Wed	03:15 AM	4.39	H
2025/01/22	Wed	11:30 AM	1.21	L
2025/01/23	Thu	04:12 AM	4.60	H
2025/01/23	Thu	12:24 PM	0.62	L
2025/01/24	Fri	05:05 AM	4.90	H
2025/01/24	Fri	1:03 PM	0.07	L
2025/01/24	Fri	8:11 PM	3.07	H
2025/01/24	Fri	11:15 PM	2.78	L
2025/01/25	Sat	05:54 AM	5.27	H
2025/01/25	Sat	1:37 PM	-0.42	L
2025/01/25	Sat	8:28 PM	3.27	H
2025/01/26	Sun	12:11 AM	2.63	L
2025/01/26	Sun	06:37 AM	5.68	H
2025/01/26	Sun	2:09 PM	-0.84	L

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Draw Date: 1/15
8 41 52 53 58
Power#: 7
Jackpot: 331 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 1/14
4 14 35 49 62
Mega#: 6
Jackpot: 113 M

SUPER LOTTO PLUS
Draw Date: 1/15
8 14 16 21 28
Mega#: 10
Jackpot: 17 M

FANTASY 5
Draw Date: 1/16
4 6 25 31 33

DAILY 3
Draw Date: 1/16
EVENING: 7 8 3
Draw Date: 1/16
MIDDAY: 0 5 9

DAILY DERBY
Draw Date: 1/16
1st: 07 - Eureka
2nd: 10 - Solid Gold
3rd: 08 - Gorgeous George
Race Time: 1:45.03

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Santa Monica Daily Press

GOVERNMENT

FROM PAGE 1

residents that they should also check with their insurance company agent "as soon as possible" to confirm coverage and limitations.

He added that consumers should make sure that any insurance agent or public adjuster offering their services has a valid license by checking online with the California Department of Insurance (insurance.ca.gov).

"There have been some scams in this space," Allen said. "People pop up and try to offer assistance, and then it turns out that they're scammers. In fact, under existing law, public adjusters are not allowed to solicit business for seven calendar days after a disaster, so if you have been solicited by an adjuster, they are acting outside the law (and) are probably an illegal operator, so just be aware of that."

Democratic Caucus Chair and Assemblymember Rick Chavez Zbur (D-Hollywood) hosted a roundtable meeting last week at his Hollywood District Office with California Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas, colleagues from the Legislature, and local elected officials from across the West Los Angeles area to discuss legislative solutions related to the devastation and damage caused by the recent Los Angeles County wildfires.

"The wildfires have left a devastating mark on our communities. It is imperative that we in the State Legislature do everything we can to help our people rebuild their lives as quickly as possible," said Assemblymember Rick Chavez Zbur. "That's why Speaker Rivas and my legislative colleagues met with local elected leaders from across the West LA area in my district office to understand the immediate and long-term needs of our communities in the aftermath of these fires. I am moved by the work and dedication of the many public servants who attended the meeting today who are doing everything they can to serve our constituents. Assembly Speaker Rivas, my legislative colleagues, and I are all committed to ensuring that the people of Los Angeles recover quickly and stronger than before."

During the chamber event, Allen offered his condolences and support for the Palisades residents that were on the call, as well as the Santa Monica community coming to their aid.

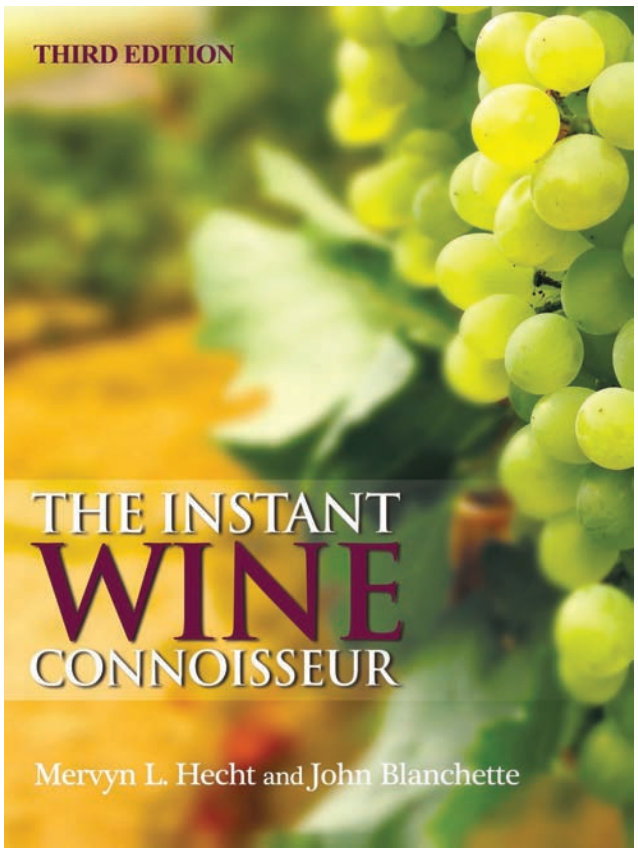
"Some of those (Palisades) businesses are working with our businesses, and I just know how appreciative all of them are for the way that Santa Monica has stepped up to assist and make a difference here," Allen said. "It's been (an) incredibly difficult week for our whole region, and I just want to thank everybody for all they're doing to help make things a little bit better."

U.S. Representative Ted Lieu also said on the call that his heart goes out to everyone affected, and stated he and Democrat allies have been "fighting back hard" about the "outrageous things" the Republican caucus has said during the fires. Sen. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin was one of many Republican leaders that stated California aid should be conditional.

"When Mother Nature strikes, she doesn't care about your party affiliation or where you live," Lieu said. "We're all Americans at the end of the day, and we shouldn't be determining disaster aid based on what party (you) have been registered to or where you live, and so we're fighting hard to push back on that and try and get as much funding as we can."

thomas@smdp.com

★★★★★ A light-hearted fun read.
★★★★★ Well written, particularly useful, instantly accessible.
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GUEST COMMENTARY

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Wealth will dictate LA fire recovery unless California learns from mistakes of past disasters



Photo by Jules Hotz for CalMatters

WEALTH: A person uses a hose to spray water on the flames of a house to prevent the Eaton Fire from spreading to other homes in an Altadena neighborhood on Jan. 8, 2025.

The wildfires sweeping through Los Angeles County have left a devastating mark, consuming more than 40,000 acres, taking dozens of lives and reducing entire neighborhoods to ash. The flames are a grim reminder of climate change fueling more frequent and destructive disasters.

This is deeply personal. My family lost their home in Altadena, a historically Black, middle-class community known for its legacy of generational homeownership. Countless families are now grappling with the reality of starting over, often without the insurance or resources needed to rebuild.

This tragedy reveals a harsh truth: Recovery isn't the same for everyone. Wealthier communities will turn to private resources, while working-class neighborhoods in Altadena will face immense barriers to rebuilding and recovery.

One of the heartbreaking aspects of this recovery is the influx of developers making low-ball offers to Altadena residents to buy their land. These developers present themselves as the only option, exploiting families who feel they have no choice.

For those without home insurance — or with policies that won't cover their losses — these offers may seem like the only way to recoup anything. But in reality, these offers erode generational wealth, force families out of their close-knit communities and deepen existing economic inequalities.

We need to protect these families from exploitation and ensure that recovery efforts prioritize the Black and brown residents who have called Altadena home for decades. Gov. Gavin Newsom's executive order this week is a positive step in that direction.

The challenges facing Altadena extend beyond residential homes. Local small businesses — the mom-and-pop shops and gathering places that form the backbone of neighborhoods — have been decimated. Across Greater Los Angeles, businesses that have operated for decades were destroyed in a matter of hours, and their recovery will not be quick or easy.

Small businesses in historically underserved communities often struggle to access grants, loans and financial relief programs. In Pasadena, for example, a recent survey of small businesses revealed that many owners were unaware of available climate-focused funding opportunities. By the time they hear about programs, the funds are gone or the

SEE **WEALTH** PAGE 6

GUEST COMMENTARY

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

As LA fires destroy homes, California's housing crisis is about to get worse



Photo by Jules Hotz for CalMatters

FIRE: The remains of a smoldering home in an Altadena neighborhood affected by the Eaton Fire on Jan. 8, 2025.

The wildfires sweeping through Los Angeles County communities have destroyed at least 10,000 homes so far and more are in the path of still-uncontrolled flames.

Obviously the loss of so many dwellings, whether they be single-family homes or apartments, exacerbates what was already one of the nation's most acute shortages of housing — a crisis that has worsened despite strenuous efforts by Gov. Gavin Newsom and legislators to make construction of new housing easier by removing local barriers.

State officials say California should be building 180,000 units of housing each year, but the trend is going the other way.

Newsom's new budget says that due to rising interest rates, California's residential permitting has "fallen substantially in 2024, with total permit growth in the third quarter falling by 13.5 percent from the previous year to an annualized rate of just around 102,000 permits," after averaging nearly 121,000 in 2021.

The budget projects continued low housing production until interest rates decline later in the decade; it could hit 125,000 in 2028 "as the Federal Reserve decreases interest rates, making construction inputs more affordable and lowering mortgage rates."

It's a far cry from Newsom's campaign pledge to build 3.5 million new units of housing. "As governor, I will lead the effort to develop the 3.5 million new housing units we need by 2025 because our solutions must be as bold as the problem is big," then-Lt. Gov. Newsom wrote on Medium in 2017.

During his inaugural speech in 2019, Newsom announced a "Marshall Plan for affordable housing," evoking the multi-billion dollar program to rebuild Europe after World War II.

However at the current level of construction of roughly 100,000 units a year, Newsom's governorship will probably end two years hence with less than a quarter of his announced goal having been reached.

California is not alone in having a housing shortage even though, in both absolute and relative terms, it has one of the worst. How did the state go from building as many as 200,000 units a year in 2005 to half that level today?

The peak 20 years ago reflected some unusual conditions, such as the federal government's program to expand home ownership that, in turn, sparked lower standards for mortgage applications —creating a bubble that spectacularly burst a few years later. It precipitated a global financial crisis and a severe recession that hit California and a few other states particularly hard, with lingering aftereffects, a new study of the

SEE **CRISIS** PAGE 6

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WEALTH

FROM PAGE 4

deadlines have passed.

This reflects a larger, systemic issue. Recovery programs are often designed without fully considering the unique needs of small businesses in marginalized communities. These businesses need accessible pathways to funding and support — not bureaucratic hurdles that leave them behind.

As we've seen with disasters like Hurricane Katrina, recovery is often unequal. Investigations into the federally funded Road Home program, designed to help Louisiana rebuild after hurricanes Katrina and Rita, revealed significant disparities in how aid was distributed.

Grants were calculated based on pre-storm property values instead of actual rebuilding costs, a method that disadvantaged low-income neighborhoods. Black homeowners were especially affected, as racial disparities in housing markets meant their properties were often undervalued.

The inequities were widespread. Federal rebuilding contracts largely bypassed smaller, minority-owned businesses. Of the $1.6 billion allocated for recovery efforts, only 1.5% went to Black-owned firms, excluding many businesses from opportunities to contribute to or benefit from the rebuilding process.

California cannot repeat these mistakes. Rebuilding contracts must prioritize diverse, local firms that reflect the communities they serve. This approach not only ensures that recovery dollar stay within the community but also helps build economic resilience by empowering local businesses to play a key role in rebuilding efforts.

Policymakers and local leaders must act swiftly to ensure that Altadena receives equitable access to recovery resources. This includes fair insurance payouts, targeted grant programs, protections against predatory developers, and a commitment to emphasizing rebuilding contracts with diverse, local businesses.

It also requires longer-term investment in climate resilience so communities like Altadena can better withstand future disasters.

The wildfires in Los Angeles are a wake-up call. If we want to protect the communities we love — places like Altadena — we need to create recovery systems that work for everyone, not just those with the means to rebuild.

Let's give communities the opportunity to rebuild, thrive and pass down their homes, businesses, and legacies to future generations.

Altadena deserves that future.

Tunua Thrash-Ntuk is the president and CEO of The Center by Lendistry and a member of the Long Beach City Council. This article was originally published by CalMatters.

CRISIS

FROM PAGE 5

nation's housing shortage by University of Southern California researchers shows.

After the housing bubble burst, bankers and government officials tightened down on qualification for mortgages, but tighter credit led to limited supply, which didn't match a new generation's housing desires, the study found.

"These measures came at the worst possible time — just as millennials, the largest generation in 30 years, entered the housing market," Dowell Myers, a study author who directs the Population Dynamics Research Group at USC's Sol Price School of Public Policy, said in a USC announcement. "Young home seekers were welcomed with the lowest construction in more than 60 years.

"Housing policy needs to be better at planning for the needs of different age groups and their life stages to avoid mismatches between supply and demand," Myers said in the release.

HOW ABOUT THE IMPACT OF LOS ANGELES' WILDFIRES?

"A tightly constrained housing supply reduces resilience to absorb losses from unexpected disasters — fires, earthquakes, hurricanes and more," Myers said. "In Los Angeles, this lack of flexibility could rapidly intensify gentrification as relocations strain the existing housing stock."

By Dan Walters. This article was originally published by CalMatters.



CLEANUP

FROM PAGE 2

protection," Wilson said.

SAFETY TRAINING

On Tuesday morning, day laborers and community volunteers mingled at the Pasadena Community Job Center. The day laborers, who typically wait for work requests from homeowners or contractors at Home Depots or street corners, were instead preparing to lead efforts to clean up the debris left by strong winds.

Dozens of men and women shoveled, raked and swept neighborhood streets where winds had topped over trees, branches and debris that could spark or carry embers. By the end of the day, they had filled a convoy of 15 dump trucks with debris.

The National Day Laborer Organizing Network, which runs the job center, helped organize the volunteers from the community and from throughout the county to clean up throughout the week. The effort highlights the role immigrant workers play helping their communities recover from disasters, said Manuel Vicente, director of the network's Radio Jornalera program.

"It was a way to respond to the rhetoric about immigrants happening now, the rain of lies about immigrants that have been stigmatizing us," he said. "That we're a community that if someone falls, we extend a hand to help them up."

In anticipation of its members being picked up for cleanup jobs, the network has deployed an OSHA-certified trainer at the job center to teach workers how to identify hazards in burned homes. It also plans to send staff to local Home Depots to hand out pamphlets and educational materials to day laborers.

The network has done similar training in hurricane-battered regions on the East Coast and in Texas and Louisiana.

Officials at the LA County Department of Public Health have been distributing N95 masks to workers centers.

Alice Berliner, director of the department's office of worker health and safety, pointed to surveys of gardeners, housekeepers and other domestic service workers conducted by advocacy groups after the 2018 Woolsey Fire in Malibu.

"Based on the fact that they were exposed to toxic debris, handling unsafe materials without proper equipment," Berliner said, "we're very likely to see a similar dynamic with this upcoming cleanup."

CLEANING UP

In Sonoma County after the Tubbs Fire, Christy Lubin remembers two kinds of disaster responses.

In one, the state sent specialized contractors to remove toxic substances from charred homes. Most of the workers who came to the Graton Day Labor Center in the county's wine country were shut out from those jobs, lacking the state-required hazardous material certifications, said Lubin, the center's director.

In the other, the town flooded with other reconstruction contractors from around the country.

"(The contractors) were bringing in a lot of immigrant workers, especially a lot of women, who got hired to go in and do especially interior building cleanup, smoke damage cleanup," Lubin said. "Those contractors were picking up groups of workers, meeting them on a corner, driving them in a van to these workplaces where they were sent into these buildings without the proper training, without the proper personal protective equipment."

It can be tough, said Riley of UCLA, to enforce safety regulations in those disaster zones.

"It's a bit of a wild west situation at times," he said. "Just because of how massive the work is and how varied the worksites and how spread out they are."

Garcia, the former vineyard employee, said she found her cleanup job through a Facebook ad for a restoration contractor that said it was working for an insurance company. Hundreds of workers who needed income after the fires responded, she said, and the contractors didn't seem to care about their immigration status.

The workers boarded 15-passenger vans to burned homes, businesses and even public buildings, she said. Sometimes she worked 10-hour days. She recalled being paid somewhere between $13 and $15 an hour.

For a few weeks, Garcia cleaned a hospital clinic strewn with blood and syringes before then cleaning homes, clearing and bagging up ashes and debris.

"Everything was covered in ashes," she said. "Everything you saw was black."

She said workers were given gloves and a helmet, but nothing to protect their bodies or cover their shoes. They only received masks the first two days, then had to reuse them, she said.

'WHAT WE NEED IS TO WORK'

Experiences like those drove Garcia — now a house-cleaner and a board member at the day labor center — and other worker advocates to push California lawmakers to better protect workers.

The state has passed new regulations requiring employers to protect workers from wildfire smoke or prohibiting them from forcing workers to be in evacuation zones.

And in July, some domestic workers will be newly covered under state workplace safety laws. There's an exception for those hired privately by homeowners, but Cal/OSHA spokesperson Daniel Lopez told CalMatters in an email that anyone who is hired for cleanup — no matter the employer — is already covered by a slew of wildfire-specific safety regulations.

A state advisory committee on domestic labor in 2022 recommended against hiring people commonly employed for household or yard work to clean up soot or ash after a wildfire, "as this may require specialized equipment and training."

It doesn't erase their willingness to do the jobs.

On Tuesday morning in Pasadena a handful of day laborers waited for gigs at the corner of Villa and Fair Oaks, three miles south of homes the Eaton Fire had burned one week earlier.

They perked up as cars slowed past the street. Work has been slow all season, they said, even before the fires destroyed many household jobs.

Marcelo Esteban said he knew that there might be work coming to clean up or rebuild burnt down communities, though he expected homeowners to turn to day laborers only after they've gotten help from insurance companies or the government.

He doesn't think much about the risks that work might carry.

"If someone needs help, we can use masks," he said. "Someone is going to do the work anyway. What we need is to work. It doesn't matter what."

CalMatters reporter Wendy Fry contributed to this story. This article was originally published by CalMatters.

PICKLEGATE

FROM PAGE 1

immersive dome.

The concept was to feature a combination of pickleball courts, padel courts and a "luxury dog park" and had been crafted from the collaborative efforts of Jonathan Neeter, owner of the Pickleball Center at 2505 Wilshire Blvd, Encino residents Mary Pat Faley and Ilene Feldman (who operate Pickletown on Lincoln Blvd) and Stephanie McCaffrey who is part owner of the PicklePop facility on the Promenade.

The original proposal pitched to DTSM included two 68 ft by 35 ft padel courts, four 60 ft by 30 ft pickleball courts, beer garden seating, a food stand area, a "premium dog park" and a bathroom area. Dogdrop, a venture capital backed dog daycare center founded in Los Angeles, was set to be the operational advisor of the canine component.

The Santa Monica Citizen Access Website suggests that the permit application has changed to now incorporate "eight paddle sports courts" not six, with no mention of a dog park or any food and beverage outlets. There has been no progress on the site and despite an initial goal of opening in February. It is not yet known if the other partners are still involved, however, Shaina Denny, CEO of Dogdrop said that she had not heard anything about this lawsuit and indeed had not heard anything more about this project "for quite some time."

The lawsuit alleges that each owner would put a minimum of $200,000 into the project and would receive an ownership interest proportionate to the amount paid.

McCaffrey claims in the lawsuit that Pickletown owners Mary Pat Faley and Ilene Feldman initially agreed to invest $200,000 each in the project but backed out after the contract was awarded in November. Despite withdrawing, the defendants allegedly continued to interfere by demanding ownership stakes and attempting to control pricing.

"The Pickletown defendants engaged in wrongful and egregious misconduct by misrepresenting their ability and intent to financially contribute to the project. They falsely assured Plaintiffs that they would invest capital once the project was awarded, only to back out entirely after the award, refusing to make any financial contributions," claims the lawsuit.

The suit also claims the defendants demanded that McCaffrey not charge more than the rates set by Pickletown in an attempt to control market pricing.

The plaintiffs claim that Pickletown's owners have caused "significant disruption" by repeatedly contacting city officials after being told to communicate only with McCaffrey, who is the sole point of contact for the project.

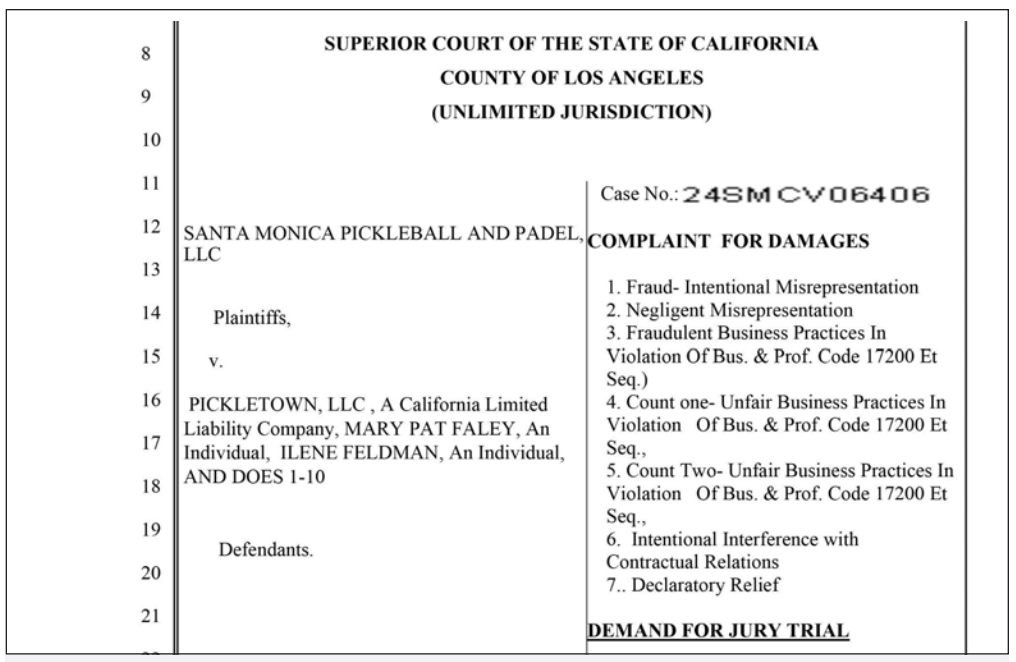
The lawsuit is asking for restitution of damages suffered by the alleged interference and a court order clarifying ownership of the project.

"Plaintiffs seek a declaration from this Court confirming that none of the Pickletown Defendants, Mary Pat Faley, Ilene Feldman, or Pickletown, LLC, have any ownership interest, equity stake, or claim to any part of Santa Monica Pickleball and Padel, LLC or the 4th St. Project. Defendants' attempts to claim ownership and demand money or equity, despite their complete lack of involvement or financial contribution, are without merit and must be dismissed," says the lawsuit.

The Daily Press spoke to Faley and Feldman who simply said that they didn't want to talk about this and wholeheartedly hoped it would all just go away. We also reached out to McCaffrey who denied any legal action was taking place, despite the already filed lawsuit. Neeter declined to comment and his legal representation, Nader Fannyan, simply said, "The parties are seeking resolution."

The next step in this lawsuit is the Case Management Conference, set to be heard at Santa Monica Courthouse on May 2, 2025.

scott.snowden@smdp.com



SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
(UNLIMITED JURISDICTION)

Case No.: 24SMCV06406

SANTA MONICA PICKLEBALL AND PADEL, LLC

Plaintiffs,

v.

PICKLETOWN, LLC , A California Limited Liability Company, MARY PAT FALEY, An Individual, ILENE FELDMAN, An Individual, AND DOES 1-10

Defendants.

COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES

1. Fraud- Intentional Misrepresentation
2. Negligent Misrepresentation
3. Fraudulent Business Practices In Violation Of Bus. & Prof. Code 17200 Et Seq.)
4. Count one- Unfair Business Practices In Violation Of Bus. & Prof. Code 17200 Et Seq.,
5. Count Two- Unfair Business Practices In Violation Of Bus. & Prof. Code 17200 Et Seq.,
6. Intentional Interference with Contractual Relations
7.. Declaratory Relief

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Courtesy image

PICKLEBALL PARTNERSHIP PREDICAMENT: Santa Monica sports facility partners set to clash in court.

INSURANCE

FROM PAGE 1

Response Team (DART) to wildfire-affected areas to protect survivors from scams. The team will work alongside the Contractors State License Board to verify vendor licenses and ensure compliance with state regulations.

Hochman issued a stern warning to potential fraudsters, promising maximum penalties for those who target fire victims. He noted that sentences for wildfire-related crimes can range from three to 25 years in prison. Hochman said his office has spent significant time issuing warnings to potential criminals to inoculate cases against any claim of ignorance.

"I don't want any discussion afterwards that 'I was confused, that maybe they weren't crimes, and these crimes weren't going to be punished, and if they were being punished, maybe I would just get a slap on the list.' The answer is no. Justice will be swift and justice will be significant if you want to take advantage of people in their lowest moment, people who have suffered the tragedy of losing homes, having property destroyed, and are now seeking to recover from that destruction."

The partnership comes as State Farm, California's largest insurer, announced it would pause all pending non-renewals not just in fire-affected areas but throughout Los Angeles County for one year. The move will impact tens of thousands of policies, according to Lara.

"I do applaud State Farm for answering my call and really setting the tone for other insurance companies to follow during this unprecedented crisis," he said.

Since 2019, the Department of Insurance has provided over $550 million in funding to district attorneys statewide for fraud investigations and prosecutions, including $116 million to Los Angeles County. The department has recovered more than $474 million for consumers following past wildfire disasters.

Officials cited several recent fraud cases, including a public adjuster sentenced to 10 years in prison for stealing more than $1.2 million in insurance payouts while hiring unlicensed contractors and leaving victims with unrepaired homes.

To help survivors navigate the claims process, the Department of Insurance has extended its service hours to include weekends and evenings. Representatives are now available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

THE DEPARTMENT IS ALSO HOSTING FREE INSURANCE SUPPORT WORKSHOPS:

- January 18-19 at Santa Monica College
- January 25-26 at Pasadena City College

Survivors can schedule one-on-one appointments with department staff and insurance representatives by calling 800-927-4357.

LARA OFFERED SPECIFIC GUIDANCE FOR PROTECTING AGAINST FRAUD:

- Document all property damage with photos and videos before cleanup
- Keep receipts for additional living expenses like hotels and meals
- Create a dedicated email folder for insurance communications
- Verify licenses for contractors and adjusters through the department's website
- Be wary of unsolicited offers from contractors
- Report suspicious activity immediately

The commissioner has also expanded a mandatory moratorium on property insurance non-renewals and cancellations to include additional areas affected by the fires, including Palisades, Eaton, Hearst, Lydia, Sunset, and Woodley.

"All eyes are on insurance companies, including ours as a department," Lara said. "Insurance companies must do the right thing during this crisis and stand by consumers, many of whom have been with them for years."

Hochman's office has already begun prosecuting wildfire-related crimes. This week, authorities announced charges against 18 individuals for various offenses, including looting, arson, and impersonating a firefighter.

"For the criminals who think they can take advantage of the system for their own benefit, for their despicable desires to profit from this tragedy, you are seeing a unified front that is going to come after you," Hochman said.

> "My goal is very simple: to make insurance fair, accurate and available for all Californians
>
> - Ricardo Lara, Insurance Commissioner

The district attorney identified two common fraud schemes: individuals posing as insurance agents or brokers to deceive victims, and people filing false claims for damages they never suffered.

Out-of-state adjusters coming to California to handle the surge in claims must be verified through the department and understand the state's unique consumer protections, Lara emphasized.

"My goal is very simple: to make insurance fair, accurate and available for all Californians," he said.

The Department of Insurance urges survivors to visit insurance.ca.gov or call 800-927-4357 for assistance with claims, contractor verification, or to report suspected fraud.

editor@smdp.com

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LET US KNOW YOUR OPINION
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Santa Monica Daily Press

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DBA

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NUMBER: ORIGINAL FILING This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES on 12/03/24 2024245647The following person(s) is (are) doing business as Strings By Reiko 3017 Pico Blvd Santa Monica, CA 90405.. Los Angeles Articles of Incorporation or Organization Number (if applicable): Ai #ON. The full name of the registrant(s) is/are Sounds Roads Music LLC 3017 Pico Blvd Santa Monica, CA 90405. If corporation or LLC- Print State of CA This is Business is Conducted: A Limited Liability Company . The date registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on N/A. Registrant / Corp/LLC Name Sounds Roads Music LLC Title: Secretary Grishma Keny . This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 08/15/2024NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE County CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411 et seq. ,Business and Professions Code).

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NUMBER: ORIGINAL FILING This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES on 1/06/25 2025002893The following person(s) is (are) doing business as Mar Vista Cheap Mobile Notary 3175 Federal Ave Los Angeles, CA 90066. Los Angeles Articles of Incorporation or Organization Number (if applicable): Ai #ON. The full name of the registrant(s) is/are Josh's Mobile Notary LLC 3175 Federal Ave Los Angeles, CA 90066 . If corporation or LLC- Print State of CA This is Business is Conducted: A Limited Liability Company . The date registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on N/A. Registrant /Corp/LLC Name Josh's Mobile Notary LLC Title: CEO Josh Lipman . This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 08/15/2024NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE County CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411 et seq. ,Business and Professions Code).

DBA

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NUMBER: ORIGINAL FILING This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES on 1/06/25 2025002002The following person(s) is (are) doing business as Edward Avedis 101 Wilshire Blvd Santa Monica, CA 90401. Los Angeles Articles of Incorporation or Organization Number (if applicable): Ai #ON. 4158617The full name of the registrant(s) is/are Edward Avedis Limited 101 Wilshire Blvd Santa Monica, CA 90401 . If corporation or LLC- Print State of CA This is Business is Conducted: A Corporation . The date registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on N/A. Registrant / Corp/LLC Name Edward Avedis Limited Title: CEO Avedis Guerboian . This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 01/06/2024NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE County CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411 et seq. ,Business and Professions Code).

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NUMBER: ORIGINAL FILING This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES on 12/16/24 2024253915The following person(s) is (are) doing business as Culver Crescent 5388 Ballona Ave Culver City, CA 90230. Los

DBA

Angeles Articles of Incorporation or Organization Number (if applicable): Ai #ON. 202564511469The full name of the registrant(s) is/are Culver Crescent Media, LLC 5388 Ballona Ave Culver City, CA 90230. If corporation or LLC- Print State of CA This is Business is Conducted: A Limited Liability Company . The date registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on 11/2024. Registrant /Corp/LLC Name Culver Crescent Media, LLC Title: CEO Christian May-Suzuki . This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 01/06/2024NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE County CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411 et seq. ,Business and Professions Code).

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NUMBER: ORIGINAL FILING This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES on 1/15/25 2025009196The following person(s) is (are) doing business as AD-Ad Studio 521 Montana Ave Unit 203 Santa Monica, CA 90403. Los Angeles Articles of Incorporation or Organization Number (if applicable): Ai #ON. The full name of the registrant(s) is/are Afra Farry Architects PC 521 Montana Ave Unit 203 Santa Monica, CA 90403. . If corporation or LLC- Print State of CA This is Business is Conducted: A Corporation . The date registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on 01/2025. Registrant /Corp/LLC Name Culver Crescent Media, LLC Title: CEO Christian May-Suzuki . This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 01/15/2025NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE County CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED

DBA

PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411 et seq. ,Business and Professions Code).

Name Change

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAMECase No. 24CHCP00490 Superior Court of California, County of Los AngelesPetition of Brandon Curtis Nakamoto Hayman for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner or Attorney: Brandon Curtis Nakamoto Hayman with this court for a decree of changing names as follows: Brandon Curtis Nakamoto Hayman to Brandon Koji Hayman . The court orders that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Notice of Hearing: Date 02/28/2025 Time: 8:30 a.m, Dept: F49 Room: _ The address of the court is SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA – COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES 9425 Penfield Ave Chatsworth, CA 91311. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: Santa Monica Daily Press

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ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAMECase No. 24NNCP00825 Superior Court of California, County of Los AngelesPetition of Mary Ann Charlotte Bear for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner or Attorney: Mary Ann Charlotte Bear with this court for a decree of changing names as follows: Mary Ann Charlotte Bear to Mary Ann Charlotte Turner . The court orders that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Notice of Hearing: Date 03/17/2025 Time: 8:30 a.m, Dept: T Room: _ The address of the court is SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA – COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES 150 West Commonwealth Ave Alhambra, CA .

Name Change

A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: Santa Monica Daily Press

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ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAMECase No. 24SMCP00669 Superior Court of California, County of Los AngelesPetition of Ann Marie Onaindia for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner or Attorney: Ann Marie Onaindia with this court for a decree of changing names as follows: Ann Marie Onaindia to Ann Marie Greco . The court orders that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Notice of Hearing: Date 02/07 /2025 Time: 8:30 a.m, Dept: K Room: _ The address of the court is SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA – COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES1425 Main St Santa Monica, CA 90401 A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: Santa Monica Daily Press

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ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAMECase No. 24SMCP00009 Superior Court of California, County of Los AngelesPetition of Erika Ono for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner or Attorney: TErika Ono with this court for a decree of changing names as follows: Erika Ono to Erika Ono Sanders . The court orders that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Notice of Hearing: Date 02/21/2025 Time: 8:30 a.m, Dept: K Room: _. The address of the court is SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA – COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES 1725 Main St Santa Monica, CA 90401 . A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: Santa Monica Daily Press

Name Change

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAMECase No. 25SMCP0012 Superior Court of California, County of Los AngelesPetition of Mickie Alisa Scholes for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner or Attorney: Mickie Alisa Scholes with this court for a decree of changing names as follows: Mickie Alisa Scholes to Mickie Alisa Arias . The court orders that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Notice of Hearing: Date 02/21/2025 Time: 8:30 a.m, Dept: K Room: - The address of the court is SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA – COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES 1725 Main St Santa Monica, CA 90401 . A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: Santa Monica Daily Press

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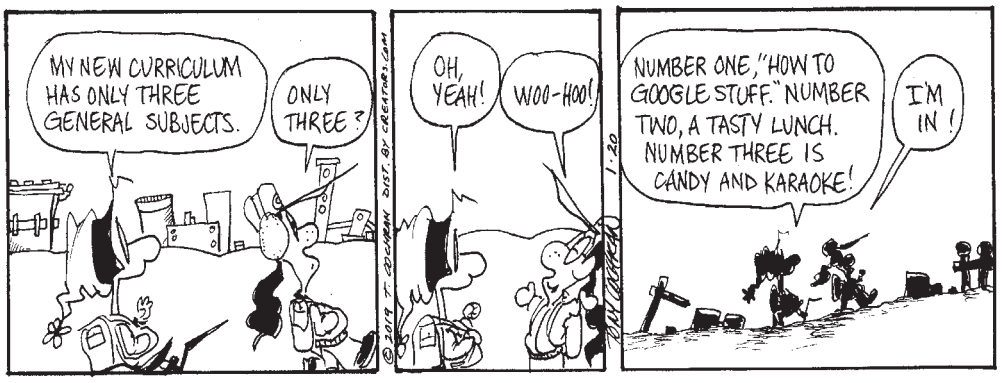
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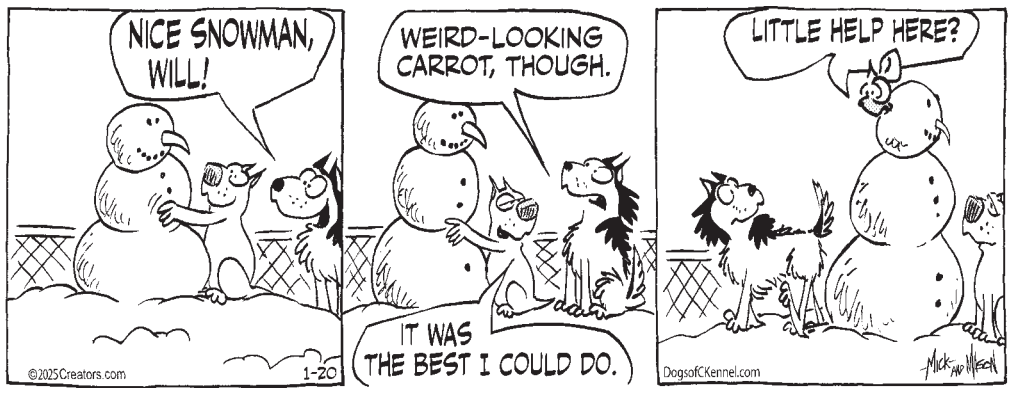
Agnes

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Dogs of C-Kennel

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Heathcliff

By PETER GALLAGHER



"CRAZY SHIRLEY TREED HEATHCLIFF."

Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING



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

© australianwordgames.com.au 6461

Far North Queensland

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

Art deco	Charm	Hills	Nebo	Shoal
Bays	Coast	Hook	Noosa	Staff
Beach	Cove	Hotels	Olio	Swim
Beer	Dalby	Jet ski	Orallo	Taroom
Boat	Dunk	Lagoon	Pool	Tour
Bongeen	Eton	Laze	Quay	Tully
Bypass	Eulo	Lota	Rain	Tuna
Calm	Fine	Major	Regions	Units
Camping	Gore	Mango	Roma	Water
Cape	Hats	Marian	Sand	
Cardwell	Hazy	Mt Isa	Scuba	

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Many broken promises

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TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 20)

Your talent is limitless. You can be confident in the dues you've paid and the person you are - one who deserves every bit of the joy and success you envision. In the weeks ahead you will refine plans, sort feelings and dream even bigger. More highlights: Fun! A surprise check, the dazzling spotlight on your work, and the sweetest reciprocity among friends. Leo and Taurus adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 24, 21, 13, 7 and 19.

HOROSCOPES

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Whatever you need - whether it's a break, a challenge or a treat - you will give it to yourself. Design it as you would any event you were throwing for a loved one - with care and attention to detail.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You'll be good at creating subtle changes that help people think differently. You also teach without giving formal instruction. Your presence is making the difference today, even when it's not immediately obvious.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Negotiations will ensue. Just remember that often the value of things is what people believe or decide it is as a society, or, in today's case, as two people trying to make a deal.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Recognizing an unhelpful pattern will be the first step toward changing it. It may pertain to a person who doesn't bring out the best in you. Acknowledging the dynamic will be the start of creating something better.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Your talents, powers and capabilities will grow and shine, and there's not a single thing you need to add to your life to make this so. Instead, it's a process of assessment and organization - a reordering of your priorities that allows the expansion to happen.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Opportunities present themselves. The first deal tempts, but you are still just learning the lay of the land, the extent of your need and how that matches what's available. Don't skip the shopping process. This is only the beginning.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You'll get mixed feedback today, and though you may not know exactly what to make of it at this point, the fact that people are talking is something of a validation in and of itself. Stay confident - you're on to something.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Whether or not there really is enough of a certain thing to go around, there will be clear benefits to believing in abundance and opening your mind and heart to the possibility that there are many ways for a need to be met.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Since most problems have no perfect solution, release the need to get it just right. This is a day for broad strokes, approximations and moving forward with pure-hearted intent. The plan will reveal itself while you're already in action.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). What is at stake in an interaction? Money might seem to be the exchange in question, but it's seldom the biggest thing at stake. The life energy you put into making money gives it the charge, and that is the true exchange.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Think, write and talk about what you want because your dreams will be your wings. When you put yourself out there and involve others, you'll be met with enthusiasm, support and unexpected opportunities that propel your vision further.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Relationships have their own unique music. When one person changes tone, the other person can either remain the same and bear the tension of dissonance, or adjust in harmony. Either way, every interaction adds to the song.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

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.

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

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S SUDOKU

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

Newsday Crossword

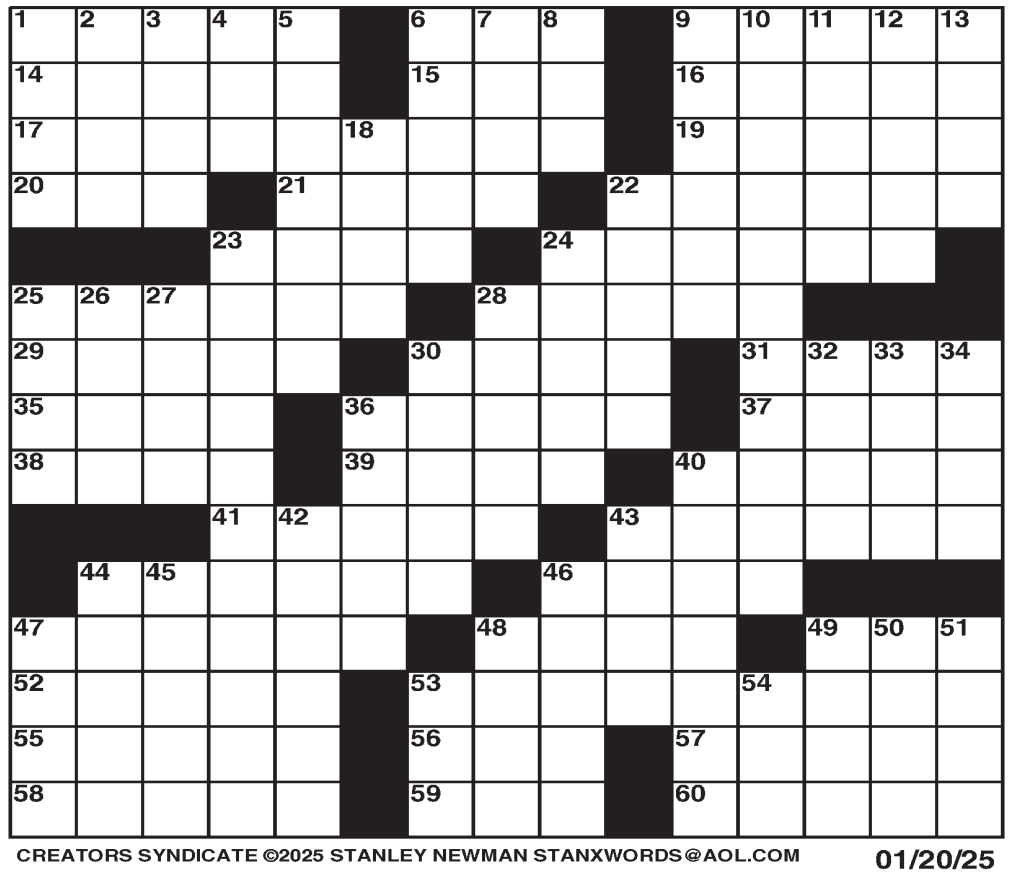
THINK PINK by Sally R. Stein
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS

1 Flying insects attracted to light
6 Grocery sack
9 Poker player's wager-matching comment
14 Deplete completely
15 Nation south of Canada: Abbr.
16 "It's the truth!"
17 Often-pink long-legged shore birds
19 Kitchen's range
20 On behalf of
21 __ of Mexico (water west of Florida)
22 Feminine parent
23 Here today, __ tomorrow
24 Add more film to a camera
25 Nasal sounds of scorn
28 Towel or pillowcase
29 Masculine parents, informally
30 Endow, as a scholarship
31 Police officers
35 Immediately, in a memo
36 Tunes performed
37 Ready, willing and __
38 Rooster or ram
39 Price labels
40 Nose, slangily
41 Holder for a gallery painting
43 West Point students
44 Without a doubt
46 General's fighting force
47 "That didn't work"
48 Radar screen flash
49 "Now I understand!"
52 Loosen, as shoelaces
53 Often-pink chew for kids
55 Retail shops
56 Written promise to pay
57 Major social gathering
58 Tuba's metallic alloy
59 Place to exercise
60 Stops for a break

DOWN

1 Ear covering in winter
2 Capital of Norway
3 Shed a __ (weep)
4 How to play the kazoo
5 Water faucets
6 Military trumpet
7 __ now (so far)
8 Car fuel
9 Shoe's padding
10 Often-pink carnival confection
11 Hawaiian greeting
12 Resided
13 Impolite look
18 Convent residents
22 Repairs with thread
23 Often-pink sources of breakfast juice
24 Wedding bands
25 Unwelcome email
26 Rocket-launching agency
27 Whitish gemstone
28 Fencer's thrust
30 Having much lather
32 Woodwind instrument
33 Evil scheme
34 Full collections
36 Piece of celery
40 Promotional assortment to try
42 Courtroom break
43 Infant's bed
44 Ship's tracking device
45 Prefix for violet
46 Book of personal photos
47 Feeling nothing
48 Harbor's floating marker
49 Improves, as wine
50 Search (for)
51 Quantities: Abbr.
53 Enormous
54 Day before a holiday



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

FIREFIGHTER

FROM PAGE 3

companies as creating a two-tiered system where those with more resources get better protection than everyone else. After billionaire developer Rick Caruso hired private crews to defend his Palisades Village mall, backlash spread on social media as images circulated of pristine chain stores with water trucks parked outside alongside burnt-out ruins of homes and small businesses. Caruso later pledged a $5 million donation to the Los Angeles Fire Department Foundation.

A 2018 California law requires private firefighters arriving in an evacuation zone to check in with the local incident commander and follow any of their instructions, including leaving the scene when asked. They're not allowed to use the same radio frequency as government firefighters to communicate with each other, must mark their vehicles as "nonemergency" and avoid using sirens.

That law doesn't prevent private firefighters from hooking up to public fire hydrants — though representatives for both the fire companies and the state's fire protection department, Cal Fire, said they typically bring their own water trucks or connect to homeowners' hydrants. It's a sensitive issue because some hydrants in Pacific Palisades ran dry early last week as firefighters struggled to contain the blaze.

Assembly Majority Leader Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, who authored the 2018 law, said in a statement to CalMatters that it was sparked by previous wildfire seasons in 2007 and 2017 in which private firefighters entered disaster zones without coordinating with their public counterparts, confusing residents and distracting emergency responders.

"The public thought the private firefighters were public firefighters, which gave a false sense of security that there was emergency response in their neighborhoods," she said. "Private firefighters were going into evacuation areas without prior authorization. In a couple of (instances) they had to be rescued, which put emergency personnel at risk."

Aguiar-Curry said fire agencies are evaluating the effectiveness of the law as the Los Angeles fires unfold to see if any changes need to be made.

Insurers, who are likely staring down tens of billions of dollars in liability from the Los Angeles fires, have been willing to spend on wildfire defense in order to avoid the more costly loss of insured property. A contracted rate for private firefighters to visit a home and take preventive measures as a fire approaches can run about $1,000, said Mark Sektnan, vice president of state government relations for the American Property Casualty Insurance Association, another industry group.

MacKenzie said Capstone is made up largely of retired firefighters and younger employees trying to gain the experience they need to be hired by a fire service. During the off-season, they visit insurers' customers and give them tips on how to fire-harden their properties.

When they're on site at a fire, he said, they try to know their limits, sticking to the jobs that emergency responders might not have time to do.

"We don't want to become part of the incident and create more havoc for the responding agencies," he said. "If there are small spot fires, like an ember coming from half a mile away, we'll extinguish that. But if that fire is coming up the canyon at a rapid rate, we typically gel the side of the exposed home and we'll leave and make sure our folks are safe."

The company has visited more than 2,000 homes during the current Los Angeles firestorm, said MacKenzie, fielding a team of 16 engines with 34 people at the height of their operation.

Another company widely used by insurers, Wildfire Defense Systems, says it has responded to 1,400 wildfires since 2008 and has a 99% success rate in saving structures if it arrives on scene in time to prepare the property.

"The people that actually have to put money at risk in these situations are insurance companies and reinsurance companies, so I think it's important to look at what they think is effective," said Wara, the Stanford researcher. "They think (home hardening by private firefighters) is highly effective and want to see more of it."

A key question, said Wara, is whether private firefighters hired by insurers can get to a fire scene fast enough and whether they're admitted by the on-site commander. He said he'd heard from private firefighting crews who attempted to enter the Palisades Fire zone and were turned away.

Captain Dan Collins, a spokesperson for Cal Fire on the Palisades Fire, said he couldn't confirm whether private crews had been denied permission to enter, but that if they were, it was for their own safety.

Unlike private firefighters who are contracted directly with Cal Fire, fire crews who work for insurers or homeowners may not have the same training as regular firefighters, Collins said. Some fire departments, for example, require firefighters to be trained as paramedics.

"There's no way for us as professional firefighters to vet their training, or their personal protective equipment," he said.

Private firefighters are also not communicating on the same system or always briefed on the overall plan for tackling the fire, he said. "It makes things harder if we're in a dynamic fire situation and we drive by some unknown type engine and we can't get a hold of them or advise them of danger or something happening. It creates a potentially dangerous situation for those people."

"No one wants to take on that liability," he added.

Of the more than 5,000 people fighting the Palisades Fire, Collins said Cal Fire had contracted one private fire engine with a four-person crew. They were previously vetted by Cal Fire and report to a Cal Fire supervisor, he said.

Will the private firefighting sector continue to grow? Ken Sebastiani directs the fire technology program at Santa Rosa Junior College, where about 1,200 students pass through each semester, many inspired to work in fire prevention by personal experience in the Tubbs, Glass and Carr fires, which ravaged the wine country.

He doesn't see many go on to private firefighting companies, he said; most want to work for Cal Fire or municipal departments.

But he described the existence of private firefighting as a sign that with wildfire danger increasing, it's all hands on deck. "It's a global challenge, the need for firefighters, because of climate change," he said. "It's happening everywhere — Greece, Italy — so it's not just California."

"Until Mother Nature slows down, it's really hard for the fire departments to catch up."

By Felicia Mello. This article was originally published by CalMatters.



MONDAY | JANUARY 20

MLK BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION 2025

9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Soka Gakkai International Auditorium, 525 Wilshire Blvd. Join one of Southern California's largest birthday celebrations for Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., honoring his memory and work to ensure equality and civil rights for all people. This 39th anniversary event embraces the theme "Stop the Hate, Start the Healing." The multiethnic interfaith program includes inspirational readings, music, and education awards presentations.

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

7 - 10 p.m. SMI Room, Civic Center Parking Structure, 333 Civic Center Dr. The Commission on Sustainability, Environmental Justice and the Environment shall act in an advisory capacity on sustainability, environmental programs and policy issues. The Commission closely monitors the Santa Monica's Sustainable City Plan and advises the Council on plan implementation.

TUESDAY | JANUARY 21

SBA CONSULTATION

9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce, 2525 Main St. Walk in and get help applying for the US Small Business Administration's Disaster Relief loans to help homeowners, renters and businesses of all sizes recover from the wildfires.

MEMORIES & MOVEMENT SENIOR CLUB

10:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Patio Room, Virginia Avenue Park, 2200 Virginia Ave. Come, learn and have fun each week with something new, like exercise, talking with friends, learning, guest presenters and health & wellness. For more information, call 310-458-8688.

BOOKS & BAGELS

12:30 - 1:30 p.m. Venice Branch Library ,501 South Venice Blvd., Venice. Join each month for bagels, coffee and tea. There will be a thoughtful discussion of the current selection and discuss other great things we've been reading. Copies available at the front desk. Provided by Friends of Venice Library.

TEEN COUNCIL

4:30 - 5:30 p.m. Palms-Rancho Park Branch Library, 2920 Overland Ave. Make a difference in your community at the library. Teens ages 12-18 are welcome to join and earn volunteer credit for participating. Discussions include what to do to help the library, plan fun events, and more. Snacks are funded by the Friends of the Palms-Rancho Park Library. Contact Bella at prncho@lapl.org with any questions.

MYSTERY & THRILLER BOOK GROUP

7 p.m. Virtual. This community-led, monthly book discussion group meets virtually to discuss domestic and international titles in the mystery and thriller genres. To register, email library@santamonica.gov. This month's title is "The Fury" by Alex Michaelides.

BRYAN CALLEN

7:30 p.m., 9:30 p.m. The Venice West, 1717 Lincoln Blvd., Venice. Actor, comic and co-host of "The Fighter & The Kid" podcast Bryan Callen returns to The Venice West in preparation for the release of his latest one hour special called "Never Grow Up." For ages 21 and up. Tickets $30, to purchase visit: https://www.ticketweb.com/event/bryan-callen-early-show-the-venice-west-tickets/14123963. To purchase tickets for the 9:30 p.m. show, visit: https://www.ticketweb.com/event/bryan-callen-late-show-the-venice-west-tickets/14123973.

WEDNESDAY | JANUARY 22

HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

SMI Room, Civic Center Parking Structure, 333 Civic Center Dr. The goal of the Santa Monica Human Services Commission (HSC) is to advise City Council on priorities and strategies involving the well-being, equity, and needs of vulnerable, low income, and at-risk residents including youth and families, seniors, and people experiencing homelessness.

THURSDAY | JANUARY 23

LA LAW LIBRARY OFFICE HOURS

2 - 6 p.m. Lobby, Santa Monica Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd. A LA Law Library legal research specialist helps patrons find answers to legal questions, learn about the law, or prepare to go to court. Legal research specialists are not attorneys and cannot provide legal advice, help fill out forms, or interpret the law.

BOURBON TASTING WITH BUFFALO TRACE

7 - 9 p.m. Marina Del Rey Hotel, 13534 Bali Way, Marina del Rey. Get an inside look at the artistry and dedication that goes into each bottle of expertly curated bourbon. General admission ticket includes a three-course dinner and a take-home souvenir. Tickets $60, to purchase visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bourbon-tasting-with-buffalo-trace-at-marina-del-rey-hotel-tickets-1091308305519.

FRIDAY | JANUARY 24

CHINESE PAPER LANTERNS WITH EMMY LAM

3:45 - 4:45 p.m. Fairview Branch Library, 2101 Ocean Park Blvd. It's the Year of the Snake! Learn about Lunar New Year and other Chinese Festivals and make a paper lantern. All materials provided. Space is limited; free tickets available at 3:30 p.m. For ages 8 & up.

COMEDY PARTY AND BENEFIT SHOW

7 - 10 p.m. ARTime Barro, 302 Pico Blvd. BackDoor Comedy is back in 2025 with great comedy, food and music. Happy hour from 7 to 7:45, comedy from 7:45 to 9, after party from 9 to 10. Food from Bello Pizza. Benefit show for the LA wildfires. Tickets $30, to purchase visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/a-comedy-party-benefit-show-for-the-la-wildfires-tickets-1141720459629.

POETRY COLLECTION CELEBRATION

8 - 9:30 p.m. Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Center, 681 Venice Blvd., Venice. Authors Nancy Miller Gomez ("Inconsolable Objects"), Lynda V.E. Crawford ("Washing Water") and Lynne Thompson ("Blue on a Blue Palette") are celebrating newly published collections and will be reading from their latest books. Enjoy a reception and book signings after the program. Tickets $10, students/seniors $6, to purchase visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nancy-miller-gomez-lynda-ve-crawford-lynne-thompson-tickets-1118331051279.

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